

Answers to questions

Budget—capital works (Question No 2)

Ms Lee asked the Chief Minister, upon notice, on 4 December 2020 (*redirected to the Treasurer*):

In relation to the 19 initiatives listed on pages 26-27 of the Pre-election Budget Update on design work and feasibility, of which 12 have received funding for feasibility studies and seven have received funding for design work, (a) what is the cost of each of the 12 projects that received funding for a feasibility study, (b) what is the cost of each of the seven projects that received funding for design work, (c) what is the scope of each of these studies, (d) who undertook this work, (e) how were they contracted, (f) what is the timeframe for completion, (g) how many have been started, (h) how many have been completed and (i) when will a decision be made as to whether they proceed to implementation.

Mr Barr: The answer to the member's question is as follows:

The answer to the Member's question is provided at **Attachment A**

(A copy of the attachment is available at the Chamber Support Office).

Planning—Holt (Question No 15)

Mrs Kikkert asked the Minister for Planning and Land Management, upon notice, on 4 December 2020:

- (1) Noting that the detached housing blocks on the eastern side of Lionel Rose Street, Holt, are compact blocks, only 12.5 metres wide, resulting in minimum side boundary setbacks of nil and a minimum rear boundary setback of 3m, according to Table 7 of the ACT Government's Single Dwelling Housing Development Code and that Rule 37A of this code, however, requires that 'a daytime living area is provided with a minimum 4m² of transparent vertical glazing that is oriented between 45° east of north and 45° west of north'. For a structure built on one of these blocks, the only wall that could allow for the required solar access would be the north-facing side wall. In reality, this is impossible because the north-facing side walls on all but corner blocks are contiguous with the south-facing side walls of neighbouring structures and therefore have no solar access, on what grounds did the ACT Government give approval to a housing development mainly comprised of compact blocks that cannot physically comply with Rule 37A of the Single Dwelling Housing Development Code.
- (2) In relation to detached houses already built on the eastern side of Lionel Rose Street, Holt, was a blanket exemption to Rule 37A given to these structures, or was each required to seek an individual exemption.
- (3) If each structure was required to seek an individual exemption, what was the process of seeking an exemption in each case, and how was the assessment carried out.

- (4) Why has the ACT Government begun enforcing compliance with this rule for owners of as-yet undeveloped blocks, in light of the fact that many houses that do not comply with Rule 37A have already been built on these blocks.
- (5) Can the Minister provide a clear description of how a dwelling built on a non-corner compact block on the eastern side of Lionel Rose Street, Holt, can structurally comply with the minimum rear boundary setback of three metres and Rule 37A regarding solar access.

Mr Gentleman: The answer to the member's question is as follows:

- (1) The Holt Estate Development Plan was given development approval on 4 April 2016 prior to the introduction of Rule 37A into the Single Dwelling Housing Development Code on 7 September 2016.
- (2) No. The planning and land authority (the authority) does not have general legislative powers to issue exemptions from planning requirements.
- (3) The planning and land authority (the authority) does not have general legislative powers to issue exemptions from planning requirements. The exemptions from the requirement to obtain development approval are set out in Schedule 1 of the *Planning and Development Regulation 2008*. For residential development, a lessee needs to comply with all provisions of the Single Dwelling Housing Development Code, including rule 37A, in order to be exempt from requiring development approval.

The authority can issue an *exemption declaration* in limited circumstances, as set out in section 1.100A and 1.100AB of Schedule 1 of the Regulation. However, this does not include non-compliance with Rule 37A.

Where a development does not comply with Rule 37A, and is therefore not exempt development, a development application is required and will be assessed against Criterion 37A.

- (4) The sites were selected at random as a part of a proactive audit program. Properties that had already been issued with a Certificate of Occupancy and Use (COU) were not audited.
- (5) The Single Dwelling Housing Development Code allows a 0 metre setback on the northern boundary. However, this does not mandate a 0 metre setback and a dwelling could be designed to be set back further to help achieve compliance with Rule 37A.

