



**Government Response
to the Report of the
Select Committee on Estimates 2015-2016
on the
*Inquiry into Appropriation Bill 2015-2016 and
the Appropriation (Office of the Legislative
Assembly) Bill 2015-2016***

**Andrew Barr MLA
Treasurer
August 2015**

INTRODUCTION

The 2015-16 Budget is for Canberra – for our suburbs, our people, our businesses and our economy. The 2015-16 Budget continues the tradition of finding a balance between supporting our economy, maintaining sound public finances, and investing in our future.

The ACT Government builds on its past investments in this budget, with a focus on health, education, economic growth, diversification, suburban renewal, better transport, liveability and social inclusion. The 2015-16 Budget maintains the Territory's world-class facilities and services, upholding our title of the most liveable city in the world.

The 2015-16 Budget stands up for Canberra against the Commonwealth Government's savage cuts. This budget continues to safeguard jobs for Canberra, to support our local businesses and grow our economy, while outlining a clear plan to return to surplus.

The Select Committee on Estimates (the Committee) presented its Report on the inquiry into the *Appropriation Bill 2015-2016 and the Appropriation (Office of the Legislative Assembly) Bill 2015-2016* on 4 August 2015.

The Government respects and values the crucial role played by the Committee in scrutinising the proposed expenditures in the Budget and has endeavoured to respond fully to the questions asked of it during the Estimates process.

The Government notes that the Committee sought external advice on the Territory's Budget from the Centre for International Economics (CIE). This independent Review of the ACT's 2015-16 Budget provides some important observations.

The Review stated that, overall, forecasts contained in the Budget appear reasonable, but note that there are uncertainties around the return to surplus. Specifically, these factors are weak local business confidence, the impact of reduced Commonwealth Government spending in the ACT, and generally weak economic conditions and growth.

In terms of key economic variables, CIE determined that the Gross State Product, State Final Demand and Employment Growth forecasts seem reasonable given the underlying macroeconomic assumptions.

The Review considered the revenue projections contained in the 2015-16 Budget to be generally efficient, although it noted that lower than anticipated revenue from the Commonwealth is primarily the result of downward revisions of GST payments to the ACT. CIE also considered that the size of the Commonwealth funding decline had a substantial impact on ACT revenues.

Additionally, the CIE Review noted that the continued implementation of the ACT taxation reform package is delivering increased efficiency and stability of the tax system by shifting the source of tax revenue from inefficient duties towards more broad based general rates.

The Review noted that the 2015-16 Budget savings measures are modest compared to previous budgets, and arise mainly from procurement and administrative efficiencies across the ACT Public Service.

The Review considers the substantial capital works program to be stimulatory to the ACT economy, and reinforced that the program should continue to generate employment aligned to sectors where there is excess capacity.

The Government welcomes the findings of the CIE Review and considers that its broadly positive tone is reflective of the Government's efforts to support continued growth in the economy and infrastructure investment through responsible financial management.

The Government remains committed to open, transparent and accountable practices. The Government will continue to endeavour to provide additional information to support policy decisions and processes where that information is available.

The Government thanks the Committee for its Report. The Committee has provided a report with 148 recommendations on a wide range of issues across all Government portfolios.

In its response, the Government has:

- agreed to 61 recommendations;
- agreed in principle to 14 recommendations;
- agreed in part to four recommendations;
- noted 60 recommendations; and
- not agreed to nine recommendations.

The Government has provided a response to each of the recommendations of the Committee, and these are set out below.

RESPONSE TO RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATION 1

The Committee recommends that all Questions Taken on Notice, not answered within the inquiry period be provided to the Clerk within 30 days from the tabling of this report.

Government Response

Agreed in principle.

The Government endeavours to meet the 30 day timeframe to respond to Questions on Notice, in accordance with section 118A of the ACT Legislative Assembly standing orders, for the majority of the questions taken on notice. From time to time, however, circumstances arise which make this deadline unachievable.

RECOMMENDATION 2

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government consider, as part of its ongoing concessions review, the ability for self-funded retirees to access certain concessions.

Government Response

Noted.

Ongoing discussions with the community will seek to identify what is the fairest allocation of limited resources to target concessions to those most in need.

RECOMMENDATION 3

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government should consult further with older Canberrans to determine ideal housing types and consider removing barriers within current planning laws that impede construction in established suburbs.

Government Response

Agreed.

The Government is committed to meeting the needs of its ageing population. In recent community engagement on the development of the Minister's Statement of Planning Intent, the community and key stakeholders highlighted their desire for neighbourhoods throughout the city to be more inclusive, by providing diversity in housing and community facilities that meet the needs of all socio-economic groups and for ageing in place. There was a strong desire for suburbs to focus on medium density housing options, such as terraces, townhouses and secondary dwellings.

The Territory Plan, which creates the conditions under which development in the Territory may occur, is regularly reviewed and updated to ensure the changing social, economic and environmental needs of the Territory are accommodated.

RECOMMENDATION 4

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government engage with National Seniors Association ACT regarding representation on the Ministerial Council on the Ageing.

Government Response

Agreed.

The current term for the Ministerial Council on the Ageing will conclude on 31 December 2015. National Seniors will be invited to apply for the next term. The Office for Ageing regularly provides opportunities for National Seniors to engage in ageing policy discussions - for example the Older Persons Assembly - and in July 2015 the Office facilitated a budget overview to 100 National Seniors members.

RECOMMENDATION 5

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government make improvements to the funding of arts programs in the ACT and the infrastructure for obtaining private funding support, noting the positive benefits that the arts bring to various sectors of the community.

Government Response

Noted.

Funding support to arts programs is reflected in the 2015 ACT Arts Policy.

RECOMMENDATION 6

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government and the ACT arts community develop a working group to address the issues between these sectors and help develop a more cohesive learning environment.

Government Response

Noted.

RECOMMENDATION 7

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government restore the funding for weeds management to previous levels.

Government Response

Noted.

Funding for weed control in the 2015-16 Budget is \$1.5 million, including a base portion and a project portion. The base portion of \$1.2 million is an increase of 60 per cent from the 2014-15 level of \$0.7 million and a 127 per cent increase from 2010-11 levels of \$0.5 million. This funding will be used to address priority areas. The project funding is \$0.3 million in 2015-16 and will be directed towards river corridor weeds and the Lower Cotter Catchment area. Additional funding for specific weed control projects will be considered in future budgets.

RECOMMENDATION 8

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government ensure a comprehensive whole-of-government approach, as well as community consultation, to determine the best investment and environmental option for waste to energy initiatives.

Government Response

Agreed.

The feasibility study outlined in the Budget will investigate and advise Government on options to best achieve a sustainable and cost-effective waste management system in the ACT. The project is taking a technology-neutral approach and will involve consultation with key stakeholders.

RECOMMENDATION 9

The Committee recommends the ACT Government consider establishing a single nature conservation agency, in line with previous announcements and as recommended by the Select Committee on Estimates 2014-2015.

Government Response

Noted.

All administrative arrangements are the responsibility of the Chief Minister. The *Nature Conservation Act 2014* strengthens the framework in which the Government manages conservation in the Territory.

RECOMMENDATION 10

The Committee recommends the ACT Government complete the review of the Emergency Financial and Material Aid program, including community service delivery agencies in the formation of the review, and table the review by the last sitting day in October 2015.

Government Response

Agreed in part.

In December 2014, the Community Services Directorate (CSD) provided an extra \$150,000 in Emergency Material and Financial Aid (EMFA) funding to support the Salvation Army, St Vincent de Paul and Uniting Care Kippax to carry out their work.

The review of EMFA services and funding for clients was undertaken in December 2014 and provided to EMFA funded organisations. In June 2015, CSD extended its Service Funding Agreements with EMFA service providers until 30 June 2017.

The outcomes from the review will be published on the CSD website.

RECOMMENDATION 11

The Committee recommends the ACT Government report to the Legislative Assembly by the last sitting day of 2015 on how it will better include the youth sector in its consultations, to ensure more collaborative processes and the development of greater trust.

Government Response

Agreed.

The ACT Government will table the ACT Children and Young People's Commitment (the Commitment) later this year. The Commitment embeds principles for ensuring the voice of young people is heard and the key issues of importance to young people are promoted in government policy and program development. The Commitment has been developed through an extensive consultation process with children, young people, community agencies and the ACT Government.

RECOMMENDATION 12

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government implement a whole-of-government strategy to address issues affecting Canberra's youth such as employment and mental health support, with a focus on early intervention and prevention.

Government Response

Noted.

The draft ACT Children and Young People's Commitment 2015-2025 sets the vision for a whole-of-government and whole-of-community approach to promote the rights of children and young people. The intent is that all children and young people across the ACT will have the opportunity to reach their potential, make a contribution, and share the benefits of our community.

