

**2019**

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY FOR THE  
AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY**

**GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO THE FINAL REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT  
REVIEW INTO THE WORKPLACE CULTURE WITHIN  
ACT PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES**

**Presented by**

**Meegan Fitzharris MLA**

**Minister for Health and Wellbeing**

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## INTRODUCTION

On 19 March 2019 the Minister for Health and Wellbeing, Ms Meegan Fitzharris MLA, tabled the Final Report of the Independent Review into the Workplace Culture within ACT Public Health Services (the report), in the ACT Legislative Assembly.

The Minister announced the establishment of an Independent Review into Workplace Culture in the ACT public health system (the Review) on 10 September 2018. The Terms of Reference for the Review and details of the Independent Panel appointed to lead the Review were released on 21 September 2018.

The Terms of Reference for the Review tasked the Independent Panel to:

- Examine and report on the workplace culture of public health care services in the ACT and provide advice on any systemic and institutional issues.  
This examination was to consider any examples of best practice workplace culture and professional conduct in the delivery of public health care in the ACT, nationally and internationally.
- Examine claims made in relation to inappropriate conduct and behaviours.
- Examine and report on the existing workforce policies and complaints management practices to ensure their relevance and appropriateness.
- Provide recommendations for further improving workplace culture across the ACT public health system, and any additional support systems required for staff and management.

Further, the terms of reference required that the Independent Review Panel provide their Interim Report to the Minister for Health and Wellbeing by 31 January 2019, with a final report due by 30 March 2019.

The Panel delivered its Interim Report to the Minister on 30 January 2019 and it was subsequently released publicly on 1 February 2019.

The Final Report of the Review was publicly released on 7 March 2019.

The Government has agreed to all twenty recommendations contained in the Final Report.

The Government recognises the importance of working closely with staff and stakeholders to ensure that the recommendations are implemented in a way that drives the change we need to see.

The key themes highlighted in the Report indicate that:

- staff members within the public health system have been subjected to inappropriate behaviours, including bullying and harassment, in the workplace;
- there are inefficient processes and processes to manage complaints handling;
- additional training is required to support management in dealing with inappropriate workplace practices;
- an inability to make timely decisions;
- inefficient and inappropriate Human Resource practices;
- historically there has been a lack of effective leadership and management throughout the ACT Public health System; and
- there is a need to ensure greater clinical engagement to ensure that the system can benefit from expert knowledge and input of individuals.

The Review Panel recognised in the report that work has begun over the last 12 months to improve workplace culture; and acknowledged the positive effect that this has had within the workplace.

The Government has already established a strong governance framework to ensure that implementation of the recommendations made by the Review Panel is effective, efficient and accountable. The ACT Health Directorate, as system steward, will lead the response to ensure that there is a consistent and territory wide approach taken.

Governance will have oversight at the highest level. The inaugural meeting of the Culture Review Oversight Group was held on 28 March 2019, chaired by the Minister for Health and Wellbeing with the Minister for Mental Health as the Deputy Chair and included key senior stakeholders and the senior executive leadership team of the public health system.

The executive structures within the ACT Health Directorate, Canberra Health Services and Calvary Public Hospital Bruce have been, or are in the process of being, reformed to ensure that we have the

right people in place to lead a contemporary health service across the ACT. There has been rigorous focus on stabilising and refining organisational structures, working closely with all staff.

The Government was pleased to read in the Final Report that cautious optimism was expressed by many within the service regarding the new leadership.

The Review has fundamentally assessed and understood the core of the culture issues in ACT public health services; and has allowed staff and stakeholders to be heard, to share their experiences, their stories and contribute in a positive way to real change.

The Panel has provided a clear way forward. The Government would like to thank the Independent Panel members: Mr Mick Reid (Chair), Ms Fiona Brew and Professor David Watters for their expertise, leadership and compassionate approach in their conduct of this Review.

The Government is committed to providing to members of the ACT Legislative Assembly a biannual update on progress against the Recommendations for the next three years.

The Government has agreed to all the recommendations and the broad implementation timeline; noting that many of the initiatives will be ongoing and are aimed at embedding best practice and continuous improvement throughout the ACT Public Health System.

The Government assures staff, stakeholders and the community that it will implement the recommendations of the Independent Panel, and will do so in the same spirit of openness with which it embarked on the Review.