It may not be possible to meet the requirements of Rule 37A in every instance. In this case, there is an ability to lodge a Development Application (DA) to be assessed on its merits against Criterion 37A.

Planning—transmission lines (Question No 16)

Mrs Kikkert asked the Minister for Planning and Land Management, upon notice, on 4 December 2020:

- (1) Noting that certain residents in Lionel Rose Street, Holt, purchased blocks and built

homes without any knowledge of the 330kV transmission lines that would be erected directly behind their properties because the ACT Government failed to include the development application for this major infrastructure project on the official lease conveyancing reports. Leaseholders have been informed that at least some of their residential fences must now be earthed to avoid the risk of induced voltage. Also noting that in question on Notice No 2915 (Ninth Assembly) I asked, ‘Who will pay for rectification work to residents’ fences that require earthing’ and in response, I was told that ‘the ACT Government is engaging with the utility around responsibilities’. Further noting that on 14 September 2020, residents were informed via an email from the utility that ‘in principle, the earthing of fences in these circumstances is the responsibility of the property owner, however given the history of this matter we have been in consultation with the ACT government in an attempt to assist landowners. We will follow up this matter in coming weeks and will provide an update’. The 330kV transmission lines have been live since at least 4 November 2020, according to the utility and an audit identified certain lengths of fence located on residential blocks in Lionel Rose Street that needed to be earthed, have all these lengths of fence been earthed now; if so, on which date/s were they earthed; if not, why not.

- (2) Why is it the responsibility of property owners to earth fences on their properties that were safe from induced voltage before the construction of high-voltage transmission lines directly behind their houses.
- (3) Who has paid or will pay for the earthing of these fences, and how much was/is the total cost, and if shared, how much did/will each party pay.

Mr Gentleman: The answer to the member’s question is as follows:

- (1) The information that some Lionel Rose Street, Holt, residential fences need to be earthed is not correct. Whilst an initial generic audit by Transgrid based on general criteria that was conducted in late 2019 indicated that some fences may have required earthing, a subsequent site-specific Stockdill project assessment showed that residential fence earthing would not be needed. This position has been supported by recent independent on-site testing showing compliance with Australian Standards. TransGrid has additionally advised that the 330kV transmission line is safe.
- (2) TransGrid had advised that if fence earthing was in fact required, TransGrid would undertake this work prior to line energisation. Standard utility communication regarding fencing risks is typically tailored to people building residences near existing transmission lines, not new lines.
- (3) Not applicable.

Community Services Directorate—contracts (Question No 56)

Mrs Kikkert asked the Assistant Minister for Families and Community Services, upon notice, on 4 December 2020:

- (1) Did the Community Services Directorate (CSD) in 2018–19, let 94 contracts worth almost \$190 million be exempt from tender; if so, for each of these contracts, can the Minister provide (a) name of contractor, (b) service contracted for, (c) dollar value of contract, (d) expiration date of contract, (e) length of time that this contract has been held by the same contractor and (f) for any contract valued between \$25,001 and

\$200,000, the dollar value of each written quote obtained from competitive contractor.

- (2) Did the CSD in 2018–19 let 71 contracts with values above \$200,000 without open tender; if so, for each of these contracts, can the Minister provide (a) name of contractor, (b) service contracted for, (c) dollar value of contract, (d) expiration date of contract, (e) length of time that this contract has been held by the same contractor and (f) reason why the CSD overrode current procurement policy guidelines (and legislation) in awarding this contract.

Ms Davidson: The answer to the member’s question is as follows:

- (1) In 2018–19, CSD exercised procurement activities in accordance with the ACT Government tender thresholds and complied with procurement policies and procedures as stated in the *Government Procurement Act 2001* (the Act) and the *Government Procurement Regulation 2007* (the Regulation).

Fifty-four of the ‘Single Select’ contracts relate to programs where existing contracts were extended for an additional term in accordance with Procurement Guidelines and approved by the ACT Government Procurement Board (GPB).

