FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST – FOI REF: CSD-20/05

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Please be aware that under the *Freedom of Information Act 2016*, some of the information provided to FOI applicants may be released to the public through the ACT Government's Open Access Scheme. The Open Access release status column of the table below indicates what documents are intended for release online through open access. Personal information or business affairs information will not be made available. If you think the content of your request would contain such information, please inform the contact officer immediately. Information about what is published on open access is available online at: www.act.gov.au/open-access

Applicant	THE PARAMETERS OF THE REQUEST	File No
[redacted]	*"The final briefing packs prepared for the Minister Chris Steel MLA for the 2019-20 Estimates hearings. I also seek copies of any final briefing packs prepared for Witnesses that are different to the one provided to the Minister".*	**Additional witness documents**

No Folios	Description	Date	Decision	Reason for non-release or deferral	Open Access release status
1-2	Budget Estimates Brief - ACT Carers Strategy Action Plan	18/06/2019	Full release		Full release
3-5	Budget Estimates Brief - ACT Community Services Industry Strategy 2016-2026	18/06/2019	Full release		Full release
6-8	Budget Estimates Brief - Commissioning for Outcomes	18/06/2019	Full release		Full release

No Folios	Description	Date	Decision	Reason for non-release or deferral	Open Access release status
9-10	Budget Estimates Brief - Digitising Government Records (2018-19 Budget Initiative) – Joint Initiative with CMTEDD	18/06/2019	Full release		Full release
11	Budget Estimates Brief - Implementing the Commonwealth Redress Scheme for Institutional Child Sexual Abuse (Joint initiative with JACS)	18/06/2019	Full release		Full release
12-13	Budget Estimates Brief – National Redress Scheme	18/06/2019	Full release		Full release
14-15	Budget Estimates Brief – Place-based initiatives	18/06/2019	Full release		Full release
16-19	Budget Estimates Brief – reportable Conduct Scheme	18/06/2019	Full release		Full release
20-21	Budget Estimates Brief – Strategic Plan – Integrated Reporting Framework	18/06/2019	Full release		Full release
22-25	Budget Estimates Brief – Working with Vulnerable People	18/06/2019	Full release		Full release
26-27	Budget Estimates Brief – National approach to NDIS Worker Screening	13/06/2019	Full release		Full release

ACT Government

BUDGET ESTIMATES BRIEF

Add reference number

Portfolio/s: Community Services and Facilities

Community Services and Facilities

ISSUE: ACT CARERS STRATEGY ACTION PLAN

Talking points:

- Last year, the Carers Strategy Taskforce (the Taskforce) convened to develop the first three-year Action Plan to deliver on the vision, outcomes and priorities of the *ACT Carers Strategy 2018-2028* (the Strategy).
- Ongoing collaboration between Government and the community sector will be critical to implementing actions that will make a real difference for carers.
- Members of the Taskforce met for five workshops to develop actions, using a deliberative approach that ensured diverse voices were heard and encouraged robust and informed discussion of potential actions. Feedback from the Taskforce emphasised the value of this innovative approach to co-designed policy.
- The Action Plan includes 25 actions that are grouped across five broad themes: services and supports for carers; recognition and awareness; inclusion; support for young carers; and workforce and skills recognition.
- The Action Plan was launched on 16 October 2018 during National Carers Week.
- The 2017-18 ACT Budget allocated $200,000 for the Strategy, including $50,000 in-kind support. A Treasurer's Advance of $50,000 was provided in 2016-17 and remaining funding was allocated as follows:
    - 2017-18 $56,000
    - 2018-19 $56,000
    - 2019-20 $38,000
- The Carers Strategy Governance Group will oversee the implementation of actions and contribute to reporting for the Action Plan.
- The Governance Group includes carers as well as representatives from Government and community sector organisations. This model supports

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the ongoing engagement of carers in the governance and implementation of the Strategy.

Key Information

- In 2017, the ACT Government partnered with Carers ACT and democracyCo to conduct a deliberative democracy process to develop the framework for the Strategy.
- The Carers Voice Panel, comprising 49 carers and members of the broader Canberra community, met twice in October 2017. The Panel deliberated on its vision for a carer friendly Canberra, the outcomes we want to see for carers and what our shared priorities should be.
- In December 2017, Minister Stephen-Smith launched the *Carers Voice Panel Report* and the *Vision, Outcomes and Priorities Statement*. Together, these documents form the framework for the Strategy.

