

Commissioning Conversations #13

We provide this edition of Commissioning Conversations at the close of 2022. It can act as a summary of where we are at as the year ends and serve to refresh memories in the new year as staff return from well-earned summer breaks.

The strategic commissioning teams of CSD and ACT Health wish everyone a very restful and restorative Christmas season and look forward to collaborating with you further in 2023.

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COMMISSIONING – 2022 YEAR IN REVIEW

Commissioning gained significant momentum in 2022, with multiple commissioning cycles underway across the community and health sector.

We learnt a lot about how we collectively deliver our shared reform to the human services system. We shifted from commissioning as a concept to commissioning in practice.

We are just 18 months into a 10-year reform, yet benefits are already emerging from the 15 commissioning cycles where government, non-government organisations and people with lived experience are collaborating to:

- design with services users and people with lived experience
- design services and supports that are more culturally responsive for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
- design safer, welcoming, and inclusive services for young people design a mix of connected services for people with complex needs such as people experiencing homelessness with wrap around supports for mental health, drug and alcohol rehabilitation, domestic violence, or cultural healing
- respond to changing community need as our population grows and evolves
- deliver greater service capacity and certainty with longer funding agreements
- develop a common understanding of the value of peak organisations and a common set of outcomes to be achieved by peaks

We can also see system links strengthening and opportunities arising as the human service system reform and commissioning approach gains momentum – such as:


- improving trust and relationships between government and the NGO sector
- organic connections between funded services that can be formalised or reinforced like homelessness, alcohol and drug dependence or domestic violence supports

- addressing service gaps or misalignment where emerging needs are not effectively met such as the increase in school refusal and the impact on youth services

We appreciate long term reform takes time, energy, and commitment. This is just the beginning, and more benefits will emerge and be realised as we continue commissioning together.

We encourage you all to stay informed and involved as we continue to commission to ensure we have the right services and supports to for the health and wellbeing of vulnerable Canberrans.

2022-2024 COMMISSIONING ROADMAP – OUT NOW

	<p>Last week we launched 2022-2024 Commissioning Roadmap in a webinar for the government and non-government sector.</p> <p>You can watch the launch video here.</p>
<p>As commissioning gained momentum in 2022; it was clear how important the Commissioning Roadmap is for everyone to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • plan and participate– being informed of upcoming cycles and phases • understand – key concepts and the overall system reform • be assured – governance checks and balances are in place • develop – by learning about the skills and capabilities for commissioning 	

The 2022-2024 Commissioning Roadmap was an opportunity to refresh based on experience and to ensure we had relevant and useful advice and forecast information for everyone.

We present the 2022-2024 Commissioning Roadmap as three (3) distinct booklets available for download and as accessible content throughout the refreshed commissioning website:

- [Commissioning as a 10-year reform](#)
- [Commissioning in practice](#)
- [Commissioning progress and plans through to 2024](#)

We will refresh the Commissioning Roadmap again in late 2024 for the period of 2025 to 2028. **Find it - access the 2022-2024 Commissioning Roadmap [here.](#)**

COMMISSIONING RESOURCES – OUT NOW

We need resources to support us all on our commissioning journey.

We have released the first tranche of tools, templates and guides [online](#) to support commissioners and sector partners and participants.

You will find the ‘What is commissioning?’ video; a guide to lived experience in commissioning, templates for commissioning intentions, discovery paper, planning collaboration; strategic

investment plan; tools like the standard commissioning presentation, post activity survey, lessons learnt reflections or the lived experience checklist.

There is more to come. We are developing other resources with the support of the sector and in 2023 we will release more resources for transition planning; lived experience in commissioning, outcomes reporting and effective facilitation.

There are also a range of commissioning forums for government and non-government organisations – [get involved](#).

Find it – [tools, templates and training](#) and [stay informed](#).