The Commitment has been developed in consultation with children, young people, community agencies and the ACT Government, and has been informed by an analysis of the evidence and designed using a consultative community engagement process.

The issues of employment and mental health support are two of the key priority areas listed under the Commitment, with a focus on early intervention and prevention.

The Commitment is currently before Government for consideration.

RECOMMENDATION 13

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government develop a program of improving and educating young students on the value of positive mental health, as is currently the case with physical health and wellbeing.

Government Response

Noted.

The ACT Education and Training Directorate currently delivers, and will continue to deliver, programs and a curriculum to improve and educate young students on the value of positive mental health through:

- relevant content of the *Australian Curriculum*;
- whole of school approaches to building mental well-being, including programs such as MindMatters (secondary schools) and KidsMatter (primary schools) which are provided in partnership with ACT Health; and
- partnering with a range of external agencies such as Beyond Blue and headspace to deliver mental health programs.

RECOMMENDATION 14

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government examine the social procurement model and its positive outcomes for youth employment, and subsequently increase social procurement in ACT Government contracts.

Government Response

Agreed.

The Government has already implemented initiatives to support social procurement, most notably the establishment of a Social Enterprise Panel (the Panel) from which directorates can directly engage to deliver services. The Government also provides guidance detailing how social outcomes, including removing barriers to employment for target groups, can be incorporated into the procurement process.

The Social Enterprise Panel is delivering very positive outcomes and the Procurement and Capital Works area is promoting the Panel across government, working to expand the Panel and the range of services delivered through Social Enterprises. The Government continues to engage with stakeholders and consider ways that its social procurement policy could be improved.

RECOMMENDATION 15

The Committee recommends the ACT Government develop a long-term strategy for the delivery of animal welfare services in the ACT, including preventive investment and educational approaches. The strategy should be tabled in the Legislative Assembly by the last sitting day of March 2016.

Government Response

Noted.

Given recent changes at the RSPCA, preparatory work on developing a long-term strategy for animal welfare services in the ACT is underway. The outcome of this work will be considered in due course.

RECOMMENDATION 16

The Committee recommends the ACT Government legislate for improved animal welfare, including:

- **a civil bond process for violations of the Animal Welfare Act;**
- **changes to the Animal Welfare Act allow for recovery of costs to be awarded as part of a guilty verdict, at least for medical costs incurred;**
- **limiting the maximum number of animals allowed per residence (including public housing);**
- **amendments to seizure powers;**
- **additional enforcement powers;**
- **minor amendments to current offences and new offences under the Animal Welfare Act;**
- **clarification in relation to ancillary offences; and**
- **penalty reviews.**

These matters should be progressed by the last sitting day in June 2016.

Government Response

Noted.

As a means of addressing these issues, potential changes to legislation are being identified through discussions with stakeholders.

RECOMMENDATION 17

The Committee supports the ACT Government's provision of a primary prevention program in schools to reinforce respectful relationships and counter domestic violence.

Government Response

Noted.

The 2015-16 Budget provides \$0.615 million over two years for the provision of countering domestic violence programs in ACT public schools.

RECOMMENDATION 18

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government work with the community sector to determine the level of unmet need with particular regard to housing and homelessness and therapeutic services; in conjunction with work being undertaken by the Domestic Violence Preventative Council, and update the Legislative Assembly by the last sitting day in June 2016.

Government Response

Agreed in part.

The Community Services Directorate is undertaking a gap analysis using the client journey of domestic violence services and justice issues. Unmet need for housing and homelessness services is collected through the waiting list for public housing and data collection through the Central Intake Service for Homelessness Services, First Point.

RECOMMENDATION 19

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government explore the option of extending the Land Rent Scheme to Tier 2 and Tier 3 housing providers.

Government Response

Noted.

Registered housing providers, regardless of tier of registration, are able to utilise the Land Rent Scheme (the Scheme) subject to a determination by the Commissioner for Revenue. The Scheme is available on previously unleased territory land for standalone properties.

RECOMMENDATION 20

The Committee recommends that before the Budget is passed, the ACT Government detail to the Legislative Assembly what funding is included in the Budget to address the priorities as outlined in the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Agreement 2015-18.

Government Response

Noted.

The Government considers the presentation of information in the budget papers each year.

The *ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Agreement 2015-2018* was signed on 23 April 2015. A Whole of Government Implementation Reference Group has been established to develop an implementation plan to deliver the priorities of this Agreement.

In addition, the ACT Government, in consultation with the Elected Body, has developed a fact sheet on the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander programs and initiatives funded through the 2015-16 Budget. This fact sheet will be publicly available on the Office of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs website during the next month.

Information on total spending on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander programs is also published by the Productivity Commission biennial, based on information provided by the ACT Government.

RECOMMENDATION 21

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government work with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body and other relevant stakeholders to facilitate a process to establish an independent ACT Indigenous Chamber of Business, with a particular emphasis on small and medium business, and report to the Legislative Assembly on its progress on the last sitting day of 2015.

Government Response

Noted.

The ACT Government recognises the crucial role that small businesses play in building the economic development and independence of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Initiatives in this area will be considered in line with the *ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Agreement 2015-2018*.

RECOMMENDATION 22

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government review the resources required to enable the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body to effectively carry out its functions as legislated for in *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body Act 2008*.

Government Response

Agreed.

An independent reviewer has been engaged to undertake a review of the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body Act 2008*. The terms of reference include a review of the effectiveness of administrative and governance arrangements in supporting the objectives and functions of the Elected Body.

RECOMMENDATION 23

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government consider a regional Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children's services agency in conjunction with the NSW Government.

Government Response

Noted.

The ACT Government will work with providers in Canberra to support the development of an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children's services agency. The focus will be on preventing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children coming into statutory care, and the provision of culturally appropriate out of home care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.

RECOMMENDATION 24

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government review funding to the ACT Auditor-General to allow for an increase in the number of performance audits over time.

Government Response

Noted.

In the 2012-13 Budget, the Government provided the Auditor-General's Office with additional funding of \$0.250 million per annum over four years (extending to 2015-16) to enable the performance audit program to be expanded from an average of six performance audits per year to seven. The Government considers that this additional capacity has provided the Auditor-General with additional flexibility to prioritise areas of need and thereby maximise the benefits that Office provides.

Any future requests for funding will be considered by the Government against other competing priorities in the budget context.

RECOMMENDATION 25

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government and the Speaker hold further discussions on how to implement the Territory's Protective Security Policy Framework with particular regard to the Assembly and report to the Legislative Assembly by the last sitting day in 2015.

Government Response

Agreed.

Implementation of the Protective Security Policy Framework across the ACT Government continues, including consultation with the Office of the Legislative Assembly. Further actions on the implications of the framework for of the Assembly will also occur once the expansion works of the Assembly are completed.

RECOMMENDATION 26

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government and the Speaker hold further discussions on how to best progress enhanced library services for the Assembly and report to the Legislative Assembly by the last sitting day in 2015.

Government Response

Agreed.

RECOMMENDATION 27

The Committee recommends that in the event the Treasurer presents in the Legislative Assembly a bill for an Appropriation Act for the appropriation for the Office of the Legislative Assembly relating to a financial year, and the appropriation is less than the “recommended appropriation” given to the Treasurer by the Speaker in accordance with section 20 of the *Financial Management Act 1996*, the Treasurer comply with both the intent and the spirit of section 20AA(2) of that Act.

Government Response

Agreed.

While the Government considers that it met both the intent and spirit of section 20AA(2) of the *Financial Management Act 1996*, it agrees to provide further explanations of its decisions in relation to the Office of the Legislative Assembly budget requests in future budgets.

RECOMMENDATION 28

The Committee recommends that in the event the Treasurer presents in the Legislative Assembly a bill for an Appropriation Act for the appropriation for an Officer of the Legislative Assembly relating to a financial year, and the appropriation is less than the “recommended appropriation” given to the Treasurer by the Speaker in accordance with section 20AB of the *Financial Management Act 1996*, then the Treasurer comply with both the intent and the spirit of section 20AC(2) of that Act.

Government Response

Agreed.

While the Government considers that it met both the intent and spirit of section 20AC(2) of the *Financial Management Act 1996*, it agrees to provide further explanations of its decisions in relation to budget requests from Officers of the Legislative Assembly in future budgets.

RECOMMENDATION 29

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government work with the Speaker to address concerns regarding the funding and administrative arrangements required to support the functions established under the *Officers of the Assembly Legislation Amendment Bill 2013*, including amendments to the *Auditor-General Act 1996*, and report to the Legislative Assembly on progress by the last sitting day in 2015.

Government Response

Agreed.

The Government recently obtained legal advice which clarifies these arrangements. In short, under the *Financial Management Act 1996*, the Speaker is able to commit public money by entering into a contract so long as there is agreement regarding which agency will make the payment from its' appropriation. The Office of the Legislative Assembly is legally able to provide the Speaker with assistance in the functions established under the *Officers of the Assembly Legislation Amendment Bill 2013*.