Background Information

- The delivery of the Strategy was an election commitment in the 2016 Parliamentary Agreement for the 9th Legislative Assembly.
- In May 2017, the Community Services Directorate contracted Carers ACT and democracyCo to design and conduct a deliberative democracy approach to develop the Strategy. These contracts were funded by a $50,000 Treasurer's Advance.
- The Taskforce that developed the Action Plan included representatives from:
    - Government directorates including: CSD; ACT Health; Education; CMTEDD; EPSDD; and TCCS.
    - Community sector bodies including: Carers ACT; ADACAS; CYCLOPS (Anglicare Young Carers Program); Mental Health Community Coalition; Capital Health Network; Health Care Consumers Association; ACT Together; NDIS Local Area Coordination Service; Multicultural Advisory Council; Youth Advisory Council; and the Disability Reference Group.
    - Carers were selected from those who participated in the 2017 Carers Voice Panel. The carers included a young carer and carers supporting people with diverse needs, including people experiencing multiple conditions.

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Portfolio/s: Community Services and Facilities

ISSUE: ACT COMMUNITY SERVICES INDUSTRY STRATEGY 2016-2026

Talking points:

- The ACT government is committed to working with the sector and we acknowledge the significant role community partners play in supporting and delivering on the expectations identified through government Strategies and Action Plans.
- A number of the Strategies and Action Plans focus on what we need to do differently within our current resources to make a difference.
- To support future development of a 'Commissioning for Outcomes' framework the Community Services Directorate is in the early stages of scoping a review of the resource requirements and industry support that will be needed to implement the approach across the ACT. This will include understanding the expectations that arise from these strategies and their impact.
- Over the next 12 months this work will build on the momentum of existing reform and policy initiatives; most notably a recent commitment to shift government and non-government human service delivery into a commissioning for early support outcomes environment.
- ACT Government and the community services industry are also working in partnership to implement reform through the *ACT Community Services Industry Strategy (2016-2026).*
- The Strategy identifies the need for a skilled workforce to meet the growing demand for services and provide more flexible and responsive client-centred care. Consequently, the first implementation plan of the Industry Strategy is a Workforce Plan.
- The five projects commissioned under the Industry Strategy

Identifying and Supporting Emerging Leaders: Identifying and developing a platform for a dynamic list of available learning and development opportunities;

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- Developing a methodology to identify key and emerging leaders in the industry, to contribute to seamless succession planning and ensure career pathways; and
- Identifying scholarship pathways for leaders in the industry

Develop a Framework: Develop a framework and tools to support consistent approaches across the ACT Community Services Industry for on-boarding, peer support, supervision, coaching and mentoring.

Workforce & Career Mapping: Develop ACT specific community services industry reference documents that articulate, promote and facilitate entry points to working in the sector; and to develop a tool to map the pathways across career and across sector.

Workforce Data & Community Needs Analysis: Gather and analyse relevant data to identify and describe the current ACT

- community services industry (industry) workforce and project growth, diversity, skill and knowledge needs into the future to meet the needs of the ACT community.

Evaluation: Develop an evaluation framework for the Industry Strategy to measure progress towards the outcomes expressed in the Strategy, including the Workforce Plan 2017-2020.

- The Industry Strategy outlines a plan to establish a 'Sector Development and Innovation Fund'. The focus for this fund is to
  - Look at new ways of working and holistic models of care
  - increasing collaboration
  - involving clients in the planning and design of services
  - promoting sharing of data and resources across the sector.

- Sound progress is already being made on these focus areas and I am pleased that there that there is existing funding - $119 000 collected as part of a 0.34 contribution levee collected from the sector - for the Industry Strategy that can be used to further progress activities across these focus areas.

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Key Information

- There are a range of ACT Government strategies and action plans including: the ACT Multicultural Framework, The ACT Women's Plan, The ACT's commitment to the National Disability Strategy; the ACT Carers Strategy; The ACT Affordable Housing Strategy, the Disability Justice Strategy, The ACT Community Services Industry Strategy and the ACT Volunteering Strategy amongst others.
- Community stakeholders are of the view that Strategies should have funding attached to them and governance of implementation should include establishment of an oversight group that includes representatives from the sectors that will contribute to leadership and implementation.
- The Act Community Services Industry Strategy is funded by approximately $600,000 from the co contribution levy, which ceased in June 2017. The Joint Community Government Reference Group (JCGRG) has governance responsibilities for the Industry Strategy and has developed three 3-year implementation plans to achieve this vision, with the final year for evaluation and future planning.
- A subcommittee of the JCGRG, the Industry Strategy Steering Group, which comprises representatives from community and government, is overseeing the development and implementation of the first action plan, focused on workforce capability.