(a)-(e) Details provided in Attachment A.

(f) This information is commercial-in-confidence.

- (2) (a)-(e) Details provided in Attachment B.

(f) CSD has acted in accordance with procurement policy and legislation in determining the most appropriate procurement methodology for each process.

(Copies of the attachments are available at the Chamber Support Office).

Community Services Directorate—Senior Practitioner (Question No 65)

Mrs Kikkert asked the Minister for Disability, upon notice, on 4 December 2020:

- (1) What are the complete powers, roles and responsibilities of the Senior Practitioner.
- (2) What data does the Senior Practitioner collect in relation to people living with disability in the ACT.
- (3) What data does the Senior Practitioner collect in relation to restrictive practices.
- (4) How many full-time equivalent staff are currently employed in the Office of the Senior Practitioner.
- (5) How many staff are currently employed, what are their work classifications and what type of employment are they engaged in, ie full-time, part-time, casual etc.
- (6) What is the total number of complaints received by the Senior Practitioner for each year since appointment to the date this question on notice was published.

Ms Davidson: The answer to the member’s question is as follows:

- (1) The powers, roles and responsibilities of the Senior Practitioner are described in the *Senior Practitioner Act 2018* (the Act).

The Senior Practitioner is responsible for the implementation of the intent and objects of this Act, specifically to provide a framework for reducing and eliminating the use of restrictive practices by providers.

The functions of the Senior Practitioner are set out in section 26 of the Act and includes broad oversight and regulation of the use of restrictive practices in accordance with the Act, education and dissemination of information related to restrictive practices and the rights of people subject to restrictive practices, give advice to people who may be subject to restrictive practices and to carry out research related to restrictive practices.

The Senior Practitioner must make Guidelines (Section 12 and 21) regarding positive behaviour support plans and panels; may also make Guidelines for the Act (Section 27), respond to complaints, carry out investigations and give Directions to providers (Part 5), and share information with key entities (Part 6). Part 8 of the Act provisions regarding possible offences should restrictive practices be used other than in accordance with the Act.

- (2) The Office of the Senior Practitioner receives the names, date of birth, gender, address and service provider details for people living with a disability in the ACT who have had a restrictive practice use reported to the Office. The Senior Practitioner may also request additional information under section 22 of the Act in relation to registration of positive behaviour support panels.

- (3) The Office of the Senior Practitioner collects data on restrictive practices as described in Section 10 of the Act:

- the name of the person on whom the restrictive practice was used;
- whether the person was a child when the restrictive practice was used;
- the kind of restrictive practice used;
- for how long the restrictive practice was used;
- the reason why the restrictive practice was used;
- what prior attempt (if any) was made to avoid the use of the restrictive practice;
- the effect of the restrictive practice on the person's behaviour;
- the name of the person who authorised the use of the restrictive practice (if relevant);
- the name of the person who used the restrictive practice.

- (4) The number of full-time equivalent (FTE) permanent and temporary staff who work in the Office of the Senior Practitioner is 4.4.

- (5) The current staff complement comprises:

- Executive Level, Executive Branch Manager – 1 FTE.
- Senior Officer A, Senior Director – 1 FTE.
- Senior Officer B, Director, part time – 0.4 FTE.

- Senior Officer C, Assistant Director – 1 FTE.
 - Administrative Services Officer 6 – 1 FTE.
- (6) There have been 23 complaints in total as at 4 December 2020. On all occasions the complaints were referred back to the Provider, who investigated. The Senior Practitioner has not, to date, instigated an own motion investigation.
- 2018: 3 complaints
 - 2019: 18 complaints
 - 2020: 2 complaints

**Government—Discrimination, Health Services, Disability and Community Services Commissioner
(Question No 69)**

Mrs Kikkert asked the Minister for Disability, upon notice, on 4 December 2020 (*redirected to the Minister for Human Rights*):

- (1) What are the complete powers, roles and responsibilities of the Discrimination, Health Services, Disability and Community Services Commissioner.
- (2) What data does the Commissioner collect in relation to people living with disability in the ACT.
- (3) Does the Commissioner engage any staff to assist in carrying out their role; if so, how many (a) full-time equivalent staff are currently employed and (b) staff are currently employed, what are their work classifications and what type of employment are they engaged in, ie full-time, part-time, casual etc.
- (4) What is the total number of complaints received by the Commissioner for each year the past four years to the date this question on notice was published.