WHAT IS NEW ON THE COMMISSIONING WEBSITE

We have overhauled the commissioning website to make it easier to navigate – here’s a quick guide:

- [Home](#) – listen to Minister Stephen-Smith Commissioning Roadmap launch message
 - [Commissioning as a 10-year reform](#) – find out about the strategic challenges we need to address to realise reform of the human service system
 - [Approach](#) – all the background on commissioning, our pick is the advice on planning for intersectionality impacts
 - [The Cycle](#) – a phase by phase breakdown of the commissioning cycles
 - [Monitoring and evaluation](#) – links to the post activity survey and annual survey benchmark
 - [Sectors in Progress](#) – a page for nearly every active commissioning cycle
 - [Resources](#) – case studies, tools, terms, our pick the commissioning journey timeline
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KEY UPCOMING DATES & ACTIVITIES 2023

- [6 February - Seniors Card Review consultation closes](#)
- [March – Homelessness – First procurement processes open](#)
- [10 February - Child, Young People and Families – Input and Feedback due for Discovery paper and Government Interface Workshop](#)
- [1 March – Child, Young People and Families – Government Interface Workshop](#)
- [29 March – Child, Young People and Families – Needs and Problem Framing Workshop](#)
- [April – Homelessness – First procurement process closes](#)
- [April – Community Support – Procurement process opens](#)
- [27 April – Child, Young People and Families – Current service user journeys and experiences World Café](#)
- [May – Community Support – Procurement process closes](#)

Stay informed of the indicative commissioning schedule via the [commissioning calendar](#), a tool to support your participation.

This indicative calendar can include ‘to-be-confirmed’ dates that may change but will be confirmed via email invitations to commissioning activities. Check the sub-sector pages for further insights on timings and processes where you may be a participant.

COMMISSIONING CYCLE UPDATES

We are actively commissioning 32* sub-sectors for Whole of Government; ACT Health Directorate; Community Services Directorate and Justice and Community Safety Directorate. Commissioning status as of December 2022:

DISCOVER	STRATEGISE	DESIGN	INVEST	DELIVER	INTEGRATE
10	8	7	2	5	3

**some cycles are in the second round of commissioning or integrating with other commissioning cycles so that the numbers below add to more than 32*

[Commissioning is a cycle](#) through which we examine community needs together with more rigour; we collaborate across the sector and government to address service delivery gaps; and we explore opportunities to provide services in new ways.

The cycle is adaptable and involves several phases – discover, strategise, design, invest, deliver, integrate, and evaluation. The below are key updates grouped by where they sit in the cycle.

DISCOVER – We identify and document what we already know and what could be possible to explore through the commissioning cycle. We also plan our commissioning phases.

Self-determination in commissioning

We encourage self-determination by fostering the growth of Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations within the Canberra community. This means more services, programs, and supports delivered by community for community.

Through Commissioning, we seek to design, invest in, and deliver culturally safe services that foster truth-telling, healing, connection, and positive outcomes for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community of Canberra. Guided by Traditional Custodians, Elders and First Nations Community Controlled Organisations, commissioning cycles and practices are adapted for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander services and programs.

We adjust commissioning process to be culturally safe and meet engagement needs. We ensure we are working through genuine community-led solutions, and we look for opportunities to improve culturally safe service delivery across the sector, system, and services. Cultivating culturally responsive services across Canberra improves equitable access and choice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

We are actively commissioning or intend to commission by 2024, the following services or programs that are meeting the needs of the growing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community in Canberra.

- Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation/s for Housing
- Yerrabi Yurwang Child and Family Corporation
- Job Readiness Support Program
- Winnunga Nimmityjah
- Gugan Gulwan
- First Nations Justice Program/s

Commissioner: Cross-Government

More information: [Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commissioning - Commissioning](#)

Addressing Veteran Homelessness in the ACT

More than 22,000 veterans, people who have served in the Australian Defence Forces, call Canberra home. Veterans have been identified as a vulnerable population group at risk of homelessness both nationally and through the commissioning cycle for [homelessness services](#) in the ACT.

While the risk factors that contribute to veteran homelessness are like others such as relationship breakdown, unemployment, mental ill-health and addiction, veterans and their families may face additional challenges in terms of their mental health and wellbeing.