RECOMMENDATION 30

The Committee recommends that the Speaker update the Legislative Assembly at least once each quarter until the end of the 8th Assembly on the progress of the construction works required to accommodate an enlarged 9th Assembly.

Government Response

Noted.

The Government and the Speaker will discuss future accommodation options for the Assembly and report back to the Assembly on progress in a timely manner.

RECOMMENDATION 31

The Committee recommends that the Speaker investigate future accommodation options for the Assembly.

Government Response

Noted.

The current plans to renovate the Assembly building will provide suitable accommodation for the foreseeable future. While the Government and the Speaker will need to investigate future accommodation options to accommodate the increasing size of the Assembly, a decision on any new arrangements is not required until outside the current forward estimates period.

RECOMMENDATION 32

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government determine and report on how to measure the effectiveness of the 'One Government' reforms by the last sitting day of 2015 and report regularly thereafter.

Government Response

Agreed in principle.

The Government will regularly report to the Assembly through the Annual Reports process.

RECOMMENDATION 33

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government advise the Legislative Assembly before the ACT Budget 2015-16 is passed, if known, how much funding for responses to family and domestic violence will go to the national campaign and how much to direct service delivery.

Government Response

Agreed in principle.

The ACT Government has committed to contributing to the national campaign. However, work to devise the format of the national campaign is still at the early stages and the ACT's share has yet to be settled. Likewise, the proportion of funding to be directed to service delivery is yet to be determined. The ACT provided an additional \$250,000 for crisis services in the 2015-16 Budget.

RECOMMENDATION 34

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government should consider developing and launching an updated Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment policy for the ACT public service.

Government Response

Agreed.

The Employment Strategy for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples is being refreshed and expanded to include new whole of government initiatives that will provide directorates with increased support to reach their annual employment targets and meet the whole of government target by 2018-19.

RECOMMENDATION 35

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government provide further details on how the establishment and implementation of the iConnect platform is progressing.

Government Response

Agreed.

iConnect has three key platform components:

1. Customer Transaction Portal – that will, over time, provide access to all ACT Government transactional services and provide:
 - Customisation - enables customers to choose which ACT Government transactions they want displayed on their view of the portal home page;
 - Personalisation – the Government will be able to tailor messaging to customer segments - for example, car owners can receive notices that vehicle registration is due, or parents will get notification of school specific information; and
 - Digital mailbox that offers an alternative to regular post.

2. Customer Identity and Access Management – users authenticated online will be able to undertake transactions that currently need to be done face to face.
3. Enterprise Integration – this platform will provide integration between government business line systems to deliver end to end services.

The iConnect program is currently undertaking procurement activities for the digital capabilities that will enable the three components outlined above.

The iConnect program is working closely with Access Canberra and key ICT projects across government to identify transactions that will go online once the technology is in place. The first transactions are forecast to go live in the fourth quarter of 2015-16.

RECOMMENDATION 36

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government provide further details on how the rollout of public Wi-Fi across Canberra is progressing.

Government Response

Agreed.

As at July 2015, there were 125 Wireless Access Points (external Wi-Fi transmitters) installed in central Canberra, including City East, City West, Braddon and New Acton. In addition, CBRfree is also available at over 40 Wi-Fi Hotspots in businesses across Canberra, including in locations at Weston Creek, Woden Town Centre, Tuggeranong Town Centre, Kingston Foreshore, Fyshwick and Mitchell. There have also been 25 indoor Wireless Access Points installed at EPIC for events at this venue.

The town centres scheduled to receive CBRfree Wi-Fi but are currently not operating are: Belconnen, Dickson, Kingston, Manuka, Tuggeranong, Gungahlin, Weston, Woden and Bruce. Belconnen and Dickson will be completed by the end of October 2015, and Manuka will be completed in time for the Smart Parking trial scheduled for early 2016. All remaining town centres are on track to be completed by the end of the 2015-16 financial year.

RECOMMENDATION 37

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government provide further details on the use of Wi-Fi for the trial of smart parking in the ACT.

Government Response

Agreed.

The manner in which the Wi-Fi network will be used in the smart parking trial is the subject of the current Request for Proposal (RFP) process (2015.25869.110). Section '7.8 Integration with CBRfree Wi-Fi network' of the RFP's Statement of Requirements states that the Smart Parking solution should use the CBRfree Wi-Fi network for data transmission.

RECOMMENDATION 38

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government's budget update on progressive tax reform include detail on whether or not the reforms are revenue neutral.

Government Response

Noted.

Estimates of revenue from each tax line subject to tax reform are published in each ACT Budget. The Government will review the presentation of tax revenue information in future budgets with the view to providing more information of the impact of tax reform.

RECOMMENDATION 39

The Committee recommends that in the 2016-17 Budget the ACT Government report on the first five-year phase of tax reform and outline its plan for the next five-year phase of tax reform, in particular its commitment to the principle of revenue neutrality and its long term goal of abolishing stamp duty over two decades.

Government Response

Noted.

The Government will announce the next five year path of tax reform in the 2016-17 Budget.

RECOMMENDATION 40

The Committee recommends that the results of these reviews, or at least those that are complete should be tabled in the Legislative Assembly, as they were funded under previous years' budgets.

Government Response

Noted.

The review of the *Financial Management Act 1996* is ongoing. The Government presented the *Financial Management Amendment Bill 2015* to the Assembly in June 2015 proposing amendments to improve and modernise the Act.

The outcomes of the Emergency Services Agency (which included the Commonwealth Fire Payment), Parks and City Services, and Concessions Program reviews were presented in the 2014-15 and 2015-16 Budgets. The reviews of Corrective Services, and Parking Infrastructure and Service Delivery Models were not finalised at the time of the Budget. These reviews will be used to inform future decisions of Government.

RECOMMENDATION 41

The Committee recommends the ACT Government consider ways to support and develop the 'sharing economy' in the ACT, including how to improve the use of underutilised assets in the household, community, business and government sector.

Government Response

Agreed.

The Government supports innovation and improved utilisation of assets within the context of security, insurance and fiscal capacity constraints.

RECOMMENDATION 42

The Committee commends the ACT Government for the opening of Winyu House in Gungahlin, acknowledging this is the largest employment base in the Gungahlin Town Centre and will have a positive impact on the local area, especially Town Centre businesses.

Government Response

Agreed.

Winyu House and the Access Canberra Service Centre will help stimulate business and ensure the Gungahlin community is provided with appropriate services as the region continues to grow. The Centre operates under a new service delivery model to make doing business with government easier. The building accommodates over 600 staff and provides 200 services previously provided at separate locations. The YWCA Winyu Early Childhood Service is also on site and provides childcare for staff at Winyu House as well as families who live or work in Gungahlin.

RECOMMENDATION 43

The Committee recommends the ACT Government consider extending the five per cent weighting for local content to all tenders invited by the ACT Government.

Government Response

Noted.

The Government agrees with the need to support local industry and enhance opportunities for local content in tender responses, and is seeking to improve the method by which this is achieved.

The Government will appoint a Local Industry Advocate (the Advocate) shortly who, among other things, will be tasked with developing and implementing a new Local Industry Participation Policy (LIPP). The intent of the LIPP is to enable an assessment of the benefits of the tender to the local economy by considering issues such as employment, supply chain, training and apprenticeships, and innovation. The Advocate will consult with relevant stakeholders in developing the LIPP.

RECOMMENDATION 44

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government include appropriate standard termination/withdrawal clauses in all contracts for the provision of Capital Metro.

Government Response

Noted.

The ACT Government intends to include appropriate standard termination provisions in the Capital Metro Project Agreement.

RECOMMENDATION 45

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government provide the Legislative Assembly with an update by the last sitting day in October 2015, on progress finding suitable alternative sites for the Manuka Occasional Child Care Association (MOCCA) relocation.

Government Response

Agreed in principle.

The ACT Government will continue to update the Assembly as this matter progresses.

RECOMMENDATION 46

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government update its Tourism 2020 strategy to consider the ten years to 2030 and take into account:

- i) accommodation;**
- ii) attractions; and**
- iii) events.**

Government Response

Agreed.

The ACT's Tourism 2020 strategy is part of the national tourism 2020 framework and will be reviewed and updated in that context.

RECOMMENDATION 47

The Committee recommends the ACT Government fund stage two of the Belconnen Arts Centre.

Government Response

Noted.

The design and development approval for stage two of the Belconnen Arts Centre are complete and will be the subject of future budget consideration.

RECOMMENDATION 48

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government consider the provision of arts facilities in the Woden/Weston Creek area and Gungahlin.

Government Response

Agreed.

The Government will work with community organisations in considering the provision of arts facilities across the Territory.