Government Response – Workplace Culture Review Recommendation, Position and Comments		
Recommendation	Position	Comment
<p>1). <i>That the three arms of the ACT Public Health System should commence a comprehensive process to re-engage with staff in ensuring the vision and values are lived, embraced at all levels, integrated with strategy and constantly reflected in leadership. To achieve this the Health Directorate should take the lead in providing the necessary tools and guidelines and coordinate the implementation by Canberra Health Services, Calvary Public Hospital and the Health Directorate.</i></p>	Agree	<p>Recognising the territory-wide focus re-engagement with staff will occur across each of the three arms of the ACT Public Health System.</p> <p>Canberra Health Services and the ACT Health Directorate are embarking on projects to review their vision, values, role and behaviours. These projects will seek to ensure that, with the recent transition of ACT Health to two organisations, the vision and values of the new organisations are appropriate and clearly understood. This work will be completed by September 2019. There will be significant staff engagement as these projects are rolled out with a view to embedding the vision and values from November 2019.</p> <p>Calvary Public Hospital’s values and vision are in line with the Little Company of Mary. As a key partner in the delivery of territory-wide services, Calvary will undergo re-engagement with staff to ensure the vision and values are embedded.</p>
<p>2). <i>That Canberra Health Services and Calvary Public Hospital in conjunction with the Health Directorate, develop an appropriate suite of measures that:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>reflect on elements of a great health service - both culture and strategy;</i></li> <li>• <i>monitor patient/client perspectives of outcomes/experience; and</i></li> <li>• <i>engage clinicians in their development.</i></li> </ul>	Agree	<p>Commencement of the development of the suite of measures will occur from July 2019 and it is anticipated that this will take at least six months to finalise phase one. The development and maturity of the measures will be iterative and ongoing to reflect the contemporary culture of the ACT Public Health System.</p>

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<p><i>3). That a program designed to promote a healthier culture to reduce inappropriate workplace behaviour and bullying and harassment be implemented across the ACT Public Health System. The model adopted should be based on the Vanderbilt University Medical Center [sic] Patient Advocacy Reporting System (PARS) and Co-worker Observation Reporting System (CORS).</i></p>	<p>Agree</p>	<p>The planning, procurement and foundational work for implementation of a program to promote a healthier culture will commence in July 2019.</p> <p>This will be a program based on the Vanderbilt system and the implementation model will be required to be consistent across the three arms of the ACT Public Health System.</p>
<p><i>4). The Health Directorate convene a summit of senior clinicians and administrators of both Canberra Health Services and Calvary Public Hospital to map a plan of improved clinical services coordination and collaboration.</i></p>	<p>Agree</p>	<p>The Health Summit of senior clinicians and administrators from across the ACT Public Health System is planned for the second half of 2019.</p>
<p><i>5). The CEO of Canberra Health Services should review mechanisms to better integrate clinical streams of the community health services within the Clinical Divisional Structures.</i></p>	<p>Agree</p>	<p>This work has commenced to better integrate the clinical streams of the community health services. This is reflected in the new organisational structure of Canberra Health Services.</p>
<p><i>6). That the Health Directorate re-establish open lines of communication with the NGO sector and other external stakeholders</i></p>	<p>Agree</p>	<p>The Health Directorate has commenced the re-establishment of open lines of communication with the NGO sector with a view to establishing an NGO Leadership Group by October 2019.</p>

<p><i>7). The initiatives already underway to develop a valued and more coordinated research strategy in partnership with the academic sector and others are strongly supported. These provide a mechanism to encourage professional development and address culture, education, training, research and other strategic issues.</i></p>	<p>Agree</p>	<p>The ACT Health Directorate is building on work commenced with the inaugural ACT Health Summit: ‘Research, Teaching and Training’, held on 13 November 2018 which included the development of relationships within the academia sector. An academic partnership and training strategy is being developed.</p> <p>The Culture Review Oversight Group membership was extended to include the Deans of the faculties of health at ANU and UC (see response to recommendation 18).</p>
<p><i>8). That discussions occur between ACT and NSW with a view to developing a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for improved collaboration between the two health systems for joint Ministerial consideration</i></p>	<p>Agree</p>	<p>The ACT Government is currently renegotiating the ACT-NSW Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for Regional Collaboration, to be re-signed in 2019. Improved Collaboration between the ACT and NSW health systems can be listed as an agreed priority area for this MoU. The ACT Health Directorate has begun work and will commence negotiations with a view to developing an MoU with NSW Health by the end of 2019.</p>
<p><i>9). Clinical engagement throughout the ACT Public Health System, particularly by the medical profession, needs to be significantly improved. Agreed measures of monitoring such improvement needs to be developed through consensus by both clinicians and executives. Such measures should include participation in safety, quality and improvement meetings, reviews and other strategy and policy related initiatives.</i></p>	<p>Agree</p>	<p>Canberra Health Services and Calvary Public Hospital have begun work on measures to monitor the improvement in clinical engagement across the ACT Public Health System. It is proposed that the measures be finalised and agreed by December 2019.</p>