Background Information

- It is intended that the Workforce Plan will support the recruitment and retention of individuals with the skills and abilities to meet current and future needs.

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Portfolio/s: Community Services and Facilities

Community Services and Facilities

ISSUE: COMMISSIONING FOR OUTCOMES

Talking points:

- Commissioning is a strategic planning approach that embeds community needs analysis, ongoing strategic evaluation, and increased transparency and accountability into investment and resource allocation.
- The Community Services Directorate (the Directorate) is in the early stages of scoping options for commissioning.
- Commissioning will focus on using all available resources to achieve positive outcomes for people and positive social impact for the ACT.
- The Directorate plans to implement commissioning incrementally across all its investment in government and non-government services. A Commissioning Road Map will be developed with community partners.
- In implementing commissioning our vision is for 'Investment driven by coproduction, that delivers value for money and creates shared accountability for measurable outcomes that can be directly attributed to positive social impact in the ACT.
- Commissioning will ensure our current service system is responsive to community needs, is sustainable and supports industry capacity building, innovation, efficiency and growth.
- Over the next twelve months (2019/2020) the Directorate will develop a commissioning strategy with community partners and is committed to coproduction with a focus on engaging service users.
- In developing a 'Commissioning Strategy' the Directortate will work closely with partners to ensure that the Directorate's:
    - Investment is driven by shared social impact strategies
    - Investment is meaningful and delivers systems and services that meet the needs of Canberrans

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  - Investment can be directly attributed to positive outcomes for people and communities
  - Investment directly supports self-determination for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities
  - Investment is informed through meaningful engagement with service users.

- In July 2019 the Directorate will release a Commissioning for Social Impact Discussion Paper; key milestones for the release include:

  - 1-July 2019: Discussion Paper: Released to Peaks Agencies and Regional CEOs
  - 10-July 2019: Discusion Paper Workshop with Regional CEOs 11-July 2019:
  - Discusion Paper Workshop with Peak Agencies
  - 29-July 2019: Discussion Paper - Release to Community Services Industry

Key Information

- Community services sector funding and procurement has developed over time and in some areas has grown and developed based on existing programs and services, rather than in response to community and industry needs. This needs to change, and in line with Cabinet Submission/Agreement in September 2018, commissioning will provide the strategic direction and the vehicle to deliver this change.
- To support 'Commissioning for Outcomes', we will develop a strategy with community partners and in doing so we are committed to coproduction with a focus on engaging service users and the community services industry. Community engagement will commence with the release of a Discussion Paper. Key activities will include:
  - July 2019: Discussion paper released to community sector
  - July – October 2019: Workshops with key stakeholders
  - October 2019: Discussion paper submissions close
  - February 2019: What We Heard Discussion Paper released to community
  - February - June 2020: Commissioning Strategy Development Phase – Community workshops with community sector and service users

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- July 2020 – Launch/release Commissioning Strategy

Background Information

- In September 2018 cabinet agreement was received to shift government and non-government human service delivery into a commissioning for early support outcomes environment over a 10 year period.

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Portfolio/s: Community Services and Facilities

ISSUE: DIGITISTING GOVERNMENT RECORDS (2018-19 BUDGET INITIATIVE) – JOINT INITIATIVE WITH CMTEDD

Talking points:

- The Government will complete the rollout of digital record-keeping systems across agencies to improve data accessibility and retrieval and to generate efficiencies in records management.
- The cost of this initiative is partially offset by contributions from directorates' storage costs associated with the existing paper records system.
- The financial impact of the offset for each agency can be found in the summary table.

Key Information

This is a whole of government initiative which would deliver benefits across all Directorates. They include:

- More efficient use of office space, allowing the ACTPS to take full advantage of the savings offered through Activity Based Working (ABW) in its new office accommodation;
- Other reduced costs, through more efficient business processes and reduced costs of handling and storing paper records;
- An increased ability to share reliable and authoritative records, information and data across government, supporting efficient customer service, informed decision-making and improved data analysis capabilities;
- Greater environmental sustainability, through the reduced use of paper;
- Decreased information security and business continuity risks, including through support for mobile access to digital records, and increased compliance with the *Territory Records Act 2002*.

