



INTERIM REPORT

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Independent Review
into the Workplace Culture
within ACT Public Health Services

.....

January 2019

31 January 2019

Ms Meegan Fitzharris MLA
Minister for Health and Wellbeing
ACT Legislative Assembly
London Circuit
CANBERRA ACT 2601

Dear Minister

On 10 September 2018 you announced the Independent Review into the Workplace Culture within ACT Public Health Services. Thank you for the opportunity to conduct this Review.

We are pleased to present this Interim Report, which sets out the initial findings and a range of recommendations for your consideration that we believe, if adopted, will effect positive change to the workplace culture across the ACT Public Health System.

We wish to thank the extensive number of individuals and organisations who have participated to this stage of the Review. Their engagement, experiences and ideas have been integral to the findings and recommendations contained in this report. Nevertheless, the Reviewers accept full responsibility for the views expressed.

You asked the Reviewers 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. To establish a basis for our findings and recommendations we have taken into account:

- close to 400 submissions received from individuals and organisations
- insights from a range of workshops, round table discussions and meetings
- a survey of staff across the ACT Public Health System, and
- relevant literature research and previous reports and reviews.

The Reviewers will continue to consult with key stakeholders to explore in greater depth some issues not fully addressed in this Interim Report. Similarly, we will ensure the recommendations are fully considered and align with work already underway to improve the workplace culture prior to our final report to you.

Yours sincerely



Mick Reid
Chair



Fiona Brew
Member



David Watters
Member

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Executive Summary

In September 2018, the ACT Minister for Health and Wellbeing, Meegan Fitzharris MLA issued a statement on workplace culture which committed the ACT Government to an independent review of the culture within the public health services.⁽¹⁾

This report is the Interim Report, with a final report due before the end of March 2019. The purpose of this report is to present initial high-level findings and a range of recommendations to support improvements to the workplace culture across the ACT Public Health System.

The Review operated in accordance with the following Terms of Reference:⁽²⁾

- a) 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 should take into account any examples of best practice workplace culture and professional conduct in the delivery of public health care in the ACT, nationally and internationally.
- b) Examine any claims made in relation to inappropriate conduct and behaviours related to the delivery of public health care services in the ACT, and provide advice on:
 - i. best practice responses to such complaints;
 - ii. whether referral of such complaints should be made to any other authority; and
 - iii. what support services should be provided to complainants.
- c) Examine and report on the existing workforce policies and complaints management practices to ensure their relevance and appropriateness in achieving satisfactory outcomes for all parties.
- d) Provide findings and recommendations for:
 - i. further improving workforce culture across the ACT public health system; and
 - ii. additional support systems required for staff and management engaged in the delivery of public health services in the ACT, including processes, training and professional development.

The Review specifically excluded investigation of individual allegations of inappropriate workplace behaviour and bullying and harassment. Where clusters of complaints were received, the senior executive of the relevant arm of the ACT Public Health System was advised. Similarly, where the Reviewers were particularly concerned during interviews about the wellbeing of an individual, with the agreement of that individual, again, a senior executive was notified.

Despite the scepticism expressed by some that this Review would achieve any more than previous attempts to improve the workplace culture, the overwhelming response to the call for submissions revealed a deep desire from staff and the community for change. Close to 400 submissions were received from staff, former staff, family members of patients, consumers, members of the public, Non-Government Organisations (NGOs), health care groups and unions.

To capture the broad views of staff across the ACT Public Health System, an online survey was conducted, which also had a high participation rate of 1953 responses (constituting 20% of ACT Public Health System staff) over a period of a week.

The Reviewers complemented these sources of information with numerous individual interviews and forums with a broad spectrum of groups including medical practitioners, nurses, allied health workers, support and administrative staff, NGOs, consumers, executives and unions. These conversations enabled the Reviewers to test findings about the problems and issues, discuss areas of best practice and identify practical solutions.

Prior to presenting the results, the Reviewers wish to emphasise the positive and professional approaches they witnessed in many areas of the ACT Public Health System and the dedication of both individuals and groups in the delivery of quality care.

The Reviewers have been cautious to ensure these positive aspects are not lost within the report and instead, present opportunities to build the culture by leveraging off existing strengths.

It should also be emphasised that the ACT Public Health System is not alone in health sector workplace culture issues of inappropriate behaviours, bullying, discrimination and harassment. All other States and Territory health services have identified similar issues in their workplace, as have studies in international health services.

Turning to the findings, the submissions overwhelmingly highlighted:

- inappropriate behaviours and bullying and harassment in the workplace
- inefficient procedures and processes including complaints handling
- inadequate training in dealing with inappropriate workplace practices
- inability to make timely decisions
- poor leadership and management at many levels throughout the ACT Public Health System, and
- inefficient and inappropriate Human Resource (HR) practices, including recruitment.

The results from the survey similarly pointed to a number of concerning trends with 60% of respondents having witnessed bullying over the past twelve months and 35% having experienced bullying themselves. Most of the bullying was staff-on-staff.

Of great concern was that 12% of staff indicated they had been subjected to physical harm, sexual harassment or abuse at work. Of these staff, 46% indicated it was by someone they worked with and 37% was by a member of the public.

Almost three in four who experienced bullying or were subjected to harm did not submit a formal complaint, and worryingly, only 22% of staff had confidence in the way grievances were resolved once they were identified and reported.

The survey results were similar across all three arms of the ACT Public Health System (ie. Canberra Health Services, Calvary Public Hospital and the Health Directorate) and were worse than comparable data for NSW Health.