RECOMMENDATION 49

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government consider assisting the arts sector by determining a path to improve the wages paid to the arts community.

Government Response

Noted.

RECOMMENDATION 50

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government, in conjunction with relevant stakeholders, promulgate a vision for Canberra's CBD.

Government Response

Agreed in principle.

The *City Plan* stipulated a vision for the CBD. The Government, through the Coordinator General, Urban Renewal will deliver an action plan to progress this vision and to assist in the urban renewal of the CBD.

RECOMMENDATION 51

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government develop a vision for Canberra as a whole, with a:

- **long-term plan of 50 years;**
- **medium term plan of 15 years; and**
- **short term plan of 5 years.**

Government Response

Noted.

The Government continues to plan for the long-term growth of Canberra. The importance of planning for sustainable economic and environmental development underpins all decision making and is reflected annually in each budget. Planning for future infrastructure, service needs and sustainable outcomes for an estimated population of 600,000 by 2050 is demonstrated through: record infrastructure funding to support urban renewal; the tax reform commenced, the CBR business development strategy complimented by the Government's regulatory reform agenda; investment in hospitals, schools and public transport; and commitment to achieving significant renewable energy targets.

RECOMMENDATION 52

The Committee recommends that the Minister for Urban Renewal and Minister for Housing work as closely as possible on the redevelopment of public housing to ensure that residents are provided with consistent and timely information.

Government Response

Agreed.

Close collaboration within government is already occurring on the redevelopment of public housing.

RECOMMENDATION 53

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government inform the Legislative Assembly of the final cost of delivery of West Basin Stomping Ground on the first sitting day after it is known.

Government Response

Noted.

RECOMMENDATION 54

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government provide the Legislative Assembly, before the ACT Budget 2015-16 is passed, with an update on the financial status of the loose-fill asbestos buy-back scheme.

Government Response

Noted.

Updates on the financial status of the Scheme will be provided as part of normal estimates update processes. The Taskforce already provides quarterly reports on the progress of the Scheme, with the next one due to be tabled in the August sittings.

RECOMMENDATION 55

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government consider how undetected loose-fill asbestos properties will be detected and brought to its attention.

Government Response

Noted.

This issue was raised by the Asbestos Response Taskforce in its report of August 2014. The Government is considering regulatory options for addressing this issue.

Owners of houses built before 1980 should consider having an asbestos assessment undertaken before commencing any building work in or on their houses.

RECOMMENDATION 56

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government provide further information to the Legislative Assembly on the status of reported asbestos contamination at the dump site under Nudurr Drive Extension between Crace and Palmerston within 90 days of this report being tabled in the Assembly.

Government Response

Agreed.

RECOMMENDATION 57

The Committee recommends the ACT Government closely monitor the first 12 months of Access Canberra and report to the ACT Legislative Assembly in March 2016 on its first 12 months of operation, including community awareness, engagement and satisfaction levels, organisational change and staff issues, and collaboration across ACT Government.

Government Response

Agreed in principle.

Access Canberra is supportive of closely monitoring community awareness, engagement and satisfaction levels, and work has commenced on establishing baseline data to assist with this monitoring. The Government will report to the Assembly through the Annual Reports process.

RECOMMENDATION 58

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government establish performance indicators for the number of Working with Vulnerable People checks to be carried out each year.

Government Response

Agreed.

Indicators regarding annual checks of Working With Vulnerable People registrations are currently captured as part of an existing Access Canberra performance indicator "Number of inspections conducted by Access Canberra".

RECOMMENDATION 59

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government provide details to the Assembly of any changes to the Icon Water dividend policy that may result from the working group's advice, within five sitting days of its receipt.

Government Response

Noted.

The Government is continuing to consider the current dividend policy for Icon Water. A joint working group between the Government and Icon Water has been established to inform deliberations. Any changes to the Icon Water dividend policy that may arise from this process will be publicly announced in due course.

RECOMMENDATION 60

The Committee recommends that the Independent Competition and Regulatory Commission, in its next review of water pricing in the ACT, consider a pricing point for community usage to support community owned facilities such as sporting facilities.

Government Response

Noted.

Under the terms of the Industry Panel's substituted price direction for regulated water and sewerage services, the regulator is required to undertake a review of the tariff structures for the regulated water and sewerage services provided by Icon Water before the next regulatory period commences from 1 July 2018.

The tariff review process, which will include a call for submissions from the ACT community, represents the appropriate mechanism for considering issues such as whether a specific water tariff for community-owned facilities should be introduced.

RECOMMENDATION 61

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government consider sensible and well-timed divestment of its holdings in fossil fuels.

Government Response

Agreed.

The Government has an ongoing commitment to increase renewable energy sources, reduce the reliance on fossil fuels and reduce carbon emissions over time. In line with this, direct investment exposures will also be reduced over time. The Government will continue to periodically consider the responsible investment policy framework as part of examining all investment exposures. The framework will be adjusted as appropriate, with changes to exposures made progressively and prudently over time. This will be an ongoing program.

RECOMMENDATION 62

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government reconsider the decision to use *Eucalyptus mannifera* as the replacement tree on Northbourne Avenue.

Government Response

Not agreed.

Detailed studies were carried out, by both Territory and independent arborists, into suitable tree species to be grown on Northbourne Avenue as a replacement upon the removal of the existing trees. The National Capital Authority advised of a preference for native trees to be utilised; this was further confirmed by the community feedback received through the consultation exercises carried out by the Capital Metro Agency.

Soil samples were taken and analysed to ensure that the most appropriate species of native tree was recommended to shortlisted bidders.

The above activities resulted in the recommendation of the *Eucalyptus mannifera* to be grown on Northbourne Avenue as a replacement for the existing trees.

RECOMMENDATION 63

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government undertake a staged approach to tree replacement on Northbourne Avenue.

Government Response

Noted.

The ACT Government, through the auspices of the Capital Metro Agency (CMA) Request for Proposals process, has asked that the two shortlisted bidders identify costs for an optional approach to undertake a staged removal and replacement of the trees on Northbourne Avenue.

As part of the evaluation of the two proposals, the CMA will assess both the cost and program impact of a staged approach to tree removal and replacement.

RECOMMENDATION 64

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government release the second review of the full Capital Metro Business Case before the last sitting day in 2015.

Government Response

Not agreed.

The ACT Government shall, at its own discretion, determine if, and when, the aforementioned review is to be publicly released.

RECOMMENDATION 65

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government provide reports on the Office for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs, Community Recovery, Office for Ageing, youth engagement, Office for Women and Office of Multicultural Affairs, including the exact costings of the programs and projects run by each sub-unit, by the last sitting week in October 2015.

Government Response

Agreed.

A report will be provided to the Committee that provides greater detail for Output Class 3 *Community Participation* by the last sitting week of October 2015. The report will provide further detail on the costings and programs included in this Output.

RECOMMENDATION 66

The Committee recommends that in future budget papers the ACT Government amend the Community Services Directorate Output Class 3 so that there be seven sub-Outputs:

3.1 Corporate

3.2 Women

3.3 Multicultural Affairs

3.4 Ageing

3.5 Community Recovery

3.6 Youth Engagement

3.7 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs

and determine appropriate accountability indicators for each of the seven Outputs.

Government Response

Noted.

The Government will review the accountability indicators to see if changes would provide enhanced performance information with a particular focus on outcomes and outputs that reflect the needs of specific sub-population groups. While the Budget Statements provide a summary of the resourcing for the different outputs in the Community Services Directorate, the Annual Report provides an opportunity to provide greater detail on the content and delivery of individual programs such as those covered by the Community Participation Output.

RECOMMENDATION 67

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government include in its National Disability Insurance Scheme quarterly reporting to the Legislative Assembly information on the level of staffing in Disability ACT and Therapy ACT during the transition.

Government Response

Agreed.

The Minister for Disability will provide information in regular reports to the ACT Legislative Assembly on the level of staffing in Disability ACT and Therapy ACT during the transition from government service delivery to the non-government sector.

RECOMMENDATION 68

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government continue to work with Tier 2 community service organisations on the NDIS Information, Linkages and Capacity Building to ensure a smooth transition of funding with appropriate notification periods for those organisations.

Government Response

Agreed.

The ACT Government will continue to work with non-government organisations and the National Disability Insurance Agency in implementing the Information, Linkages and Capacity Building functions of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (the NDIS) in the ACT.

The ACT Government is committed to local organisations receiving appropriate notification to address any transitional issues related to the NDIS.

RECOMMENDATION 69

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government determine the level of unmet need for early intervention services and report to the Legislative Assembly by the last sitting day in 2015 on the level of unmet need and how they intend to address that need.

Government Response

Agreed in principle.

The ACT Government supports determining the level of unmet need in early intervention services after an analysis of the 2015 Australian Early Developmental Census (AEDC) has been conducted.