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Financial Impact	2018-19 $'000	2019-20 $'000	2020-21 $'000	2021-22 $'000	Totals $'000
CMTEDD	819	1,087	343	-304	**1,945**
CSD	698	1,080	798	-202	**2,374**
Housing ACT – Offset	0	-25	-85	-100	**-210**
Net Expenses	**1,517**	**2,142**	**1,056**	**-606**	**4,109**

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Portfolio/s: Community Services and Facilities

ISSUE: IMPLEMENTING THE COMMONWEALTH REDRESS SCHEME FOR INSTITUTIONAL CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE (Joint initiative with JACS)

Talking points:

- As part of the Commonwealth Redress Scheme, the ACT Government will provide support to eligible survivors of abuse in Government institutions through a redress payment, counselling and psychological care, and a direct personal response.
- The cost of this initiative is being met by a number of agencies.

Key Information

- This funds 3 FTE's in the first year and 2.5 FTE's in the second year. In addition to resourcing, operational costs of $149,000 and $123,000 respectively.
- The initial work is about establishing the policy and guidance around undertaking the work set up of the systems to support monitoring and review of performance in achieving the Redress Scheme requirements.

Financial Impact	2018-19 $'000	2019-20 $'000	2020-21 $'000	2021-22 $'000	Totals $'000
JACS	1,787	2,774	4,009	4,117	**12,687**
CSD	582	491	0	0	**1,073**
Other agencies	218	185	0	0	**403**
Health – Offset	-73	-37	-37	-37	**-184**
Net Expenses	**2,514**	**3,413**	**3,972**	**4,080**	**13,979**

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Portfolio/s: Children, Youth and Families

Children, Youth and Families

ISSUE: NATIONAL REDRESS SCHEME

Key Information

- The Attorney-General has responsibility for the implementation of the National Redress Scheme in the ACT. The Community Services Directorate is working closely with the Justice and Community Safety Directorate to deliver the best outcomes for survivors of child sexual abuse.
- The ACT Government was one of the first jurisdictions to sign up to the scheme, which will provide support to people who were sexually abused as children while in the care of an institution.
- Every state and territory government has now joined the scheme along with several non-government organisations including the Catholic Church, Anglican Church, Uniting Church, Salvation Army, Scouts, Barnardos Australia and YMCA.
- This means that over 92 per cent of survivors of child sexual abuse across Australia will be covered under the scheme.
- The scheme is operated by the Australian Government Department of Social Services. The Attorney-General, through the Justice and Community Safety Directorate, is leading the implementation of the scheme for the ACT.
- The Commonwealth has started to receive applications.
- The ACT has been preparing for the commencement of the scheme for some time and is continuing to work with the Commonwealth Department of Social Services - the Scheme Operator - to ensure that applications in relation to ACT Government institutions are responded to effectively.
- This includes work being undertaken by the Justice and Community Safety Directorate, together with the Community Services Directorate and other ACT Directorates to manage the identification of relevant information to respond to requests for information about an application.
- Victim Support ACT will be coordinating the provision of counselling services where a survivor accepts counselling support as a component of redress in relation to abuse that occurred in ACT government institutions.
- The Restorative Justice Unit is supporting the provision of direct personal responses from representatives of ACT government institutions.

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Background Information

- A person can choose to apply to the National Redress Scheme, If they:
  - experienced sexual abuse when they were a child and that abuse happened before 1 July 2018;
  - experienced that sexual abuse while in the care of a participating institution which was responsible for bringing the person into contact with the perpetrator of the abuse;
  - were born before 30 June 2010;
  - are an Australian citizen or permanent resident; and
  - apply between 1 July 2018 and 30 June 2027.

- A person cannot apply to the scheme if a court has already ruled that the relevant institution pay compensation or damages (although the person can apply in relation to other institutions).

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Portfolio/s: Community Services and Facilities

Community Services and Facilities

ISSUE: PLACE-BASED INITIATIVES

Talking points:

- The ACT and Commonwealth Governments recently committed to work together to introduce a place-based approach in the ACT to improve the outcomes for vulnerable children and families. This initiative will be one of ten sites selected across the country for Commonwealth investment.
- Place-based initiatives target a geographical area to respond to an issue. They focus on working with local communities, families, and services to design and deliver solutions. These solutions are intended to meet the needs of the local area and build community capacity.
- The ACT welcomes Commonwealth recognition of the importance of investing in Canberra as a place, and the acknowledgement that there are vulnerable people in Canberra. Better outcomes for vulnerable children and families require us to work in partnership.
- Critically, the initiative will be developed in collaboration with local residents and services, ensuring that responses are grounded in local needs and experiences
- The initiative will work with local families and services to identify their needs and improve service planning, coordination and delivery. This will enable existing services to provide better support for disadvantaged Canberrans.
- The Commonwealth government agreed to contribute up to $600,000 per year, for an initial three-year term, to contribute to the costs of a community based Local Implementation Partner. A matched contribution from the ACT Government is required, which may include currently funded and delivered services which are aligned with the objectives of the proposal.

