

Response to question on notice

Questions on Notice Paper No 11

26 September 2025

Question No. 675

SHANE RATTENBURY MLA: To ask the Minister for Corrections —

1. Has the ACT Government progressed the Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder screening program for the justice system that was funded in an earlier budget.
2. What stage is the work referred to in part (1) up to.
3. If the work referred to in part (1) has not been progressed, where did that funding go.

DR MARISA PATERSON MLA - The answer to the Member's question is as follows:

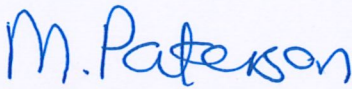
As part of the 2022–23 Overrepresentation Omnibus budget initiative, \$315,000 was provided to ACT Corrective Services (ACTCS) to improve understanding of the prevalence of cognitive impairment in detainees, and by extension, in the broader criminal justice system. The proposal outlined that screening for cognitive disability would support identification of disability related to a variety of diagnoses including intellectual disability, acquired brain injury and Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD). However, the proposal did not include a screening program specifically for FASD.

The funding was originally intended to contract an external consultant to undertake point-in-time screening of cognitive disability at the Alexander Maconochie Centre (AMC) using the Hayes Ability Screening (HASI) Tool. An advisory group for the project identified various challenges with the original project proposal, including that de-identified point in time screening by an external consultant would not allow ACTCS to subsequently support individual detainees whose results indicated potential cognitive disability. The funding was therefore redirected to fund a Data Scientist position to develop a PowerBI report for detainee related information, including de-identified data on disability. This approach would enable ongoing data collection tied to routine admissions, allow for reporting and trend analysis and to create a permanent data source to inform policy and practice.

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ACTCS has undertaken extensive work to update its induction processes, which now incorporates questions capturing self-reported disability (including through use of the Washington Group Questions). The aforementioned PowerBI report has been developed and incorporates these questions. Work is currently ongoing to implement the HASI tool in the induction process.

Approved for circulation to the Member and incorporation into Hansard.



Dr Marisa Paterson MLA
Minister for Corrections

Date: 27/10/25

This response required 3hrs 20mins to complete, at an approximate cost of \$310.84