The Commissioner is developing a discovery paper as the first step in understanding the needs of veterans and their families before services can be designed that ensure our veteran community can get the support they need.

Share your insights, perspectives, and experiences.

Commissioner: Community Services Directorate

More information: osv@act.gov.au or visit [Veteran's Homelessness - Commissioning \(act.gov.au\)](#)

Community Language Schools Program

Canberra is a proud multicultural city - with nearly 1 in 4 Canberrans speaking a language other than English at home. 2000 Canberra students are also educated in languages and culture through the Community Language Schools Program (the Program).

The Program builds connection within communities, encourages social cohesion, and strengthens familial ties through shared language. The Commissioner (government) undertook a Review of ACT Community Language Schools (the Review) in 2020. Although prior to the ACT commissioning approach, the Review identified community need, challenges, service providers and opportunities to improve service design, investment, and delivery.

The Commissioner is using this review to inform engagement with organisations and people with lived experience to further validate community needs, service design options and determine investment approaches.

Commissioner: Community Services Directorate

More information: oma@act.gov.au or visit [Community Language School Program - Commissioning \(act.gov.au\)](#)

Other DISCOVER commissioning cycles: [Children Services Program](#); [Community Development Program](#)

STRATEGISE - We examine what will meet the needs of the ACT population and deliver reform agendas.

Examining government interfaces for the Child, Youth and Family Services Program

Before we get too far into the commissioning cycle, there is a need to understand government interfaces across the human services system or how all our programs, services and activities connect or don't connect to meet the needs of children, young people, and families in the ACT who are vulnerable.

The small group of government and sector stakeholders who collaboratively designed the commissioning process for CYFSP identified government interfaces as a critical knowledge gap.

- We can't assess the needs of children, young people, and families in the ACT who are vulnerable, unless we first understand who is currently being supported across the whole

system – in Education, Health, Housing, Youth Justice, Child Protection, Child and Family Centres and other services for Children, young people, and families.

- We can't make changes to the CYFSP confidently without understanding impacts – i.e if those changes might create service gaps or impacts or increase demand in another part of the system – maybe your part?

On 1 March 2023, a Government Interface Roundtable will involve representatives from across the ACT Government that deliver initiatives, programs or services that support children, young people, and families.

Non-government organisations are also invited to review this discussion guide and the CYFSP draft Discovery Paper and share their initial thoughts, insights, and experiences.

Non-government perspectives will be helpful for the Government Interface Roundtable by identifying duplication, service gaps or emerging or unmet community needs.

To prepare for the Government Interface Roundtable, review the [Input and Discussion Guide](#) and the [CYFSP Discovery paper](#) and provide your insights and feedback by 10 February 2023.

Commissioner: Community Services Directorate

More information: visit [CYFSP Sector in Progress](#) webpage to access the documents listed above

Contact: CYFSP@act.gov.au

Advocacy scope and innovation key focus for peak provider organisations

In a first commissioning cycle during 2022, consumer and industry peak organisations co-designed new longer term grant arrangements. The new longer-term arrangements helped provide funding certainty while clarifying the collective impact of advocacy work through a common set of outcomes.

A second cycle of commissioning is now underway to explore opportunities for further collaboration and sector innovation from October 2022 to June 2024.

Commissioner: Cross-Directorate or Whole of Government

More information: visit [Peak Providers Sector in Progress](#) webpage to access the documents listed above

Contact: CSDCommissioning@act.gov.au

Commissioning multiple programs supporting Canberrans cultural diversity

A wide range of initiatives is required to meet the needs of Canberra's growing multicultural community. The Commissioner (government) will soon be collaborating with non-government organisations, people with lived experience and the Canberra community to review three (3) key initiatives using the commissioning method.

- Workforce Participation Program provides the opportunity to gain office skills and Australian workplace experience supporting people to build networks and enter the paid workforce with confidence.
- Welcome2Canberra helps connect the community with local organisations and services they may need to settle in Canberra.
- Multicultural Honorary Ambassador Program recognises ACT residents who play an active role in promoting the ACT as a welcoming and inclusive place.

