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Dear [REDACTED]

### **DECISION ON YOUR ACCESS APPLICATION**

I refer to your application under section 30 of the *Freedom of Information Act 2016* (FOI Act), received by Canberra Health Service on **Monday 04 September 2023**.

This application requested access to:

*'I would like to request a copy of any final briefs prepared for the ACT Minister for Health and CHS/ACT Health witnesses during the 2023-24 estimates hearings.'*

I am an Information Officer appointed by the Chief Executive of CHS under section 18 of the FOI Act to deal with access applications made under Part 5 of the Act. ACTHD was required to provide a decision on your access application by **Tuesday 17 October 2023**.

I have identified eight documents holding the information within scope of your access application. These are outlined in the schedule of documents included at [Attachment A](#) to this decision letter.

#### **Decisions**

I have decided to grant full access to all eight documents identified as I do not consider them, on balance, to be contrary to the public interest to disclose under the test set out in Section 17 of the FOI Act.

In reaching my access decision, I have taken the following into account:

- The FOI Act; and
- The contents of the documents that fall within the scope of your request;

#### **Charges**

Processing charges are not applicable to this request.

#### **Disclosure Log**

Under section 28 of the FOI Act, CHS maintains an online record of access applications called a disclosure log. The scope of your access application, my decision and documents released to you will be published in the disclosure log not less than three days but not more than 10 days after the date of this decision. Your personal contact details will not be published.

<https://www.health.act.gov.au/about-our-health-system/freedom-information/disclosure-log>.

#### **Ombudsman review**

My decision on your access request is a reviewable decision as identified in Schedule 3 of the FOI Act. You have the right to seek Ombudsman review of this outcome under section 73 of the Act

within 20 working days from the day that my decision is published in ACT Health's disclosure log, or a longer period allowed by the Ombudsman.

If you wish to request a review of my decision you may write to the Ombudsman at:

The ACT Ombudsman  
GPO Box 442  
CANBERRA ACT 2601  
Via email: [ACTFOI@ombudsman.gov.au](mailto:ACTFOI@ombudsman.gov.au)  
Website: [ombudsman.act.gov.au](http://ombudsman.act.gov.au)

ACT Civil and Administrative Tribunal (ACAT) review

Under section 84 of the Act, if a decision is made under section 82(1) on an Ombudsman review, you may apply to the ACAT for review of the Ombudsman decision. Further information may be obtained from the ACAT at:

ACT Civil and Administrative Tribunal  
Allara House  
15 Constitution Avenue  
GPO Box 370  
Canberra City ACT 2601  
Telephone: (02) 6207 1740  
<http://www.acat.act.gov.au/>

**Further assistance**

Should you have any queries in relation to your request, please do not hesitate to contact the FOI Coordinator on (02) 5124 9831 or email [HealthFOI@act.gov.au](mailto:HealthFOI@act.gov.au).

Yours sincerely



Janet Zagari  
**Deputy Chief Executive Officer**  
Canberra Health Services


16 October 2023

## FREEDOM OF INFORMATION SCHEDULE OF DOCUMENTS

Please be aware that under the *Freedom of Information Act 2016*, some of the information provided to you will be released to the public through the ACT Government's Open Access Scheme. The Open Access release status column of the table below indicates what documents are intended for release online through open access.

Personal information or business affairs information will not be made available under this policy. If you think the content of your request would contain such information, please inform the contact officer immediately.

Information about what is published on open access is available online at: <http://www.health.act.gov.au/public-information/consumers/freedom-information>

APPLICANT NAME	WHAT ARE THE PARAMETERS OF THE REQUEST	FILE NUMBER
	<i>'Any final briefs prepared for the ACT Minister for Health and CHS/ACT Health witnesses during the 2023-24 estimates hearings.'</i>	<b>CHSFOI23-24.14</b>

Ref Number	Page Number	Description	Date	Status Decision	Factor	Open Access release status
1.	1	A. Fetal Medicine Unit	July 2023	Full Release		Yes
2.	2	B. Paediatric Presentations to Emergency	July 2023	Full Release		Yes
3.	3	C. CHS Branding project	July 2023	Full Release		Yes
4.	4	D. Gynaecology Oncology Unit	July 2023	Full Release		Yes
5.	5	E. Obstetrics and Gynaecology	July 2023	Full Release		Yes
6.	6-7	F. Investments into healthcare	July 2023	Full Release		Yes
7.	8	G. Major health targets and infrastructure	July 2023	Full Release		Yes

8.	9	H. Cardiology	July 2023	Full Release	Yes
<b>Total Number of Documents</b>					
<b>8</b>					