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<p>10). <i>There should be a clear requirement for senior clinicians to collaboratively participate in clinical governance activities.</i></p>	<p>Agree</p>	<p>Canberra Health Services and Calvary Public Hospital are developing governance participation plans to ensure senior clinicians are collaboratively participating in clinical governance activities. These plans will be finalised by end of June 2019 with a view to commencement in July 2019.</p>
<p>11). <i>Canberra Health Services and Calvary Public Hospital should assess the appropriateness of the Choosing Wisely initiative as a mechanism for improving safety and quality of care, developing improved clinical engagement and greater involvement in clinical governance.</i></p>	<p>Agree</p>	<p>The Choosing Wisely Program will be assessed, and recommendations made to the CEO Canberra Health Services and Regional CEO Calvary ACT by October 2019.</p>
<p>12). <i>That Canberra Health Services adopt the progressive evolution of clinically qualified Divisional Directors across each Clinical Division with Business Manager support and earned autonomy in financial and personnel management.</i></p>	<p>Agree</p>	<p>The restructure of Canberra Health Services Divisions is complete. The progressive evolution of clinically qualified Divisional Directors across each Clinical Division with Business Manager support and earned autonomy in financial and personnel management will be piloted from May 2019.</p>
<p>13). <i>That an executive leadership and mentoring program be introduced across the ACT Public Health System specifically designed to develop current and future leaders. This program should include both current and emerging leaders.</i></p>	<p>Agree</p>	<p>The early planning for an executive leadership and mentoring program is underway.</p>



<p><i>14). The three arms of the ACT Public Health System should review their HR staffing numbers and functions in response to the concerns staff have expressed regarding timeliness and confidence in current HR procedures, and the future needs for HR, as proposed in this Review.</i></p>	<p>Agree</p>	<p>The initial review began with the transition to three organisations within the ACT Public Health System. Now that transition has settled, the HR resourcing and functions will be reassessed in line with this recommendation. Implementation of any findings will take place in the later part of 2019.</p>
<p><i>15). The recruitment processes in the ACT Public Health System should follow principles outlined in the Enterprise Agreements, Public Sector Management Act 1994 and relevant standards and procedures.</i></p>	<p>Agree</p>	<p>In line with the transition to three organisations, advice to staff regarding relevant legislation, standards and procedures for recruitment processes is being reviewed and updated to ensure it remains contemporary, clear and effective.</p>
<p><i>16). The range of training programs for staff offered by the ACT Public Health System should be reviewed with respect to their purpose, target audience, curriculum, training styles and outcomes so that they address the issues raised in this Review.</i></p>	<p>Agree</p>	<p>The range of training programs is being reviewed. This is expected to be completed by October 2019. Training Programs, particularly focused on resolving workplace conflicts swiftly are being considered within the three organisations.</p>

<p><i>17). Should the recommendations of this Review be accepted, a public commitment should be jointly made by the Ministers for Health and Wellbeing, and Mental Health, the Director-General Health Directorate, the CEO Canberra Health Services, the General Manager Calvary Public Hospital and key representative organisations to collectively implement the recommendations of this Review to ensure ongoing cultural improvement across the ACT Public Health System.</i></p>	<p>Agree</p>	<p>Following the tabling of the Government Response, Ministers and the senior leadership team of the ACT Public Health System will reaffirm their collective commitment to implement the recommendations of the Review.</p>
<p><i>18). A 'Cultural Review Oversight Group' should be established to oversight the implementation of the Review's recommendations. The Group should be chaired by the Minister for Health and Wellbeing, and include the Minister for Mental Health, the Director-General Health Directorate, the CEO Canberra Health Services, the General Manager Calvary Public Hospital, Senior Executives across the ACT Public Health System, the Executive Director Health Care Consumers Association of the ACT, President of the AMA (ACT), Branch Secretary ANMF (ACT), and Regional Secretary CPSU.</i></p>	<p>Agree (with additions to the membership of the Culture Review Oversight Group).</p>	<p>Agreed (with additions to the membership of the Culture Review Oversight Group).</p> <p>The Culture Review Oversight Group has been established and the inaugural meeting was held on 28 March 2019.</p> <p>Members include the: Minister for Health and Wellbeing (Chair), Minister for Mental Health (Deputy Chair), Director-General Health Directorate, Chief Executive Officer Canberra Health Services, Regional Chief Executive Officer Calvary ACT, Regional Secretary CPSU, Branch Secretary ANMF ACT, President AMA ACT, Executive Officer Health Care Consumers Association (ACT), Executive Branch Manager Culture Review Implementation Team [ex-officio].</p> <p>At its first meeting, the Group agreed to extend its membership to include: President ASMOF, President VMOA ACT, Dean College of Health and Medicine ANU, and Executive Dean Faculty of Health University of Canberra.</p>

<p>19). That the 'Cultural Review Oversight Group' auspice for the next three years, an annual, independent and external review of the extent of implementation of the recommendations of the Review and consequent impact on cultural changes within the ACT Public Health System.</p>	<p>Agree</p>	<p>The Culture Review Oversight Group will auspice the next independent review commencing around November 2019.</p>
<p>20). As a result of this Review, the 'Cultural Review Oversight Group' should engage with staff in the development of a change management and communications strategy, which clearly articulates to staff, patients/clients and the community the nature of the issues to be addressed and the mechanisms for doing it.</p>	<p>Agree</p>	<p>A comprehensive communications and change management strategy is being developed for the Culture Implementation Program. This is being led by the Health Directorate and oversight provided by the Culture Review Oversight Group.</p>

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