Ms Cheyne: The answer to the member's question is as follows:

- (1) The DHSDCS has a range of roles and responsibilities outlined in the legislation which includes handling individual complaints, undertaking systemic investigations, participating in policy and legislative reform processes, undertaking community education and training across the areas of legislative responsibility. The DHSDCSC handles (or will handle) complaints about
 - Discrimination
 - Health services including individual registered practitioners
 - Services for children and young people
 - Services for older people
 - Retirement villages
 - Disability services
 - Vulnerable people (abuse, neglect & exploitation of older people and people with a disability)
 - Veterinary Services
 - Victims of Crime Charter of Rights (1/21)

- Occupancy (2/2021)
- Sexuality and gender identity conversion practices (4/2021)

The powers roles and responsibilities of the Discrimination, Health Services, Disability and Community Services Commissioner (DHSDCS Commissioner) are provided for in the *Human Rights Commission Act 2005* at

- Division 3.4, Section 21, Disability and Community Services commissioner's functions
 - Division 3.5, Section 23, Discrimination Commissioners functions
 - Division 3.6, Section 25, Health Services commissioners functions
 - Part 4 of the HRC Act which provides the complaint handling functions
 - Part 5 of the HRC Act regarding Health codes, health profession boards and veterinary practitioners and the relationship between the commission, the health profession boards and the veterinary practitioners board
 - Part 6 of the HRC Act, Miscellaneous
- (2) The DHSDCS Commissioner collects data regarding people with a disability in the ACT who make a complaint to the Commission, including the nature of the person's disability, noting that provision of this information is voluntary.
- (3) The Commissioner currently has 11 staff (10.2 FTE) who assist in carrying out the role and responsibilities of the commissioner who are public servants employed by the Human Rights Commission not directly engaged by the DHSDCSC. The staff profile is
1 x FT SOG B, 5 x FT SOG C, 3 x PT SOG C, 1 x FT APS 6, 1 x FT APS 5

(4)

Complaints received	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	1 July-30/11/2020
Total	507	633	683	829	350

Government—disability employment strategy (Question No 74)

Mrs Kikkert asked the Minister for Disability, upon notice, on 4 December 2020 (*redirected to the Chief Minister*):

- (1) Is there currently an ACT disability employment strategy.
- (2) How does the ACT Government support disability employment in the ACT private sector.
- (3) What has been the total number of employees and the percentage of disability employment in the ACT public service, for each financial year for the past four years to the date this question on notice was published.
- (4) Are there any plans to increase the percentage of disability employment in the ACT public service; if so, what measures does the ACT Government intend to take.

Mr Barr: The answer to the member's question is as follows:

- (1) The ACTPS People with Disability Employment Framework is available on the

ACTPS Employment Portal.

- (2) The ACT Government in partnership with the ACT Inclusion Council and the Canberra Business Chamber created the Inclusion in Employment Project to expand employment opportunities for people with disability in Canberra's private sector. Twenty-four people with disability were employed as a direct result of the project.

The ACT Government further supports disability employment in the ACT private sector through subsidised Australian apprenticeships. In addition to the base training subsidy, the ACT Australian Apprenticeships program provides a \$500 loading to further support each eligible Australian apprentice with disability. Should an Australian apprentice with disability require specialised equipment, an interpreter, a mentor or a tutor, assistance with transport, or other learning or wellbeing support, then additional support funding is also available.