**A. Fetal Medicine Unit**

- The Fetal medicine Unit (FMU) at Canberra Hospital provides tertiary care for women with high-risk pregnancies in Canberra and surrounding region.
- The FMU has been under significant pressure in the last 12 months as a result of workforce shortages.
- Ongoing efforts have been undertaken to attract and retain capabilities to ensure the team have the capacity to deliver on services.
- Active recruitment continues for a permanent Maternal Fetal Medicine (MFM) specialist but due to national skills shortages within a highly competitive market, arrangements continue to build on existing resources through Visiting Medical Officer support.
- The Visiting Medical Officer support includes two MFM specialists from Sydney covering two days a week and also a visiting consultant sonologist from Melbourne who attends fortnightly to conduct training sessions for registrars.
- CHS has recently appointed two Senior Sonographers over the past month. One of these positions will provide advanced practice development and teaching, and the other operational support.
- The local consultants who work in the FMU continue to provide services for the Unit in the intervening days.
- CHS has continued its arrangement with the two Visiting Medical Officer MFM specialists from Sydney for in-person visits, and extended this arrangement to include phone support for escalation for fetal welfare concerns.

**B. Paediatric presentations to Emergency**

- A guidance document for the Emergency Department (ED) Service Provision was finalised in late December 2022, with an aim to provide guidance to the organisation, the afterhours managers and the ED Clinical Coordinator and Medical Navigator (or Consultant) in charge of each shift regarding safe service access, continuous service provision and pathways of escalation should variances evolve.
- The ACT Government is investing record resources into both Canberra Hospital and Calvary Public Hospital Bruce (Calvary). Both EDs also have improvement programs in place to drive safe and timely care. These include but are not limited to more recruitment of staff specialists, improved patient flow, strengthened ED model of care and increased education.
- In the 2021-22 Budget, the ACT Government invested an additional \$128 million to expand critical public hospital services, including \$23 million for the Canberra Hospital ED and \$16 million for more patients to receive services at Calvary. In the 2022-23 ACT Budget we also invested record amounts in the ACT's health system to deliver more services, support our ACT health workforce to deliver better care and to support the community to receive treatment when and where they need it.
- The new Critical Services Building (CSB), currently under construction and due to be completed in 2024 as part of the Canberra Hospital Expansion project, will include a dedicated purpose-built paediatric ED, including a paediatric external courtyard, allowing exposure to fresh air and offering a place for siblings to play. The design of this space has been informed by extensive consultations with health care consumers and the local community.

**C. CHS Branding Project**

Refer to GBCHS23/64

- The CHS Brand Project is about:
  - improving the way consumers and carers navigate our services
  - giving us a point of difference in a highly competitive recruitment market.
- The ACT Government is making record investments in health infrastructure. With a 20-year master plan to transform the Canberra Hospital campus, this is our opportunity to create a health brand to go alongside our new modern facilities, to make it easier for health consumers to find the services they need.

**D. Gynaecology Oncology Unit**

- The ACT Government is committed to establishing a permanent and sustainable gynaecology oncology service in the ACT.
- Canberra Health Services has re-established a service agreement with the Royal Hospital for Women, Sydney to support our local service. The service support agreement includes visiting specialists conducting an all-day surgical operating list at Canberra Hospital once a month for gynaecological-oncology surgeries.
- This will allow patients with more complex cases to have their operation locally rather than travelling interstate. The visiting specialist surgeons will also do post operative rounds on the following day, providing training opportunities for local staff and then run an all-day clinic before returning to Sydney.
- In addition, these specialists will undertake follow up telehealth clinics for women referred to the Gynaecology Oncology service in the ACT.
- Canberra Health Services has Gynaecological Cancer Specialist Nurse FTE 1.0.



**E. Obstetrics and Gynaecology:**

- Staffing shortages continued to be the main challenge in the obstetrics and gynaecology unit. This is partly due to retirement, voluntary reduction in FTE and national skill shortages. Recruitment of registrars and Fellows remains problematic as successful candidates tend to preference their choices to the bigger cities. Recruitment of senior medical staff has been more successful but midwifery staffing still faces significant shortfall. Locum doctors have been engaged to cover the shortfall. In addition, the implementation of the Digital Health Record (Epic) has created significant challenges while learning the new system and adapting it to local conditions.
- Canberra Health Services (CHS) recently hosted a planned review by the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (RANZCOG) to assess training conditions for trainees. Informal feedback was provided on the day of the review, however as yet no formal report has been received.
- CHS will work with the RANZCOG to address any recommendations it may make.
- CHS are committed to creating collaborative and position team working environments and will welcome any recommendations provided by RANZCOG.