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- Commonwealth and ACT Government officials are working to further develop the initiative, and I look forward to supporting this important work as it begins to make a real impact for Canberran families.

Key Information

- A joint statement by Minister Stephen-Smith MLA and the then relevant Commonwealth Ministers was made on Thursday, 31 May 2018 announcing this funding partnership.
- The partnership is focused on improving the impact of existing investment in programs and services, rather than providing new or additional program funding.
- The community based Local Implementation Partner will work with local families and stakeholders to identify their needs and improve service planning, coordination and delivery.
- A National Implementation Partner, funded by the Commonwealth, will support the broader work of the project, including provision of assistance to the Local Implementation Partner.
- The Commonwealth convened a workshop with all States and Territories on 6 and 7 February 2019 to further develop place-based approaches with jurisdictions and confirm the role of the National Implementation Partner.

Background Information

- At the November 2017 Children and Families Secretaries meeting, the Commonwealth sought commitment from states and territories to a joint investment to progress place-based initiatives.
- Subsequently, the Community Services Directorate (CSD) and Department of Social Services commenced discussions to develop a place-based initiative that is tailored to the needs of the ACT.
- Human Service Cluster directorates, led by CSD, are currently undertaking initial work to scope the project. Some preliminary work to identify potential sites in the ACT has occurred, however further detail on the Commonwealth's approach is required prior to the ACT undertaking detailed site analysis and selection.

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Portfolio/s: Community Services and Facilities

Community Services and Facilities

ISSUE: REPORTABLE CONDUCT SCHEME

Talking points:

- Children should be safe wherever they are cared for, and the Reportable Conduct Scheme aims to provide the community improved assurance about child safety across the ACT.
- The Reportable Conduct Scheme was established to oversee how organisations prevent and respond to allegations of child abuse and misconduct.
- The scheme is allegation based, and there does not need to be any proof to support the alleged conduct. The scheme covers a broader range of alleged conduct than the types of child abuse defined in the *Children and Young People Act 2008,* that is reported to the child protection service.
- Foster and kinship carers are subject to the requirements of the Reportable Conduct Scheme.
- Child and Youth Protection Services and ACT Together are the designated entities with responsibility under the Scheme to notify the ACT Ombudsman of allegations, offences or convictions relating to child abuse or child-related misconduct by carers. Subsequently these matters are investigated, and a finding and report of the outcome of the investigation is provided to the Ombudsman.
- The ACT Ombudsman has oversight of the Scheme and powers to independently monitor and report on an organisation's investigations of allegations of reportable conduct.
- Reports of abuse and neglect received by Child and Youth Protection Services are assessed and investigated to allow appropriate action to be taken to ensure the safety of children and young people.
- Carers are supported to understand their obligations under the Scheme through their support agencies. A Carer Handbook to support carers in

their role has recently been developed detailing the types of conduct that could result in a Reportable Conduct notification and what carers can expect in these circumstances.

- *A Step Up for Our Kids* introduced a range of additional supports to carers to assist them in their caring role. These supports include:
    - training for kinship and foster carers on how to provide trauma-informed care to vulnerable children and young people
    - providing children entering care with a therapeutic assessment, ensuring carers are provided with appropriate information and support right from the start of the placement
    - the provision of Health Passports, ensuring that carers have access to key health information about the child or young person in their care.
- There are a variety of services available to support foster and kinship carers. These include:
    - high level support and case management services, including dedicated carer support workers who are independent of a child or young person's caseworker, provided by ACT Together
    - an independent Kinship and Foster Carer Advocacy Service operated by Carers ACT, which provides information and advocacy support to foster and kinship carers so they can be better supported in their caring role
    - a dedicated Carer Liaison Officer to assist foster and kinship carers in the ACT, provided by Children, Youth and Families
    - the 'Connect for Kin' program which is a 9-week trauma informed parenting program for kinship carers
    - free family and individual counselling to carers provided by ACT Together
    - family support and children's services available through the ACT Government's Child and Family Centres.
- The oversight system in place includes not only the ACT Ombudsman but also the Human Rights Commission, and the Public Advocate who can

access all information held by Child and Youth Protection Services on child safety matters.