The ACT Government will conduct the analysis of the 2015 Australian Early Developmental Census (AEDC) by geographic location and map against community based early intervention services. However, as the community profiles of AEDC will not be available until March 2016, it is not feasible to report to the Assembly by the last sitting day in 2015. Families waiting to access a program or service can access other services and supports through their local Child and Family Centre.

RECOMMENDATION 70

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government provide regular updates to the Legislative Assembly on the implementation of the Step Up for Our Kids strategy especially with relation to improving capacity and strengthening of high risk families.

Government Response

Agreed.

The Minister for Children and Young People will continue to provide regular updates to the Legislative Assembly on the implementation of *A Step Up for Our Kids*, particularly as major milestones are reached. Updates will include information on the development of service provision under the 'Strengthening High Risk Families' domain.

RECOMMENDATION 71

The Committee recommends the ACT Government continue working to identify and address needs in supporting aged carers.

Government Response

Agreed.

The ACT Government will continue to identify and address needs in supporting aged carers in supporting people with disability to phase into the National Disability Insurance Scheme and Out of Home Care Program.

The needs of carers, including those particular to ageing carers, such as kinship carers, are central to *A Step Up For Our Kids*. Mechanisms will be established under the Strategy to support the health and well-being of carers - in particular, older kinship carers.

RECOMMENDATION 72

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government investigate the need for grandparent playgroups, aimed at grandparents providing care for their own grandchildren, and report back to the Legislative Assembly by the last sitting day of March 2016.

Government Response

Agreed.

The Government will consult with the ACT Playgroup Association to clarify demand and encourage the participation of grandparents. Additionally, through training and supports provided through *A Step Up for Our Kids*, the Government will work towards linking grandparent kinship carers with playgroups and supports through their local Child and Family Centre.

RECOMMENDATION 73

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government work with the Commonwealth Government to ensure appropriate funding to meet the demand for aged care accommodation in Canberra.

Government Response

Noted.

Aged care accommodation is a matter within the Commonwealth's area of responsibility; however, the ACT Government will continue to work with the Commonwealth as appropriate in the ACT community's interests.

RECOMMENDATION 74

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government assess the viability of green and garden waste collection throughout the Territory and report back to the Legislative Assembly by the first sitting day in March 2016.

Government Response

Noted.

The Territory and Municipal Services Directorate has undertaken a preliminary assessment which indicates that green waste collection would be cost prohibitive. The ACT has a very high level (currently 90 per cent) of green waste recovery and recycling through existing channels.

RECOMMENDATION 75

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government investigate expanding bulky waste collection as part of the ACT concessions program for current and future social housing properties.

Government Response

Noted.

The future of the bulky waste service will be considered in the 2016-17 Budget process while the implications of including social housing into the ACT concessions program will be investigated by the Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate.

RECOMMENDATION 76

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government develop initiatives that seek to reduce financial abuse of elderly Canberrans.

Government Response

Agreed.

CARE INC and the ACT Public Trustee are members of the ACT Elder Abuse Prevention that Working Group. The Group is currently developing a communications strategy will address financial abuse as a key issue, and provide government and non-government with tools to engage with seniors.

RECOMMENDATION 77

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government work closely with the community sector on the continuation of the Community Sector Reform Program.

Government Response

Agreed.

Community consultation on Community Sector Reform Program initiatives is conducted through the Joint Community Government Reference Group, a regular meeting of community sector and government representatives. Specific reform initiatives are also developed and implemented in broad consultation with community sector leaders.

RECOMMENDATION 78

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government provide the Legislative Assembly with details of what is planned for the remaining funds already collected under the Community Sector Reform Program levy.

Government Response

Noted.

Details regarding the Community Sector Reform Program levy were provided in response to E15-32 QTON as part of the 2015-2016 Budget estimates process. This comprised a consolidated reconciliation of the use of the funds already collected, as well as planned expenditure for the remaining funds.

RECOMMENDATION 79

The Committee recommends that ACT Government provide the Legislative Assembly with details of what the continued Community Sector Reform Program levy will be spent on over the next two years including an outline of the cost-benefit ratio by the last sitting day in 2015.

Government Response

Noted.

The use of funds raised through the co-contribution levy will be planned in consultation with the community sector and the Joint Community Government Reference Group. Year one funding will progress the development of a Human Services Industry Plan in collaboration with the community sector. An update on this project will be provided to the Legislative Assembly at an appropriate time.

RECOMMENDATION 80

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government update the Legislative Assembly on the outcomes of actions that are being taken to find suitable alternative accommodation for Gugan Gulwan.

Government Response

Agreed.

The ACT Property Group has been working with Gugan Gulwan to gain a clear understanding of the group's requirements. Four property options have been discussed with Gugan Gulwan since 2011; however, none of these sites were considered suitable by Gugan Gulwan.

In reviewing the current available properties, the ACT Property Group has not been able to identify any properties that would meet Gugan Gulwan's requirements that are likely to become available in the next few years. However, the organisation will continue to be considered when suitable properties become available.

RECOMMENDATION 81

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government undertake consistent monitoring of key objectives in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Agreement to ensure milestones are being met and report to the Legislative Assembly on a quarterly basis.

Government Response

Agreed.

The Government is developing the implementation strategy for the *ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Agreement 2015-2018*. Individual projects will have specific reporting requirements. In addition, overall implementation will be reported annually.

RECOMMENDATION 82

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government investigate a policy of random identifiable drug and alcohol testing for staff and detainees at Bimberi Youth Justice Centre.

Government Response

Agreed.

The ACT Government is investigating a policy of random drug and alcohol testing of staff and will consult with all appropriate stakeholders before finalising a position. Random drug testing of young detainees at Bimberi Youth Justice Centre currently occurs.

RECOMMENDATION 83

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government write to those public housing tenants affected by the public housing renewal program clearly detailing timeframes for their relocation.

Government Response

Agreed.

The Public Housing Renewal Taskforce and Housing ACT have published relocation timeframes at www.act.gov.au/housingrenewal. Public housing tenants are being advised regularly of updates through notices and events.

RECOMMENDATION 84

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government guarantee that tenants in a public housing asset included in the Asset Sales agreement with the Federal Government are able to be relocated into suitable replacement public housing prior to the sale of the asset.

Government Response

Agreed.

The proposed action is already included in Schedule A of the National Partnership Agreement with the Commonwealth Government on Asset Recycling.

RECOMMENDATION 85

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government explain to the Legislative Assembly its criteria for selecting the location of new public housing and social housing properties by the last sitting day in October 2015.

Government Response

Agreed in principle.

The Government will regularly update the Assembly on the housing renewal program.

RECOMMENDATION 86

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government identify to the Legislative Assembly the standard costings they use for a public housing property replacement cost by the last sitting day in October 2015.

Government Response

Agreed in principle.

The Government will regularly update the Assembly on the housing renewal program.

RECOMMENDATION 87

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government identify to the Legislative Assembly how many one, two, three or four or other bedroom properties they are planning to build under the public housing renewal program, by the last sitting day in October 2015.

Government Response

Agreed in principle.

The Government will regularly update the Assembly on the housing renewal program.

RECOMMENDATION 88

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government guarantee that the total stock of public housing in the ACT will not fall below the level as at 30 June 2014 of 10,848 dwellings, as per the Asset Sales agreement.

Government Response

Agreed.

The ACT Government has committed to maintaining public housing stock numbers over the life of the program under the Asset Recycling Initiative Agreement with the Commonwealth Government; this is outlined in Schedule A of the National Partnership Agreement on Asset Recycling.

RECOMMENDATION 89

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government outline how directing the proceeds from the sale of public housing assets towards construction of Capital Metro delivers the best return to the ACT economy.

Government Response

Noted.

On 19 February 2015, the Chief Minister outlined to the Assembly that the Capital Metro project had been agreed by the Commonwealth and the Territory as the economic, productivity enhancing infrastructure project that would receive the Asset Recycling Initiative (ARI) payments and proceeds of the sale of agreed assets, including public housing. The ACT Government was the first jurisdiction to sign up to this program.

The sale of selected public housing properties that are sold prior to June 2019 will attract a 15 per cent bonus payment from the Commonwealth Government, only if the sales proceeds are reinvested to the Capital Metro project. The total value of asset sales under the ARI program is about \$400 million, triggering an incentive payment of approximately \$60 million over the next four years.

The Government will ensure that any sales of government assets represent a positive financial outcome for the Territory and that the benefits flow through to the Canberra community in the form of the creation of new jobs and productive growth in the ACT economy.

RECOMMENDATION 90

The Committee recommends the ACT Government provide quarterly updates to the Legislative Assembly on progress in reducing homelessness in the ACT, based on First Point data, including the number of people waiting for housing assistance and the number of housing placements made in the period under consideration.

Government Response

Agreed in part.

This information will be reported in future Annual Reports of the Community Services Directorate.