## F. Investment in healthcare

- In the 2021-22 Budget, the ACT Government invested an additional \$128 million to expand critical public hospital services, including \$23 million for the Canberra Hospital ED and \$16 million for more patients to receive services at Calvary. In the 2022-23 ACT Budget we also invested record amounts in the ACT's health system to deliver more services, support our ACT health workforce to deliver better care and to support the community to receive treatment when and where they need it.
- The ACT Government invests in our Walk in centres to reduce pressure on Emergency Departments whilst ensuring Canberrans have access to timely health care without having to pay out of pocket. This also includes the expansion in service delivery to now include care for anyone who is over one year of age.
- We are continuing to improve clinical offerings for community based care, including the significant investment of \$5.97million into establishing expanded medical imaging services at the Weston Creek Walk-in Centre. The service will provide greater access to commonly required diagnostic medical imaging services including ultrasound, X-ray and computed tomography (CT), reducing demand for this outpatient imaging activity from the busy Canberra Hospital campus.
- The ACT Government has committed funding to improve diagnostic capabilities at Canberra Hospital in response to population growth, technology developments and advances in clinical practice.
- The project includes:
  - replacing an ageing Computed Tomography (CT) scanner; and
  - upgrading a 1.5 Tesla (T) Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) scanner with a 3T MRI scanner.
- Once complete, the project will result in the following benefits:
  - Reduced patient waiting times for diagnostic imaging services
  - Access to latest in diagnostic imaging technology and techniques
  - Improve patient outcomes through faster scanning times and improved image quality
  - Improved patient flow throughout hospital; and
  - Improved access for registrar training and support.
- The ACT Government is continuing to invest in important services for women and families, with a new dedicated unit for the Early Pregnancy Service and Antenatal and Gynaecology Unit which opened Monday 27 March 2023. These upgrades form part of the \$50 million expansion of the Centenary Hospital for Women and Children.
- ???Endoscopy
- The Canberra Hospital Intensive Care Unit (ICU) now has an additional eight beds, following completion of a \$13.5 million expansion. These extra beds, which bring the total number of physical beds in Canberra Hospital's ICU to 39, will help ensure patients can continue to receive lifesaving care, including ventilation and high-level health services following trauma or complex surgery. These beds will expand our capacity to deliver lifesaving treatment and care to Canberrans and the surrounding region for many years to come.
- This \$5.53 million Government-funded project will expand and upgrade the operational capacity of pharmacy services across Canberra Hospital. The project includes a redesign and refurbishment of the main pharmacy dispensary, as well as a brand-new medicine

compounding facility and dispensary in the Canberra Region Cancer Centre. This project will have many benefits for both Canberrans using our services and staff working in pharmacy, including:

- improved efficiency, medication safety and more ergonomic work areas for staff
- reduced wait times for dispensing medication to patients
- an increase to pharmacy staffing levels.
- We will continue to deliver pharmacy services as normal while these improvements are made.

## **G. Major health targets and infrastructure**

### Decommissioning Building 6 and 23

- As part of the Canberra Hospital Master Plan (CHMP) a new clinical services (including pathology) building will be built next to the new Critical Services Building (CSB) on the existing building 6 site. This means building 6 needs to be decommissioned and demolished. Importantly, CHS are also examining the demolition of building 23 at the same time, to improve access to the building 6 site.
- CHS is working with staff located in these building to identify alternative accommodation.
- Demolition is expected to start later this year (2023) following staff consultation, and once suitable new workplace accommodation has been identified for all affected teams.

## H. Cardiology

### Transcatheter Aortic Valve Implantation (TAVI)

- The establishment and development proposal for a TAVI service has been drafted and is being presented to CHS Executive in the coming weeks.
- There is a plan to build the TAVI service incrementally over the 23-24 financial year including workforce capability building, with a full service to be established by the opening of Building 5 in 2024.
- A new TAVI accredited Cardiologist is commencing at CHS in the first quarter of 2023-2024 financial year. This will result in a 0.8 FTE TAVI accredited staff specialist. There are currently no accredited TAVI cardiologists at CHS.

### Recruitment

- Cardiologist recruitment has progressed, which will result in full recruitment for Cardiologists overall. Cardiology remains under-recruited for the sub-specialty of electrophysiology.
  - Electrophysiology cardiologist 0.5FTE (currently at CHS on temporary contract) to be appointed permanently pending MDAAC credentialling (July/August 2023).
  - TAVI trained 1.0 FTE interventional cardiologist to commence September 2023.
  - Interventional cardiologist 0.2FTE to be appointed permanently pending MDAAC credentialling (July/August 2023).
  - General cardiologist 0.8FTE – onboarding process underway.
  - Interventional cardiologist 1.0FTE to commence early 2024 (from Germany) pending credentialling/visa.
  - ECHO cardiologist 0.8FTE to commence February 2024 pending completion of fellowship in QLD.
  - VMO cover being provided until all new staff are onboarded.
  - Interventional cardiologist 0.5 FTE (with other 0.5 FTE in General Medicine) to be made permanent after completion of peer review.
- The Coronary Care Unit is fully staffed for nursing.
- Cardiology outpatient nursing team is fully staffed.
- Currently 9.47 FTE for recruitable 13.78 FTE for Cardiac Catheter Lab nursing. One experienced Cardiac Catheter Lab RN is being recruited from UAE. Several experienced Cath Lab nurses from other Cath Labs in Canberra have joined CHS as casual staff and are completing orientation. Positions are currently advertised nationally and internationally. Also recruiting to a new position established to focus patient flow through the service.
- Two additional cardiac sonographers have recently commenced to fill permanent vacancies.
- The administration team has one Booking and Scheduling position vacant with recruitment in progress.