- The Public Advocate can also become a member of a declared care team which provides a forum for information sharing and shared decision making in relation to children in care.
- The care team process ensures that decisions can be made having information available from agencies and individuals involved with the child.

Key Information

ACT Ombudsman – Quarterly Report A report on the activities of the ACT Ombudsman 1 January to 31 March 2019

- The ACT Ombudsman reports quarterly to the Speaker of the ACT Legislative Assembly.
- In the third quarterly report of 2018-19 (1 January – 31 March 2019), the ACT Ombudsman received a total of 32 notifications, with 13 (41%) from kinship and foster care service providers. A further four (12%) reports were received from 'Other'; this category includes Residential Care Organisations, ACT Directorates and Religious Bodies.
- Given the sensitive nature of these matters, further detail on the specifics of the individual matters is unavailable.
- Ill-treatment of a child involving hostile use of force remains the most common allegation type, with misconduct of a sexual nature and ill-treatment involving emotional abuse being the next most common allegation category. Ill-treatment includes circumstances where an employee, or in these matters a carer, treats a child in an unreasonable and seriously inappropriate, inhumane or cruel manner.
- This alleged behaviour may be intentional or unintentional. The focus is on the alleged conduct rather than the actual effect of the conduct on a child.
- Amendments to the Scheme were passed in November 2017 to broaden the application of the scheme and improve information sharing.
- CMTEDD led a public consultation process in March 2018 on inclusion of religious organisations in the scheme from 1 July 2018.
- All ACT Government employees are covered by the scheme, both in their professional and private lives.
- Organisations covered by the scheme are known as designated entities.

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- While the focus of implementation has been on the reportable conduct scheme, legislative amendments to the *Children and Young People Act 2008* include a provision allowing designated entities to request information where the matter does not relate to an employee, but to a risk to a child.
- Before the legislative changes were introduced, protected and sensitive information relating to matters of child protection could only be shared with other agencies in limited circumstances.
- The Scheme commenced on 1 July 2017 after receiving unanimous support in the Legislative Assembly, expanding the jurisdiction of the Ombudsman to enable scrutiny of the way employers investigate misconduct involving children.

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Portfolio/s: Community Services and Social Inclusion

Community Services and Social Inclusion

ISSUE: STRATEGIC PLAN – INTEGRATED REPORTING FRAMEWORK

Talking points:

- In 2018, the Community Services Directorate launched its Strategic Plan, which provides a long-term approach to the achievement of our purpose and outcomes.
- Reporting will be strongly driven by the outcomes embedded in the Strategic Plan. The Strategic Plan Reporting Framework provides an opportunity to move away from reporting on counts of activities undertaken, and instead report more meaningfully on the outcomes the Strategic Plan has set for the Directorate to achieve.
- The Integrating Reporting Framework includes three tiers of reporting, including:
    - Strategic Reporting – to track performance against the core outcomes identified in the Plan.
    - Critical Indicators Reporting – to provide the CSD Strategic Board of Management with key information to monitor strategic risks and drivers for change.
    - Divisional Business Reviews – to monitor progress against division plans, including highlighting areas of risk, capability needs and resource allocation.
- The indicators embedded in the Integrated Reporting Framework will be reviewed annually. The annual review will ensure CSD is responsive to changing needs and able to address emerging sustainability concerns. The annual review will also consider the appropriateness of the indicator set and make necessary changes against the framework.
- Reporting on the new framework will commence iteratively from 1 July 2019.

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ACT Government

BUDGET ESTIMATES BRIEF

Key Information

- On 1 July 2018 the Community Services Directorate launched *Empowering People: Community Services Directorate Strategic Plan 2018-2028* which outlines our commitment to building inclusive and equitable communities where everyone is respected and valued.
- The Strategic Plan is collectively owned by the Directorate's staff who, through a collaborative and robust engagement process, worked on its development.
- The plan provides a clear purpose. Over the next 12 months, the directorate will work to cement the Strategic Plan into its business, to achieve the five aspects of our purpose:
    - Intervening early to support positive life outcomes.
    - Delivering the right services that are human-centred, holistic and tailored to those most in need.
    - Building strong communities by using evidence-informed approaches to drive local solutions and connect people in their local communities.
    - Fostering inclusive participation by empowering Canberrans to be involved in decisions that enable them to lead fulfilling lives.
    - Driving collaboration and internal and external partnerships by building effective relationships and embedding cultural change to form an integrated and holistic human services system.