This streamlined commissioning cycle will look at current and emerging community needs, and funding arrangements for multicultural services in the ACT.

Commissioner: Community Services Directorate

More information: oma@act.gov.au or visit [Multicultural Inclusion Programs - Commissioning \(act.gov.au\)](#)

Seniors respond to the review of the ACT Seniors Card Program

The ACT Seniors Card is part of an Australia-wide scheme that recognises the valuable contribution of older people in their local community.

Commissioning is our opportunity to ensure the ACT Seniors Card Program is effectively meeting the needs of our growing population with the ACT being home to more than 50,000 people who are over 60 years old.

Library drop-in sessions are now underway to understand the benefits and experiences of using the Seniors Card-day to day.

Individuals and business owners, who use the card or provide a benefit to the program can share their views via drop-in sessions throughout January or [via the online survey](#).

Feedback will help identify community needs, benefits or program improvements for further collaboration.

Commissioner: Community Services Directorate

More information: ovs@act.gov.au or visit [ACT Senior Card Program - Commissioning](#)

From effective pilot to program - Family Safety Initiatives – Health Justice Partnership

Commissioning is our opportunity to ensure our services in the ACT effectively meet the needs of our growing population, including over 6000 pregnant women and new families annually.

With at least 1 in 3 women at risk of domestic and family violence, research tells us that women are at greater risk of experiencing violence from an intimate partner during pregnancy. For women in intimate partnerships where violence already exists, this violence often increases in severity during pregnancy and into the first month of motherhood.

The Health Justice Partnerships Service is providing early support to families at risk and following a trial, the service has been subject to an independent external review since June 2022.

This review focuses on the outcomes of the service for the people who use it, the impact it has on our legal and health partners, and its contribution as a response in the broader service system. The review includes engagement with women with lived experience of domestic and family violence who are and have been clients of the service and the relevant stakeholders.

The review will help the Commissioner understand how effective the service is, identify opportunities for improvement, and make decisions about future funding and program development.

Commissioner: Community Services Directorate

More information: saferfamilies@act.gov.au or visit [Health Justice Partnerships Service - Commissioning \(act.gov.au\)](#)

Other STRATEGISE commissioning cycles: [Primary Health Care – Young People](#)

DESIGN - We define and design the service requirements and service outcomes.

A busy year for the Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drug sub-sector

Throughout 2022, the Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drug (ATOD) sub-sector has supported the ATOD Policy Team across multiple streams of collaborative consultation. Those who have contributed to the co-design have provided valuable insight into what can be done to ensure meaningful sector-wide action and improve the lives of those in our community. Notable successes we've shared with you this year have included:

- Extensions and amendments of ATOD service contracts
- Planning and design for the future ATOD service system
- Establishment of the Fixed-site Pill Testing Pilot Program
- Passing of the Drugs of Dependence (Personal Use) Amendment Bill
- Launch of the ACT Drug Strategy Action Plan 2022-2026, and
- Additional \$13m in funding for the ATOD sector in the 2022-2023 Budget.

We are in the process of finalising the key outputs of the Design phase of the current commissioning process, before transitioning to the Invest phase of the process in early 2023. A summary of the workshop discussions held throughout the Design phase have been developed into a Listening Report, which will be published soon, alongside an updated Health Needs Assessment.

We will be using the Listening Report to help inform the development of our Strategic Investment Plan, which will synthesise everything we have heard through our multiple streams of collaboration with the sector and our findings in the Health Needs Assessment. The Strategic Investment Plan will be published in early 2023 and will detail the intentions for the ACT Government's investment in the ATOD sector, including the proposed approach and indicative timeframes for procuring services.

The ATOD Team would like to extend a big thank you to our stakeholders for your contributions to the various ATOD projects of 2022, and for your time and genuine engagement in the recent Design phase workshops.

