

Tara Cheyne MLA

Minister for the Arts, Culture and the Creative Economy

Minister for City Services

Minister for Government Services and Regulatory Reform

Minister for Human Rights

Member for Ginninderra

RESPONSE TO QUESTION ON NOTICE**Questions on Notice Paper No 40****22 March 2024****Question No. 1651****Asked by Ms Lawder MLA –**

- (1) How many people (full-time equivalent) work in Access Canberra.
- (2) Are those referred to in part (1), (a) all employed in the ACT Public Service and (b) located in Canberra/surrounds or are some located remotely; if so, how many and in what roles.
- (3) How many people are assigned to answering phone calls to Access Canberra in (a) office hours (b) out of hours, including weekends and public holidays.
- (4) Are the people who answer out of hours calls ACT Government employees or are some outsourced; if outsourced, (a) how many, (b) is it a company that provides the services or individual contractors and (c) where are they located, for example, number in the ACT and number located outside of the ACT.

MS CHEYNE MLA - The answer to the Member's question is as follows:

- (1) As at the end of February 2024 Access Canberra had 767.74 FTE.
- (2) Of these, 766.74 FTE are employed in the ACT Public Service with one FTE, who is an IT expert, employed as a contractor. Requests to work remotely are assessed on a case by case basis in accordance with the ACT Public Service *Flexible Working Arrangements Policy: Working Remotely Interstate or Overseas*. In supporting flexible working arrangements, Access Canberra ensures that its business requirements to deliver services to the Canberra community are maintained. Flexible work arrangements can be ad-hoc, short-term or long-term and can be negotiated when required to recognise personal, family or other commitments of employees.



- (3) Forty five ACT Government employees in Access Canberra are in primary phone call answering roles, with the management positions also taking calls when required as a point of escalation with dissatisfied or abusive callers. The team works a rotating roster which includes weekends and public holidays and work during office hours, between 8am to 6pm Monday to Friday. Shift numbers are determined based on call demand. Reflecting this, 5 people are assigned to work Saturday and 4 on Sunday, between 9am to 5pm.

The number of people assigned to working on a public holiday, between 9am to 5pm, is again based on demand.

Outside of standard office hours of 8am to 6pm and 9am to 5pm on weekends, calls are redirected to an after-hours service provider. However, the Access Canberra Contact Centre staff answer calls on 132 500, on behalf of the State Emergency Services (SES), when requested during storm events and other emergencies.

The Contact Centre's average wait time on weekdays (YTD) is 0:01:47. Average wait time on weekends/afterhours is 0:02:05 and on the last public holiday (01/04/24) was 0:00:19.

- (4) The after-hours service provider is outsourced and was selected through a competitive tender process.

The after-hours service provider has between 30 to 50 people answering calls at any one time. They provide similar services to a variety of organisations including other state governments and local councils. The number of people they have answering calls is dependent on the demand of all these organisations as a whole, providing an economy of scale. Access Canberra's contribution to that demand is approximately 37 calls per night or fewer than 3 calls per hour.

They are a company specialising in call handling for a variety of industries.

The after-hours service provider has offices across Australia with their main office located in Melbourne. This is where most of Access Canberra's calls are answered. Access Canberra's Contact Centre is the ACT Government's key phone service for the Canberra community, including in periods of emergency or significant issues (ie. storms, fire, pandemic etc) and having an external contact centre is a safeguard should the local Contact Centre be impacted by an outage or provide overflow support. It enables additional technology, staffing and service when needed. This was a key part of the procurement requirements.

Approved for circulation to the Member and incorporation into Hansard.



Tara Cheyne MLA

Minister for Government Services and Regulatory Reform

Date:

8/4/24