In response to the COVID-19 health emergency, the ACT Government is also making available fee-free, work-related training to support the employment of jobseekers and young school-leavers (aged 17 to 24 years)—including people with disability.

- (3)

Financial Year	Headcount	Percentage of ACTPS
2016-17	458	2.2%
2017-18	521	2.4%
2018-19	565	2.5%
2019-20	622	2.7%

- (4) The ACTPS is currently reviewing the ACT People with Disability Employment Framework, including employment targets for people with disability.

Education—students with a disability (Question No 75)

Mrs Kikkert asked the Minister for Disability, upon notice, on 4 December 2020 (*redirected to the Minister for Education and Youth Affairs*):

- (1) Is there currently an ACT disability education strategy.
- (2) How does the ACT Government support disability education, in relation to both public and private education.
- (3) How many students in the ACT public education system are identified as living with a disability, to the date this question on notice was published.
- (4) Of those students identified in part (3), how many are in (a) primary school, (b) high school and (c) college and what is the percentage of students relating to each.
- (5) What kind of training, education and development is given to teachers to support students living with disability and how regular is the training provided.
- (6) Can teachers request additional training and support if they feel there is a need.
- (7) What specialists are employed to support students living with disability and what is

the nature of the support that they provide.

- (8) How many specialists are employed across the ACT.
- (9) Are there any other workers that are employed by the ACT Government to support students with disability; if so, what is the nature of their training and work.
- (10) Which ten ACT government schools have the highest percentage of students living with disability enrolled and what is the percentage for each school.
- (11) What concerns have been identified by the ACT Government in relation to disability education, and what measures will the Government take to improve and/or resolve these concerns.

Ms Berry: The answer to the member's question is as follows:

1. The Future of Education Strategy (the FoE) is relevant for all students, including those with disability.

The *Disability Standards for Education 2005* developed under the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* clarify and elaborate the legal obligations specifying how education and training are to be made accessible to students with disability. The ACT Students with Disability Meeting their Educational Needs Policy confirms the Directorate's commitment to supporting students with disability and complies with the requirements of the *Disability Discrimination Act 1991* and the *Disability Standards for Education 2005*.

2. ACT public schools are committed to meeting the needs of students with disability. In partnership with the student, parents, carers and other professionals, schools make reasonable adjustments for students with disability at the time of their enrolment and during the course of their education, supporting them to access and participate in the school curriculum, programs and activities on the same basis as their peers.

Disability education in public schools is supported in a range of ways, including:

- additional resource allocation to schools to support students with disability;
- provision of supports and adjustments depending on the needs of the student, this can include modifications to school environment, adjustments to the curriculum and support for teachers to develop specific skills;
- a diverse workforce that includes teachers, school leaders, learning support assistants, social workers and allied health professionals with expertise in developing supports for physical, sensory, communication and social skill needs of students with disability;
- workforce capability development through ongoing professional learning opportunities for teachers and other school staff; and
- collaborating with key stakeholders, including students, their families and external support services to better understand the needs of students and how to design a responsive and successful individualised educational program.

The ACT Education Directorate connects closely with the non-government school sector through developing networks, professional learning opportunities and sharing resources and supports.

3. For questions relating to student populations the Directorate uses the annual Census of

ACT public schools conducted in August each year as the most accurate source. At August 2020 census, there were 2,647 students with disability representing 5.3% of the student population.

4. At August 2020, there were:
 - 1563 students with disability in Primary School (years K-6) representing 5.7% of the student population
 - 770 students with disability in High School (years 7-10) representing 6.5% of the student population
 - 314 students with disability in College (years 11-12) representing 4.9% of the student population
5. ACT public school leaders and teachers are provided access to a range of resources, training and professional learning opportunities to support students with disability and foster inclusive school communities, such as: pedagogy including differentiation, responding to need and universal design for learning; developing individual learning plans, transition plans, manual handling and mealtime assistance planning; whole school frameworks and holistic approaches to behaviour supports and interventions to support positive interactions such as Positive Behaviour for Learning, Team Teach, Positive Behaviour Support Planning, Reducing and Eliminating Restrictive Practice, Essential Skills for Classroom Teachers, Social and Emotional Learning strategies; Trauma Informed Practice and Everyone Everyday creating inclusive school environments.