Commissioner: ACT Health Directorate

More information: [AOD Commissioning webpage](#)

Contact: AOD Policy inbox: AODPolicy@act.gov.au

Other DESIGN commissioning cycles: [Sexually Transmissible Infection and Blood Borne Virus](#); Palliative Care; Maternity Support Services; [Mental Health](#); [Chronic Conditions](#); Aged Care Respite

INVEST - We purchase the right services from the right provider at the right price, through a fair and transparent process.

Strategic investment plan released for homelessness services

The Strategic Investment Plan has been released and is now available on the Commissioning website. This Plan outlines the intentions of how we propose to invest in the Sector, the proposed approach, and indicative timeframes for the next stage of Commissioning.

An Insights Report capturing everything we have heard and worked through is also available as well as listening reports from all homelessness commissioning activities.

We have also commenced the SHIP (Specialist Homelessness Information Platform) enhancement project. As we move toward outcomes-based performance, having better data to inform and drive

investment and outcomes has become critical and has been identified as one of the key priorities of commissioning. Over the past two months, several workshops have been organised with the Data Working Group comprising representatives from our homelessness services to discuss specifications for the enhancements.

Commissioner: Community Services Directorate

More information: [Homelessness Services](#)

Contact: CSDSHHS@act.gov.au

Community Support Investment Strategy released

Current Service Funding Agreements will be extended for three months to 30 September 2023 to allow for procurement of services under the newly named Temporary Assistance and Community Supports (TACS) Program.

Procurement documentation is due for release in April 2023 with the Community Support Investment Strategy providing a high level summary of the new service specifications and details on the procurement pathway.

Commissioner: ACT Health Directorate

More information: [Community Support - Commissioning \(act.gov.au\)](#)

Contact: acthdisabilityandcommunity@act.gov.au

DELIVER - We maintain collaboration between sector partners and commissioner to deliver the desired outcomes.

Child Protection and Out of Home Care (Next Steps for our Kids)

The Child and Family Services Reform Forum was held on 6 December 2022. Minister for Families and Community Services, Rachel Stephen-Smith MLA, convened the forum which focused on the next steps in the ACT Government's ongoing reform program for child and family services.

The forum provided an opportunity to draw on the expertise and commitment of the government and non-government agencies that support some of the most vulnerable children, young people, and families in the ACT community.

Workshops at the forum were focused on supporting the development of the first 4-year action plan under the *Next Steps for Our Kids* strategy. Clear priorities and dependencies were identified alongside discussion about which partners need to come together to achieve the goals of the strategy, and in which order activities should be progressed to bring about meaningful change and positive outcomes for children, young people, families, and carers.

A communique with more detail about the forum is [available here](#).

Services: The existing *A Step Up for Our Kids Continuum of Care* and *Strengthening High Risk Families* contracts were extended to 30 June 2023. New contracts were executed for the Next Steps standalone services (which expire on 30 June 2025). The procurement for a new provider of a specialised therapeutic care services package has been completed and negotiations are underway with the preferred provider.

Stage 2 Services: Engagement is planned with selected existing service providers and other selected stakeholders from January 2023.

Commissioner: Community Services Directorate

More information: Regular updates on the progress of the *Next Steps* reform are available on the [CSD website](#) and the [Next Steps for Our Kids 2022-2030, YourSay ACT](#) page.
Contact: CBRStepsUp@act.gov.au

Other DELIVERY commissioning cycles: [\); Safe and Connected Youth \(cycles 1 and 2\)](#), [Peak Provider Organisations](#); [Disability Systemic Advocacy](#)

INTEGRATE – We integrate what we have learnt and what we know now with other commissioning cycles and for our future cycles to benefit whole-system reform.

Cycles with extensive insights available to integrate with other active cycles include:

- [Housing and Homelessness](#)
- [Safe and Connected Youth](#)

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If you are interested in regularly receiving Commissioning Conversations, please email CSDCommissioning@act.gov.au and ask to be added to the distribution list.

USEFUL LINKS

- [Joint ACT Government Commissioning website](#)
- [Commissioning Calendar](#)

[Post-activity survey](#) **Follow us on social media**

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www.act.gov.au/commissioning