Background Information

- Since the Strategic Plan was launched in 2018, the directorate has been working to develop organisational plans and other key documents to ensure the foundations are right for implementation of the Plan on 1 July 2019.
- These activities have been critical in ensuring the Plan will succeed and endure over the ten years.

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ACT Government

BUDGET ESTIMATES BRIEF

Add reference number

Portfolio/s: Community Services and Facilities

Community Services and Facilities

ISSUE: WORKING WITH VULNERABLE PEOPLE

Talking points:

- The Working with Vulnerable People Scheme aims to reduce the risk of harm or neglect to vulnerable people in the ACT. The Scheme requires those who work or volunteer with vulnerable people, including children, to have a background check and be registered.
- The ACT Government continues to review and adapt its approaches to ensure we have the best measures in place to continue to protect children and vulnerable people from the risk of sexual, physical, emotional or financial harm or neglect.
- The Working with Vulnerable People (Background Checking) Amendment (2019) Bill has been introduced into the Legislative Assembly and passed on 16 May 2019. The new provisions commence 1 July 2020.
- These amendments prepare the ACT to participate in nationally consistent NDIS worker screening arrangements.
- From 1 July 2020 workers employed by NDIS providers in the ACT will be required to comply with the (NDIS) Quality and Safeguarding Framework – this includes worker screening checks.
- NDIS Worker Screening Checks will valid for up to five years from the date of the decision and will be subject to ongoing monitoring by NDIS worker screening units.
- The NDIS Rules establish key elements of the screening regime for people who work for a registered NDIS provider. Under the Rules, providers must review all roles, including those of workers, other personnel and subcontractors, to identify whether they are a 'risk assessed role'. Any person who falls within this category must apply for an NDIS Worker Screening Check.

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- This is intended to ensure that that all personnel who have contact with people with disability as part of the registered NDIS provider's business are subject to appropriate screening requirements, irrespective of how that business is structured in terms of the sourcing and deploying of labour.

Legislative Amendments

- In October 2017, the ACT Government completed a scheduled legislative review of the Working with Vulnerable People (Background Checking) Act (2011), which made a series of recommendations to enhance the effectiveness of the Scheme, based on Government and community stakeholder feedback.
- The review report was tabled in the Assembly in October 2017.
- There will be a suite of legislative amendments to the Working with Vulnerable People (Background Checking) Act (2011) in 2019 and 2020 to cover the NDIS, Royal Commission and legislative review recommendations. These amendements will introduce key changes to the Working with Vulnerable People (WWVP) Scheme, including continuous monitoring, information sharing and disqualifying offences to fulfil the ACT's obligations in relation to national harmonisation of Working with Children Checks, and the Royal Commission recommendations.

Royal Commission

- In December 2017, the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse released its final report. The Royal Commission recommended a national approach to Working with Children Checks. The Commission recommended a national model for Working with Children Checks be established by introducing consistent standards and establishing a centralised Working with Children Checks database to facilitate cross-border information sharing.
- A Working Group was established by the Commonwealth to develop National Standards for Working with Children Checks. The National Standards provide a minimum benchmark for Working with Children Check schemes nationally.

- The ACT has consistently advocated for the inclusion of conditional registrations, which enable adults with a lived experience to work or volunteer with vulnerable adults, where this is appropriate.
- Consequently, the ACT endorsed the National Standards with the exception of Standard 28, noting that we will consider the implications of that provision as part of the WWVP Scheme.
- The ACT is working toward compliance with the National Standards, while enabling adults with a lived experience to work or volunteer with vulnerable adults, where this is appropriate.
- The recommendations made by the Legislative Review must align with national harmonisation efforts in response to several Royal Commission recommendations.

Implications of national and jurisdictional work

- The implementation of the recommendations made by the ACT Legislative Review is impacted by national and inter-jurisdictional work to achieve national harmonisation of Working with Children Checks, consistent worker screening and information sharing across jurisdictions.
- Further work is required between the Community Services Directorate and Access Canberra, to determine the impact of these intersecting schemes.
- The focus of this work will be to ensure the best outcomes for vulnerable Canberrans, while reducing the regulatory burden of the Scheme on employers, community organisations and Access Canberra.