RECOMMENDATION 91

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government detail to the Legislative Assembly by the last sitting day of 2015 how the Education and Training Directorate will reach its target of two per cent Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander employees.

Government Response

Noted.

The Education and Training Directorate has an employment action plan which aims to reach two per cent Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander employees by 2018.

This Employment Action Plan can be found at

http://www.det.act.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0003/538824/Aboriginal-and-Torres-Strait-Islander-Employment-Action-Plan-2014-2017.pdf

RECOMMENDATION 92

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government provide the Legislative Assembly its assumptions that underpin modelling in any publications or presentations in relation to future school developments and projections by the last sitting day in 2015.

Government Response

Not agreed.

The Education and Training Directorate uses assumptions and projections as working documents which are updated on a frequent basis. The provision of assumptions and projections would be inappropriate as the information is not meaningful without relevant context.

RECOMMENDATION 93

The Committee recommends the ACT Government consult more closely with the affected parties in the Telopea Park/Manuka Occasional Child Care Association (MOCCA) land swap, to investigate in detail what other options might be available.

Government Response

Agreed.

A significant number of alternate options have been considered over the past few years and reconsidered in the past few months. The Government will continue to progress investigations into alternative locations.

The two sites identified for detailed investigations are Block 5 Section 36 Forrest and Block 33 and 39 and part Block 34, Section 78 Griffith. The Government will consult with stakeholders of the site that is decided to be the most suitable for the Telopea Park/Manuka Occasional Child Care Association (MOCCA), including on any public realm changes such as road, parking and traffic arrangements.

The key considerations in continuing investigation of these sites are development parcel size, traffic, access and parking options, and location compared to the existing MOCCA site.

RECOMMENDATION 94

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government conclude its inquiry into the inappropriate withdrawal space in an ACT school expeditiously and provide an update to the Legislative Assembly within three sitting days of receipt.

Government Response

Noted.

The finalisation of the investigation into the inappropriate withdrawal space in an ACT school remains a priority.

The release of any information will be subject to legal advice.

RECOMMENDATION 95

If the report is not available for the August 2015 sittings, the Committee recommends that the ACT Government update the Assembly on progress to date.

Government Response

Noted.

The release of any information will be subject to legal advice.

RECOMMENDATION 96

The Committee recommends that the Canberra Institute of Technology ensure that Auslan Certificate II and III courses are offered to ensure communication access for Deaf people in the ACT by providing a pathway to Interpreting courses.

Government Response

Noted.

Auslan courses can be provided through the Canberra Institute of Technology (CIT) or other Registered Training Organisations.

There are two pathways for people in the ACT to become an Auslan accredited interpreter: they can complete an accreditation testing exam in Canberra through the National Accreditation Authority of Translators and Interpreters (NAATI); or complete an approved series of Auslan interpreting courses.

CIT data consistently shows that introductory courses in Auslan for personal use were in the highest demand and that the CIT Solutions short courses, which provide introductory skills to Auslan language development, are well subscribed.

RECOMMENDATION 97

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government reconsider DV306 with regard to solar access and report on the review to the Legislative Assembly.

Government Response

Noted.

The Government will consider adjustments to the relevant parts of the Territory Plan in response to concerns raised by industry regarding the solar access provisions in the residential codes.

The Government is currently finalising some options for revised solar access provisions for consideration by Government that maintain the important policy objectives, but delivered in a different way, in response to feedback received. This will be 'tested' with industry members prior to being released as a Territory Plan variation that will be open for public consultation.

This approach demonstrates the ongoing "live" nature of planning and the responsiveness of the Government and its agencies to feedback on relevant planning policies.

RECOMMENDATION 98

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government table the Light Rail Master Plan within three sitting days of its completion and receipt.

Government Response

Noted.

The Government is actively considering the Capital Metro project and broader public transport policy.

RECOMMENDATION 99

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government update the Legislative Assembly on progress regarding design along the light rail corridor.

Government Response

Agreed.

RECOMMENDATION 100

The Committee recommends that the ACT Heritage Council ensure that, when advertising Heritage decisions, it is made clear as to what the closing date for comment and/or appeal is.

Government Response

Agreed.

This matter will be considered as part of the ACT Government's 12 month review of the 2014 amendments to the Heritage Act.

RECOMMENDATION 101

The Committee recommends that the ACT Heritage Council review the guidelines for notification periods for heritage listings.

Government Response

Agreed.

This matter will be considered as part of the ACT Government's 12 month review of the 2014 amendments to the Heritage Act.

RECOMMENDATION 102

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government examine the alternative analysis by the Energy Supply Association of Australia of future costs of the ACT's renewable energy policy and confirm if the Government's projections are still valid; and report its findings to the Legislative Assembly by the last sitting day in November 2016.

Government Response

Noted.

The Government has considered the Energy Supply Association of Australia (ESAA) report and determined that it is consistent with the ACT Government's cost projections for its large-scale renewable energy program. The main difference between the reported figures is due to the inclusion by the ESAA of the cost of the Territory's small-scale Feed-in Tariff scheme. The Government constantly reviews and update its models and does not consider there to be any new information in the ESAA report that would warrant revision of its modelling approach.

RECOMMENDATION 103

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government consider providing the results of the independent review of medical training culture at the Canberra Hospital to the Legislative Assembly within three months of receipt.

Government Response

Noted.

On 17 June 2015, Mr Simon Corbell MLA, Minister for Health, announced an independent review into the training culture for doctors in specialist training programs at Canberra Hospital.

The Review of The Clinical Training Culture at Canberra Hospital is being undertaken by an independent consultancy firm, KPMG. That work is now well advanced.

The Minister has indicated that the report will be made available publicly subject to Government consideration.

RECOMMENDATION 104

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government continue to work with all First Ministers and the Commonwealth Government to ensure sustainable health funding for State and Territory governments so they can continue to deliver high quality health services to the community.

Government Response

Agreed.

The Government is actively engaged with other jurisdictions and the Commonwealth with the objective of addressing the Health funding cuts announced in the Commonwealth's 2014-15 Budget.

RECOMMENDATION 105

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government collect data on why non-elective surgeries get cancelled and report back to the Legislative Assembly on how it will address the issues driving cancellations.

Government Response

Agreed.

The ACT Government is reviewing its data collection processes and electronic capabilities on the recording of non-elective surgery postponements.

A response that detailed how the ACT Government is addressing issues driving cancellations was provided to the Legislative Assembly through Question Taken on Notice No. 75.

RECOMMENDATION 106

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government detail to the Legislative Assembly the proposed timetable and funding for the design and construction of the proposed new building 2/3, known as the 'Tower Block'.

Government Response

Noted.

A business case for the Building 2/3 redevelopment will be considered in future budgets.

RECOMMENDATION 107

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government detail to the Legislative Assembly the expenditure of \$40 million previously allocated for the proposed new building 2/3 at Canberra Hospital, known as the 'Tower Block'.

Government Response

Agreed.

ACT Health informed the Select Committee on Estimates 2015-16 that the Capital Works Project referred to in Recommendation 107 was formally ceased in the 2013-14 Budget and replaced by a new Capital Works Project in the 2013-14 Budget titled "Clinical Services and Inpatient Unit Design and Infrastructure Expansion" (\$40.8 million).

RECOMMENDATION 108

The Committee recommends that the Health Directorate produce and use a standard table of definitions of 'bed' including definitions of acute, sub-acute, non-acute, and overnight and day beds, in-patient and out-patient beds, bed spaces and traditional and non-traditional beds.

Government Response

Not agreed.

ACT Health does not report beds by care types, rather whether they are considered to be an overnight or same day bed. ACT Health currently has a total of 1,068 available beds in our public hospitals. Of these, 901 are considered to be overnight with the remaining 167 considered as same day beds. The beds available in our public hospitals treat a variety of differing care types and acuity levels. Whether the patients in our inpatient wards are acute or sub-acute is based on demand.

RECOMMENDATION 109

The Committee recommends the ACT Government consider an improved way of communicating how health services and health outcomes are delivered to the community.

Government Response

Noted.

RECOMMENDATION 110

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government provide clear definitions for counting staff numbers including head count, fulltime employees, fulltime employees (ACT funded) and fulltime employees (externally funded) and fulltime employees (all funding sources), full time equivalents and agreed abbreviations.

Government Response

Agreed in principle.

The only term used in relation to staffing in the Budget papers is “Full-Time Equivalents” and this is defined in the on-line Readers Guide to the 2015-16 Budget (see page 43) http://apps.treasury.act.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0005/733838/2015-16-Readers-Guide-to-the-Budget.pdf. Other definitions and abbreviations are also contained in the Glossary which is at Attachment B to the Readers Guide.

RECOMMENDATION 111

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government provide a breakdown of Full Time Equivalents in its annual reports indicating the number of positions externally funded and the number funded by the ACT Government.

