

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 3

7 MARCH 2025

Question No. 183

MS BARRY MLA: To ask the Minister for Health

- 1) Is it Government policy that the Ngunnawal Bush Healing Farm should be in community control and that impediments to its effective operation should be removed.
- 2) When will the Ngunnawal Bush Healing Farm be transferred to community control.
- 3) What are the impediments to the facility being put into community control this financial year.
- 4) What are the impediments to the Ngunnawal Bush Healing Farm operating as its founders intended.
- 5) Are any policy or regulatory changes necessary to enable the full operation of the facility.
- 6) What capacity building supports are being provided to support the full community control of this facility.

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

- 1) The ACT Government is committed to working with experts and community to support the transition of the Ngunnawal Bush Healing Farm (NBHF) to Community control, following an independent review in early 2024. The NBHF and its dedicated staff are currently delivering positive outcomes through the NBHF day program, which has seen a significant increase in participants since 2023. The ACT Health Directorate recently released a community update on the proposed process to transition the NBHF to Community control (see [Attachment A](#)).
- 2) A process will be undertaken in 2025 to seek a provider to deliver Community control of the NBHF. The timeline to delivery of full Community control will largely be dependent on a co-designed approach and the needs of the successful organisation.
- 3) The open process described in response to Question 2 will provide the ACT Government with a clear understanding of what capacity and capability currently exists and thus the likely timelines for complete transition of services of the NBHF to an Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation (ACCO).



- 4) There are multiple facets to the Founders' original vision, many of which are in operation and are delivering positive impact for First Nations peoples in the ACT and region. A key element of the Founders' vision is the delivery of residential services, and this will be progressed as part of the process to transition to Community control of the NBHF.
- 5) There are no policy or regulatory changes required to deliver full operation of the facility in its current capacity. Noting this, should the successful ACCO wish to take the operations in new directions, policy or regulatory change may be required.
- 6) A range of supports are in place to support ACCOs generally, and specifically the NBHF. This includes the newly released ACCO Establishment and Expansion Fund (AEEF). The AEEF aims to support new and existing ACT ACCOs to build organisational capacity and capability to improve outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples across the ACT. The AEEF is designed to support the growth and sustainability of ACCOs delivering services within the ACT, consistent with ACT Government commitments under the National Agreement on Closing the Gap Priority Reform 2: Building the Community Controlled Sector, and the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Agreement 2019-2028. Additionally, the ACT Government has engaged sector experts, Ngaimpe Consulting, for 12 months to support NBHF readiness for Community control and later residential services.

Approved for circulation to the Member and incorporation into Hansard.



Rachel Stephen-Smith MLA
Minister for Health

Date:21/5/25.....

This response required 3hrs 5mins to complete, at an approximate cost of \$358.11.