Key Information

The Legislative Review 2016 considered whether:

  - the operation of the Act is fit-for-purpose;
  - the scope of the Scheme is appropriate, and the regulatory burden is proportionate for protecting vulnerable people;
  - the resources allocated to administer the Act are sufficient for the Scheme to operate effectively; and
  - amendments to the Act are needed to improve its operation and administration.
- The recommendations from the review were to:

- extend the registration period from the current three-year to a five-year registration period;
- improve information sharing between jurisdictions; and
- make a number of legislative amendments across the following themes:
  - increasing the protections for vulnerable people;
  - strengthening information sharing capabilities within the ACT and to develop capability for cross-jurisdictional information sharing;
  - relieving administrative burden to employers and Access Canberra; and
  - strengthening compliance and monitoring and improving risk assessment guidelines and definitions.

NDIS Worker Screening

- Worker screening is a way to check that the people who are working or wish to work with the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) do not present an unacceptable risk to people with disability.
- Worker screening provides employers with an important tool for their recruitment, selection and screening processes, and in the ongoing review of the suitability of their workers.
- As a part of the (NDIS) Quality and Safeguarding Framework, the Commonwealth, states and territories are working to implement nationally consistent worker screening arrangements from 1 July 2019.
- The NDIS Worker Screening Intergovernmental Agreement was signed by the ACT on 4 December 2018 and has also been endorsed by all other Australian jurisdictions.

Background Information

- The Working with Vulnerable People (Background Checking) Act 2011 (WWVP) commenced on 8 November 2012. It aims to reduce the risk of harm or neglect to vulnerable people in the ACT.
- The WWVP Act requires those who work or volunteer with vulnerable people to have a background check and be registered.
- The WWVP scheme has progressively been implemented across a range of sectors since November 2012.
- The Working with Vulnerable People (Background Checking) Act 2011 (WWVP Act) was reviewed in 2016-17 and Cabinet agreed to the Review Report's recommendations.
- A review of the scheme is a legislative requirement at year three and year seven of implementation. The final legislative review is due in 2019 – this review will be centred on the Risk Assessment Guidelines for the scheme.

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ACT Government

QUESTION TIME BRIEF

Portfolio/s: Community Services & Facilities

Disability

ISSUE: **National approach to NDIS Worker Screening**

Talking points:

- A Bill amending the *Working with Vulnerable People (Background Checking) Act 2011* was passed in the Legislative Assembly on 16 May 2019 enabling the ACT to take steps toward national consistency in background checking with the inclusion of a national approach to NDIS worker screening in the existing Scheme.
- The changes to the Working with Vulnerable People (WWVP) Scheme bring together the best practice principles from the Royal Commission, our own review of the legislation and national negotiations on a consistent approach to background checking.
- This is the first tranche of legislative amendments specifically addressing a nationally consistent approach to worker screening and some provisions from the legislation review, there are other tranches to come that will finalise amendments from the review and recommendations from the Royal Commission.
- Amendments to the scheme strengthen the protections for vulnerable people in the ACT and enhance our capacity to impose restrictions on people who, by their past behaviours, have demonstrated that they pose an unacceptable risk to vulnerable people.
- Changes to the Scheme balance operational efficiency and red tape reduction, with increased protections for vulnerable people. This will be achieved through actions such as removing the need to have a registration card and simplifying renewal of registration; strengthening information sharing; and introducing new powers for the Commissioner to limit a person's engagement in the Scheme when unacceptable risk is identified.
- The new provisions will commence 1 July 2020.

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ACT Government

QUESTION TIME BRIEF

Key Information

- The ACT is one of four jurisdictions with legislation enabling commencement of a nationally consistent approach to worker screening, as agreed in the NDIS Quality and Safeguarding Framework.
- The ACT is working toward a 1 July 2020 full implementation of nationally consistent worker screening. Other items for implementation include the establishment of ongoing monitoring, establishment of an IT platform to communicate with the National Clearance Database and administrative change management processes for Access Canberra Worker Screening Units.

Background Information

- The ACT agreed to implement nationally consistent worker screening on 4 December 2018 by signing the *Intergovernmental Agreement on Nationally consistent NDIS Worker Screening*.
- The precursor to the IGA was agreement to the *NDIS National Quality and Safeguarding Framework* which was agreed by the ACT at the Council of Australian Governments meeting on 9 December 2016.

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