Government Response

Noted.

Consideration will be given to providing this breakdown in the next Annual Report Directions.

RECOMMENDATION 112

The Committee recommends that any decision-making by the ACT Government around community access to health services be undertaken with proper community consultation.

Government Response

Noted.

ACT Health already consults widely with the community and key stakeholders around community access to health services and will continue to do so.

RECOMMENDATION 113

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government conduct a review into the number of patients admitted to the Adult Mental Health Unit with predominantly drug-related issues rather than mental health issues and that a plan be formulated for managing drug addicted/affected patients.

Government Response

Not agreed.

ACT Health has clear admission criteria for the assessment and treatment of people with mental health issues or drug related issues. The decision to admit is made by a consultant doctor.

The Adult Mental Health Unit (AMHU) was commissioned in April 2012 to provide specialised mental health assessment, treatment and care for voluntary and involuntary people presenting with an acute mental illness that cannot be managed effectively in a less restrictive environment.

If people are assessed in the Emergency Department as having an acute mental illness, they are admitted into AMHU under the care of a treating Psychiatrist. If people are assessed as having drug related issues, they are medically stabilized and either admitted into the Withdrawal Unit under the care of an Addictions Physician or discharged home with referrals for community based Alcohol and Drug related care. If people are assessed as having both a mental illness and an addiction that requires inpatient care, they are admitted to the area that specialises in the patient's predominant presenting issues.

RECOMMENDATION 114

The Committee recommends that a whole-of-government inquiry be carried out, and the findings presented to the Legislative Assembly by March 2016, on the inpatient and outpatient services, support programs and care models for adolescents facing mental health issues.

Government Response

Not agreed.

The responsibility for responding to adolescents facing mental health issues is divided between the ACT and Commonwealth Governments. An estimated 25 per cent of young people will experience mental health problems in a given year, of these young people approximately 85 per cent will experience mild to moderate mental health problems and 15 per cent will experience severe mental illnesses. The Commonwealth Government has responsibility for primary mental health interventions for adolescents experiencing mild to moderate mental health problems; and the ACT Government, through ACT Health has responsibility for providing specialist mental health services for adolescents experiencing severe mental illnesses.

ACT Health engages with Commonwealth funded mental health programs and services which are the primary contact for the majority of adolescents experiencing mental health problems. This engagement includes liaison with GPs, direct engagement with the Capital Health Network (reconstituted ACT Medicare Local) and headspace ACT.

ACT Health has already undertaken considerable work reviewing the models of care for public child, adolescent and youth mental health services, and is currently undertaking the work regarding models of care for community adult mental health. The reviews are informing the ACT Health purchase of adolescent and youth mental health services from the community sector.

In addition, ACT Health has reviewed mental health inpatient services for adolescents while undertaking planning for the health infrastructure projects at Canberra Hospital.

RECOMMENDATION 115

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government table a copy of the framework for the Adult Mental Health Unit by the last sitting day in 2015.

Government Response

Agreed in principle.

The Framework is in the process of being developed, and will include consultation with carer and consumer peak bodies. It is envisaged that the Framework will be completed in late 2015. Consideration will be given to tabling the Framework once it is finalised.

RECOMMENDATION 116

The Committee recommends the ACT Government should consider addressing the social determinants of obesity through a whole-of-government approach, in conjunction with the obesity clinic.

Government Response

Noted.

The Government is already addressing the social determinants of obesity prevention and health promotion through the whole of government Healthy Weight Initiative across a range of focus areas.

The obesity clinic is a one-to-one clinical intervention for people with morbid obesity and does not focus on population level obesity prevention or promotional activities related to healthy weight.

RECOMMENDATION 117

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government investigate additional ways to ensure that breast screen services reach women at a level equivalent to at least that of other Australian states.

Government Response

Agreed.

In the Australian Monitoring Report 2012-2013 (due for release in September 2015), the 'age-standardised' participation rate of 54.2 per cent for the ACT is above the national average of 53.7 per cent.

RECOMMENDATION 118

The Committee recommends the ACT Government explore opportunities to create a more child and family friendly space at Clare Holland House when they care for paediatric patients. This could include consideration of:

- **different needs of preschool, primary and secondary aged children;**
- **providing specialist paediatric staff, either temporarily or permanently, when treating paediatric patients and their families; and**
- **providing age appropriate temporary or permanent physical spaces for paediatric patients and their families.**

Government Response

Agreed.

This recommendation will be further explored in discussions between Calvary and ACT Health.

Clare Holland House has one respite care bed that is utilised as required for the provision of specialist paediatric palliative care.

If a paediatric patient is admitted to Clare Holland House, the ACT Paediatric Palliative Care Network (comprising Canberra Hospital Paediatric Unit, Bear Cottage, Prince of Wales and Westmead Hospitals) provides particular education and training in relation to patient-specific paediatric issues and this is organised prior to or during the admission. Clare Holland House conducts several paediatric specific in-service training sessions each year to educate staff of what may be expected when caring for a child.

For paediatric patients, families, parents and carers are encouraged to make the room as homely as they wish. There is a covered children's playground and a range of toys, music, DVDs and electronic games that can be lent to children.

RECOMMENDATION 119

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government consider determining the cost of alcohol-related injuries and diseases on the ACT community with regard to:

- **financial cost;**
- **staff time; and**
- **facilitation,**

and report to the Legislative Assembly by the last sitting day in 2015.

Government Response

Not agreed.

Collins & Lapsley (2008) estimated that the economic costs [for Australia] associated with licit and illicit drug use in 2004-05 amounted to \$56.1 billion, comprising \$31.5 billion due to tobacco and \$15.3 billion to alcohol. Determining the ACT specific costs would require the commissioning of special studies and this is not feasible within the required timeframe and available resources.

RECOMMENDATION 120

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government consider determining the cost of tobacco-related injuries and diseases on the ACT community with regard to:

- **financial cost;**
- **staff time; and**
- **facilitation,**

and report to the Legislative Assembly by the last sitting day in 2015.

Government Response

Not agreed.

Collins & Lapsley (2008) estimated that the economic costs [for Australia] associated with licit and illicit drug use in 2004-05 amounted to \$56.1 billion, comprising \$31.5 billion due to tobacco and \$15.3 billion to alcohol. Determining the ACT specific costs would require the commissioning of special studies and this is not feasible within the required timeframe and available resources.

RECOMMENDATION 121

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government appoint a fifth Supreme Court judge.

Government Response

Agreed.

As noted in the 2015-16 Budget, funding of \$1.010 million will be provided from 1 July 2016 for the appointment of a fifth judge. In addition, funding of \$0.241 million has been provided in 2015-16 for acting judges to assist in reducing the backlog of matters considered in the ACT Supreme Court.

RECOMMENDATION 122

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government monitor the effectiveness of the new court listing process and update the Legislative Assembly by the last sitting day in March 2016.

Government Response

Agreed.

Under section 5 of the *Magistrates Court Act 1930*, the Chief Magistrate is responsible for ensuring the orderly and prompt discharge of the Magistrates Court's business. Listing is a matter for the Chief Magistrate.

The Government continues to work with the courts to improve performance and consider resourcing needs, and will provide the Legislative Assembly with an update on the operations in the Magistrates Court by the last sitting day in March 2016.

RECOMMENDATION 123

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government report to the Legislative Assembly on a quarterly basis on the progress of addressing family violence in the ACT.

Government Response

Agreed in part.

The Government is committed to working with all stakeholders to address family and domestic violence.

In the August sittings of the Legislative Assembly, the Attorney-General will table the Government Response to the Domestic Violence Prevention Council on Domestic Violence. The Government Response sets out the Government's approach to this area, and the ways in which actions in relation to it are being coordinated. Oversight by the Coordinator-General for Domestic and Family Violence will ensure that the ACT's responses to domestic and family violence are effective, innovative and integrated where possible.

The Government will report on the progress of addressing domestic and family violence in the ACT at regular intervals.

RECOMMENDATION 124

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government present in the Legislative Assembly a statement clarifying the primary intent of the review of rights protection agencies in the ACT, and proposals for their amalgamation, before any major legislative or administrative changes are made for those agencies.

Government Response

Not agreed.

The Government is satisfied that the intent of the review of rights protection agencies in the ACT is set out in the discussion paper available at <http://www.justice.act.gov.au/review/view/34/title/discussion-paper-design-of>, and in the responses of the Attorney-General to the Committee.

RECOMMENDATION 125

The Committee, noting the intended use of the London Circuit car park by Capital Metro, recommends that the ACT Government ensure adequate parking is available for the Court precinct and local traders during the Law Court renovations.

Government Response

Agreed.

