

Rachel Stephen-Smith MLA

Minister for Health

Minister for Mental Health

Minister for Finance

Minister for the Public Service

Member for Kurrajong

RESPONSE TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Questions on Notice Paper No 5

11 APRIL 2025

Question No. 343

MR RATTENBURY MLA: To ask the Minister for Health

1. Given that last term the ACT Health Directorate commissioned a review into harm reduction services in the ACT, with the report expected to be completed by December 2024, has the review been completed.
2. When will the review be made publicly available.
3. What percentage of funding for the ACT Drug Strategy Action Plan is annually spent on harm reduction services.
4. What is the total funding provided for the ACT Drug Strategy Action Plan annually.
5. What is the total funding provided for harm reduction services.

RACHEL STEPHEN-SMITH MLA - The answer to the Member's question is as follows:

1. The ACT Health Directorate (ACTHD) received the final report from the Harm Reduction Review in March 2025.
2. The Harm Reduction Review final report is under consideration by the ACT Government will be published as soon as practicable.
3. Most Government and non-government organisation (NGO) alcohol, tobacco and other drug (ATOD) services provide harm reduction to differing extents. Harm reduction is integrated as a key element of ACT ATOD treatment and support services. Quantifying harm reduction resourcing and service provision within all ACT ATOD services and the associated costs, separate to treatment and additional support, would require significant resourcing to assess and evaluate.



4. The current ACT Government funding allocated to actions under the ACT Drug Strategy Action Plan (the Action Plan) from 2022 to 2027 is approximately \$109 million, not including additional related appropriations for actions relating to housing. This includes significant investment in ATOD infrastructure and programs such as the Watson Precinct development, Canberra Script, CanTEST drug checking service, expansion of the Drug and Alcohol Sentencing List and expanding support for families and carers impacted by ATOD.

Delivery of the Action Plan involves collaboration with sector partners and across ACT Government including ACTHD, Community Services, Education, Justice and Community Safety, Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorates, and Canberra Health Services (CHS). Across ACT Government there are approximately 20.6 Full-Time Equivalent (FTE), across 14 teams, supporting the delivery of the Action Plan commitments. Specific harm reduction commitments within the Action Plan include the fixed-site drug checking service (CanTEST) which has a total committed funding of \$3.653 million (GST exclusive), and the Harm Reduction Review, at a cost of \$154,169 (GST exclusive).

A total figure for the action plan has been provided rather than an annual figure as many of the projects that address the actions are time-limited projects and do not receive ongoing annual funding.

5. In addition to the current 2022 to 2027 Action Plan investment, the ACT Government invests approximately \$19.3 million (GST exclusive) annual total funding for the ATOD NGO sector. This includes \$18.5 million for treatment, support and harm reduction services and \$1.02 million (GST exclusive) for the Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drug Association ACT (ATODA) peak body activities, including harm reduction advocacy. Within the \$18.5 million for ATOD services, the Canberra Alliance for Harm Minimisation and Advocacy is the primary service for harm reduction and receives \$909,561 (GST exclusive) annually.

The Harm Reduction Review (the Review) noted that funding for current ACT coverage of key harm reduction services (take home naloxone, opioid agonist therapy, needle and syringe programs and drug checking services) is approximately \$4.9 million annually, however the Review did not distinguish between ACT Government and Commonwealth Government funding.

CHS Alcohol and Drug Services funding is approximately \$18 million (GST exclusive) for 2024-25.

Approved for circulation to the Member and incorporation into Hansard.



Rachel Stephen-Smith MLA
Minister for Health

Date: 13/5/25

This response required 18hrs 56mins to complete, at an approximate cost of \$1,800.60.