

2009

**THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY FOR THE
AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY**

**GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO THE
STANDING COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION, TRAINING AND
YOUNG PEOPLE (6TH ASSEMBLY)
REPORT NO 7**

REPORT ON ANNUAL AND FINANCIAL REPORTS 2006-2007

**Presented by
Mr Jon Stanhope MLA
Chief Minister**

Government Response

Standing Committee on Education, Training and Young People Report No 7 – Report on Annual and Financial Reports 2006-2007 (6th Assembly)

Introduction

The Annual Reports of All ACT Government agencies are referred to the Standing Committees of the ACT Legislative Assembly for examination and report.

The 6th Assembly Standing Committee on Education, Training and Young People reviewed annual reports for:

- Canberra Institute of Technology;
- Department of Education and Training;
- ACT Building and Construction Industry Training Fund Authority; and
- Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services, specifically:
 - the Office for Children, Youth and Family Support; and
 - the ACT Official Visitor.

The Committee made four recommendations.

Response to Committee Recommendations

Recommendation 1

2.18 The Committee recommends that statistics detailing the number of reported critical incidents in ACT schools be provided in future annual reports.

Government Response

Agreed. The Department of Education and Training has collected data on the number of reported critical incidents in ACT public schools over five quarters, commencing April 2007. The Department details the number of reported critical incidents in their Annual Report as evidenced in the 2007-2008 Annual Report.

Recommendation 2

4.10 The Committee recommends that the Office of Children, Youth and Family Support review data collection methods so that the quantum of vulnerable families in the ACT requiring support from a families-at-risk service delivery model can be estimated.

Government Response

Agreed. The Office for Children, Youth and Family Support undertakes regular reviews of its data collection systems in order to ensure the information collected is consistent with national and local performance measure requirements.

Data collection is currently based on interventions with individual children rather than families. In addition, a consistent application of a definition of a vulnerable family is required. Difficulties arise in obtaining data on vulnerable families as this data is not a requirement of the national data collection system and is difficult to ensure as children from the same family are not always easily identifiable. Work has commenced on improvements to the CHYPS data system to identify families according to the relationship between individual children or young people.

Future contracts with non-government agencies will set a requirement to gather data based on individual and family measures. Child and Family Centres collect data with regards to individual and family measures.

Recommendation 3

5.7 The Committee recommends that the improvements to the therapeutic capacity of Marlow House proposed by the Official Visitor be addressed as a matter of urgency.

Government Response

Agreed-in-principle. The 2007-2008 Budget provided \$270,000 in Capital Improvement Funds for the refurbishment to the front cottage of Marlow Cottage as a therapeutic unit for children and young people with high and complex needs.

Construction has been delayed due to a Development Application that has not yet been approved, however work is expected to commence early in 2009.

The Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services is contracting non-government agencies in the provision of alternative services for children and young people with high and complex needs. The alternative services are:

- SAT – Stabilising Assessment Transition.
- ISP – Individual Support Placements.
- SPFC – Specialist Foster Care.

This provides an alternative treatment model of service for this specific and small client group.

Recommendation 4

5.10 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government confirm with the Official Visitors future intentions and proposed timeframe for co-location with the ACT Public Advocate.

Government Response

Noted. The Official Visitors provide a complaint mechanism for children, young people and others concerning issues arising during the care of children and young people at a detention centre, therapeutic protection facility or place of care visited by the Official Visitors. The *Children and Young People Act 2008* sets out the Official Visitor role as well as oversight reporting mechanisms including reports to the Minister or the Chief Executive on matters not compliant with the Act or standards of service.