The Capital Metro Agency (CMA) recognises the potential impact that the utilisation of the London Circuit car park as a possible construction site may cause. In an effort to minimise the need for this construction site, the CMA is looking at alternative solutions. These include reducing the size of the construction site footprint on the car park through to assessing what, if any, alternative locations may be available to replace this site.

The CMA is also working with the tendering parties to assess the minimum requirement for construction sites and how these might be provided.

This issue is being considered by the planning and land authority during the assessment of the Environmental Impact Statement.

RECOMMENDATION 126

The Committee recommends that during the Law Court renovations the ACT Government assist in court users' physical safety by ensuring appropriate pathways and adequate lighting.

Government Response

Agreed.

During the construction of the new court facilities, appropriate measures will be put in place to ensure the safe access and use of the courts.

RECOMMENDATION 127

The Committee recommends the ACT Government develop a policy to address recruitment issues, such as lateral transfers and advertising of positions, to ensure the most equitable outcomes for applicants and to obtain the best staffing outcomes for the government.

Government Response

Agreed in principle.

In February 2015, a project reviewing service wide human resources policies commenced. Existing recruitment policies are being reviewed as part of this project.

RECOMMENDATION 128

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government provide the Legislative Assembly, within three sitting days of receipt of the detail, the full cost of modifying its Hume Air Base hangar to house the Agusta 139 helicopter in 2017.

Government Response

Agreed in principle.

The Emergency Services Agency (ESA) will be in receipt of the Augusta 139 helicopter in 2017. The ESA has commenced a process to identify costings for the modifications of the Southcare air base hangar, and these will be provided to the Legislative Assembly once available.

RECOMMENDATION 129

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government consider accountability indicators for both the Rural Fire Service and State Emergency Service under the Response and Recovery heading of the Justice and Community Safety Directorate Budget Statement.

Government Response

Agreed.

Under the Agency's Strategic Reform Agenda, the Emergency Services Agency, in collaboration with the Australasian Fire and Emergency Service Authorities Council, will work to develop appropriate performance and accountability indicators for the Rural Fire Service and State Emergency Service.

RECOMMENDATION 130

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government conduct a formal evaluation of Community Fire Units and present it to the Legislative Assembly by June 2016.

Government Response

Agreed.

Under the Agency's Strategic Reform Agenda, the Emergency Services Agency will conduct a formal evaluation of Community Fire Units and present a report to the Legislative Assembly.

RECOMMENDATION 131

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government develop and table a comprehensive approach to addressing drug driving, including community awareness and legal implications.

Government Response

Noted.

ACT Policing continues to work with the ACT Government on a comprehensive approach to addressing drug driving.

A drug driving awareness campaign is currently being developed in the context of the *ACT Road Safety Strategy 2011-2020*.

RECOMMENDATION 132

The Committee recommends the ACT Government update the Assembly prior to the start of the 2016 school year on its focus on improving road safety, particularly around school zones, as outlined in the 2015-16 Ministerial Direction.

Government Response

Agreed.

ACT Policing supports the Ministerial Direction to focus on road safety around school zones.

On 3 August 2015, the Chief Minister and the Minister for Police and Emergency Services made a joint announcement on a suite of road safety measures in school zones.

RECOMMENDATION 133

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government investigate a policy of random identifiable drug and alcohol testing for staff and detainees at the Alexander Maconochie Centre.

Government Response

Noted.

The administration of alcohol and drug testing of detainees in ACT correctional facilities is primarily addressed in Part 9.6 of the *Corrections Management Act 2007* (CMA). Random alcohol and drug testing is provided for separately at section 221 of the CMA. Currently a cohort of 10 detainees per month is selected at random by a computer program; however, section 221 prescribes that random testing be used for statistical purposes only and that no record of the donor be kept.

The CMA provides that a regulation may be made to make provision for the alcohol and drug testing of corrections officers and/or public servants working at a correctional centre. There are currently no plans to implement such a regulation. Changes of this nature would require extensive consultation with all relevant stakeholders and would need to be considered in the context of relevant Enterprise Agreements.

The governance of random drug testing of detainees is provided for in detail in the *Corrections Management Drug Testing Policy 2011* and *Corrections Management (Drug Testing) Procedure 2011* (both Notifiable Instruments). Changes of this nature would aim to ensure Corrective Services has the ability to respond to the health and safety needs of detainees as well as maintain good order at correctional facilities.

The Government is currently considering the issue of making random drug tests identifiable; allowing a positive test sample to be considered in making any decision in relation to the management of the detainee which could include discipline or referral for appropriate treatment and programs.

RECOMMENDATION 134

The Committee, noting the treatment of ACTION funding in the 2015-16 Budget papers, recommends that funding for any organisation should only be included in the budget papers in one location.

Government Response

Noted.

The current disclosures in the budget papers reflect the nature of the transactions associated with the delivery of public transport services provided by ACTION.

RECOMMENDATION 135

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government ensure a timely and well funded road resealing program.

Government Response

Noted.

The Government has an existing program to maintain our road network. The effectiveness of this system is monitored on an ongoing basis.

RECOMMENDATION 136

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government complete the duplication of Ashley Drive from Ellerston Avenue to Johnston Drive as part of the proposal contained in the 2015-16 ACT Budget.

Government Response

Noted.

This proposal, along with other demands for future road infrastructure enhancements, will be considered by the Government through the usual budgetary processes.

RECOMMENDATION 137

The Committee recommends the ACT Government consider funding in this financial year to begin the duplication of Horse Park Drive from Majura Parkway to Well Station Drive to align with duplication from Well Station Drive to Anthony Rolfe Avenue.

Government Response

Noted.

This proposal, along with other demands for future road infrastructure enhancements, will be considered by the Government through the usual budgetary processes.

RECOMMENDATION 138

The Committee recommends the ACT Government continue to work closely with Burgmann Anglican School to explore new options for improving road and pedestrian safety around Burgmann School.

Government Response

Agreed.

RECOMMENDATION 139

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government expedite the solution to access issues to the former Pitch 'n' Putt site in Woden.

Government Response

Noted.

The Woden town centre master plan is being finalised and is expected to be released to the public in late 2015.

The master plan considers new road connections in the northern precinct of the town centre, including to the old pitch and putt site. New access is being considered in this precinct to better connect the area across the Yarralumla Creek and to facilitate new development. The master plan will also consider the opportunities that could arise if access is improved to the pitch and putt site, in relation to the other land uses and densities that could be considered for the site than what is currently permitted.

The Territory and Municipal Services and Environment and Planning Directorates are liaising with the developer and the Community Clubs Task Force on a number of options that would enable this development to proceed.

RECOMMENDATION 140

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government introduce a new 'NoWaste' target.

Government Response

Noted.

The *ACT Waste Management Strategy 2020-2025* includes waste reduction targets for 2015, 2020 and 2025, and these provide the basis for the Government's current waste reduction policy settings. Targets for 2020 and 2025 are considered by the Government to be broadly appropriate and achievable. The Government is commencing a review of the Waste Management Strategy and this review will consider whether any change to the targets is appropriate; this will include consideration of public messaging around the target and the 'NoWaste' brand.

RECOMMENDATION 141

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government place greater emphasis on the amenity of nearby residents when planning changes at the Mugga and Belconnen tips to ensure the amenity of nearby residents.

Government Response

Noted.

The impact on community amenity is a key consideration in the planning and management of landfill operations.

RECOMMENDATION 142

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government engage in detailed consultation with local communities about shopping centre upgrades and place particular weight on what facilities the community would like to see.

Government Response

Agreed.

There is an existing program of community consultation that integrates community feedback into shopping centre upgrade designs.

RECOMMENDATION 143

The Committee recommends that in selecting trees for shopping centres the ACT Government take into account staining, litter and safety hazards.

Government Response

Agreed.

A range of factors are considered when selecting plant species for shopping centre upgrades.

RECOMMENDATION 144

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government provide additional information to the community about the locations and timeframes of playground upgrades.

Government Response

Agreed.

Development of a play space strategy is underway, including a consultation plan.

RECOMMENDATION 145

The Committee recommends the ACT Government engage with the community about playground spaces and consider innovative ways to provide safe and enjoyable play spaces, including through:

- **encouraging community and local business input, maintenance and potentially funding; and**
- **new models of playspaces such as natural playgrounds.**

Government Response

Agreed.

Development of a play space strategy is underway, including a consultation plan.

RECOMMENDATION 146

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government should consider additional strategies to remove graffiti on private property.

Government Response

Agreed.

Although the ACT Government is not responsible for graffiti removal from private property, it will continue to work with commercial property owners in high traffic areas where applicable.

RECOMMENDATION 147

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government consider installing behavioural signposts around Lake Tuggeranong and Emu Inlet, as well as line markings, for the benefit of pedestrians and cyclists.

Government Response

Agreed.

RECOMMENDATION 148

The Committee recommends the ACT Government consider introducing a Bus Driver of the Year award.

Government Response

Agreed.