All ACT public schools have a Disability Education Coordination Officer (DECO) responsible for supporting students with disability and or diverse learning needs in the school and their teachers. The DECO is the liaison point for school staff, families and support services. They are supported through a network managed by the Education Support Office to coordinate professional discussions, learning and training programs and a community of practice.

There are also various training opportunities provided by external community organisations that teachers are supported to access.

6. Yes, teachers can request additional training and support if they feel there is a need. Teachers can talk to their school's Disability Education Coordination Officers (DECO), school psychologists, Network Student Engagement Teams and the Education Support Office to find out about the range of resources and support available to grow their capability.
7. There are a range of specialists employed to support all students, including students with disability, in ACT public schools such as teachers, school leaders, learning support assistants, youth workers, wellbeing support workers, psychologists, school youth health nurses and other allied health professionals including occupational therapists, speech pathologists and hearing and vision specialists.

These professionals provide various types of support and make reasonable adjustments to ensure all students can access and participate in learning. They also collaborate with school staff and provide professional learning to embed whole of school systems and to ensure quality teaching through coaching and mentoring to build capacity to develop classroom teacher pedagogy.

8. The number of specialist staff that support students in schools changes on a regular basis depending on the needs of the student population.

9. There are many other staff working within ACT Government services specifically for people with disability and services for people without disability that could at any point support students with disability. For example, bus drivers with disability awareness training; community liaison coordinators connecting families to services; clinical psychiatrists working in our hospitals; child protection workers supporting children, young people and/or parents with disability and Access Canberra staff facilitating complaints and feedback.
10. The four specialist public schools, Black Mountain School, Malkara School, The Woden School and Cranleigh School have our highest percentage of students with disability given all students attending these schools must meet the ACT Student Disability Education Criteria.

The ACT Government does not currently publicly release the number of students with disability attending each school.

11. In recent years the ACT Government has strengthened its commitment to supporting students with disability. The Future of Education Strategy has at its core an acknowledgement of inclusion within our schools and the need to place students at the centre of their learning.

The ACT Government continues to make significant investment to increase access to specialist supports within our schools and to grow capability of the workforce to better support students with disability and or diverse learning needs.

Government—carers strategy (Question No 76)

Mrs Kikkert asked the Minister for Disability, upon notice, on 4 December 2020:

- (1) How many people and what percentage of people are identified in the ACT as a carer for someone living with disability.
- (2) How does the ACT Government support carers for people living with disability.
- (3) In what ways will the ACT Government seek to develop and improve the ACT Carer's Strategy.
- (4) How many complaints has the ACT Government received in relation to carers for people living with disability.
- (5) What concerns have been identified by the ACT Government in relation to carers for people living with disability, and what measures will the Government take to improve and/or resolve these concerns.

Ms Davidson: The answer to the member's question is as follows:

- (1) According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics publication *Disability, Ageing and Carers, Australia: Summary of Findings*, released on 24 October 2019, there were approximately 50,200 people in the ACT who were identified as a carer for someone with disability representing an estimated 12.2 per cent of the total ACT population.

- (2) The ACT Government is committed to recognising and supporting carers and responding to their needs, rights, choices and opportunities to fully participate in all areas of life. This is demonstrated through the Government's funding of Carers ACT as a peak disability organisation to provide individual and systemic advocacy.

In 2017, the Government partnered with Carers ACT to develop the ACT Carers Strategy 2018-2028, a carer-led framework to support and recognise the contribution of all carers in the ACT. The strategy acknowledges the difference carers make by providing support and assistance for people who live with disability, physical or mental health conditions or are frail aged.

Canberra Health Services has developed an action plan to assist in implementing the ACT Carers Strategy 2018-28. These actions have been developed in consultation with consumer and carer representatives and include a focus on: improving education and support for carers; identifying carers who may benefit from and promoting access to respite care; providing access to the hospital school for young carers; undertaking focus groups to identify and address barriers to involving carers in health plans and discharge processes, and reviewing the "Hospital in the Home" initiative to consider carers' needs and role as part of the care team. Canberra Health Services is also currently undertaking a comprehensive Disability Needs Assessment to help inform development of a Disability Action and Inclusion Plan, which will include actions relevant to supporting carers.

The ACT Government remains committed to supporting people with disability, their families and carers, and the disability sector through the COVID-19 health emergency. In May 2020, the Government released the *ACT COVID-19 Disability Strategy*, which acknowledges that the rapid rate of change and disruption to routines due to COVID-19 can be distressing for many people with disability and their families and carers.

Phase 1 of funding under the *ACT COVID-19 Disability Strategy* provided an additional \$450,000 for a range of responses, including targeted communication delivered by several disability support organisations, and making Personal Protective Equipment accessible and available to people with disability and their carers. Phase 2 funding will provide a further \$400,000 for additional responses, including individual grants to reduce home-based pressures on people with disability and their family carers.

Phase 2 funding under the *ACT COVID-19 Disability Strategy*, respite effect grants, administered by community organisations, will support people with disability, their families and their carers experiencing hardship due to extended periods of reduced social and community engagement.

The ACT Health Directorate funds two services to support carers for people living with disability via the Community Assistance and Support Program (CASP) and the Flexible Family Support (FFS) program. The services are delivered by Carers ACT and Canberra Institute of Technology (CIT).

Carers ACT receive funding across both programs to deliver care coordination, carer counselling and advocacy, domestic assistance, home support and social support. CIT receives funding under CASP for delivering counselling, information and advocacy for carers and families of people with disability.

For people with a mental illness, including people with psychiatric disability, the ACT Health Directorate also funds Carers ACT to deliver support, counselling,

education, advocacy and referral services.

In 2020, the ACT Health Directorate published *COVID-19 an ACT Operational Plan for People with Disability* which provided guidance to support carers for people living with disability during the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2021, the ACT Health Directorate will commence work on an ACT Disability Health Strategy.

- (3) In the 10th Legislative Assembly Parliamentary Agreement, both the Greens and Labor committed to progress the *ACT Carers Strategy 2018-2028*. The ACT Government will continue to build on partnerships with Carers ACT and the Carers Strategy Governance Group to progress actions under the Strategy. As the first three-year Action Plan under the Strategy ends in 2021, the Government will work closely with the Governance Group and lead agencies to review the successes of the first three years, and build on these to improve the governance, implementation and evaluation of actions throughout the rest of the Strategy.
- (4) In the last 12 months, the Community Services Directorate has not received any complaints about carers of people living with disability.

The NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission commenced operating in the ACT on 1 July 2019. One of its core functions is to receive and investigate complaints about quality and safety within the scheme. The data for the number of complaints received by the Commission is not currently available to the ACT Government in detail. The Commission reports on the number of complaints it manages through the NDIS Commission Activity Reports.

The ACT Human Rights Commission has been able to receive complaints about alleged abuse, neglect or exploitation of older people or adults with a disability since May 2020. We have received five complaints in relation to carers of people with a disability between May and 30 November 2020.

- (5) In 2017, the Carers Voice Panel came together to identify issues that carers experience when interacting with Government and community service providers. These issues were outlined in the Carers Voice Panel Report that informed the development of the Strategy and the Action Plan. Carers made it clear they need recognition from medical and other professionals of the knowledge they have about the people they care for. The Strategy responds to this concern through several actions, including an action to conduct a carer impact assessment for the 'Hospital in the Home' initiative, considering carers' needs and their role as part of the care team. Other actions seek to acknowledge carers on health plans, including their role and support needs and consider carers' needs during hospital discharge processes.
-