The information gathered from submissions, individual and group interviews and the staff survey reveal a worrying and pervasive poor culture across the ACT Public Health System. There are pockets of high performance where staff are proud of the quality of their work and were keen to demonstrate it to the Reviewers. By contrast, there were areas where a very poor culture had persisted over many years, and where bullying and other poor performance had not been addressed.

Pride in working for the ACT Public Health System is low, bullying is common and confidence in how the system resolves grievances is extremely low. These issues have been identified in previous reviews⁽³⁾ and audits.⁽⁴⁾

A point regularly raised in submissions was that whilst the contribution of poor leadership over the past few years has led to this unhealthy workplace culture, it was also generally acknowledged that this poor culture had been present for many years.

Cautious optimism was expressed by many regarding the new leadership in the Health Directorate, Canberra Health Services and Calvary Public Hospital. However, it was acknowledged by all that establishing a great health service was a long-term proposition.

The Reviewers believe the starting point for the ambition to create a happier and healthier health service requires a concerted effort by all parties and partners to ensure the vision and values of the ACT Public Health System are lived values, embraced throughout the system, integrated with strategy and constantly reflected in leadership. There is little doubt the vast majority of staff provide high quality health care and strive for excellence. Less embedded are the values of collaboration, integrity and respect.

A program based on the Vanderbilt University Medical Center (United States) is proposed for adoption as a matter of priority throughout Calvary Public Hospital, Canberra Health Services and the Health Directorate.

The program is designed to build a culture of safety and quality in the workplace by training and thus empowering staff to better support each other and raise concerns early. All evaluations of that program demonstrate its effectiveness.

Programs adopting Vanderbilt principles are being implemented at present in an expanding number of health service organisations across Australia. These include the St Vincent's Health Australia Ethos Program, and the Cognitive Institute Speaking Up for Safety and Promoting Professional Accountability programs. The Reviewers believe implementation of such a program would greatly benefit the ACT Public Health System in addressing issues related to poor behaviour, bullying and harassment.

Developing, valuing and sustaining strong partnerships and relationships is an important mechanism to strengthen the culture within the ACT Public Health System. Internally, strengthened relationships are needed between Clinical Divisions in Canberra Health Services, between the acute and community health sectors, and between Canberra Health Services and Calvary Public Hospital.

Externally, improved relationships with NGOs, universities, and other health sectors such as NSW Health are needed. Such improved relationships will not only contribute to improved coordinated care and enable a better research and learning system but, importantly, will help strengthen culture by breaking down the relative isolation of the ACT Public Health System.

Commendable work is progressing in some of these areas with internal and external relationship building underway. Examples externally include the recent research summit with the university sector and, internally, the realignment and improved cohesiveness of the clinical divisional structures in Canberra Health Services.

A necessary prerequisite to good clinical governance in any health system is clinical engagement. A number of very dedicated clinicians, including medical clinicians have fully engaged with this Review, even though some expressed reservations regarding the Review's impact.

However, it was apparent that, unlike nurses and allied health workers, the significant majority of the medical workforce did not engage. This was indicative to the Reviewers that such disengagement was symptomatic of their general disengagement from the management of ACT public hospitals and health services.

Clinicians who are disengaged usually continue to provide high quality care to their individual patients which is why the hospitals in the ACT still achieve good clinical outcomes. However, such disengagement means that the health system does not benefit from the knowledge and input of individual clinicians who provide little consistent input to opportunities to improve the quality of care across the system.

In such a disengaged system, clinicians continue to carry out their duties, putting their patients first, as is appropriate. Despite the positive feedback they receive from their patients and recognising at an individual patient level the outcomes they achieve, disengaged clinicians are often cynical, distrustful of the system, lack pride in their organisation, and are unhappy in the workplace. A critical success factor to improving the ACT Public Health System workplace culture is to enhance clinical, in particular medical, engagement within the health system.

The onus to engage should be equally recognised by both individual clinicians and the system in which they work. Enhanced clinical engagement contributing to improved clinical governance is proposed. It is also proposed that, in line with many other health services across Australia, the divisional structure in Canberra Health Services should progressively adopt Clinical Divisional Directors with Business Manager support.

Submissions from both individuals and organisations to the Review highlighted the inadequacy of the HR practices across all levels of the ACT Public Health System, particularly around HR systems and the local implementation of policies and procedures. Consistently raised themes include, inappropriate recruitment practices, lack of "customer" focus by HR staff, opaque, often heavy-handed processes of complaints handling, a perception of insufficient and uncoordinated training programs and general inefficiencies and duplication of HR processes and practices. A number of recommendations follow, which address these issues.

At the time of preparing this Interim Report, a number of initiatives were underway designed to improve staff welfare. For example, the Ministers for Health and Wellbeing and Mental Health in mid-December 2018 announced the *Nurses and Midwives: Towards a Safer Culture – the First Step – Strategy*,⁽⁵⁾ to support the fundamental rights of nurses and midwives to be safe and protected in the workplace.

Similarly, the new CEO of Canberra Health Services advised the Reviewers of strategies she is implementing in such areas as:

- reducing occupational violence
- establishing an employee advocate role, and
- facilitating targeted workshops for teams and departments with recognised disharmony and poor culture.

All these initiatives are strongly supported by the Reviewers. However, it needs to be emphasised that the level of dissatisfaction and distrust is high and effecting the necessary improvements will be a long process that will require sustained attention.

The Reviewers acknowledge the challenges in resetting the culture of a complex, multifaceted system like the ACT. Writing this report is the easy phase. For this Review to fully realise its intent and deliver the desired outcomes there will need to be a focus on developing a sustained, transparent and measurable approach for monitoring implementation.

An Implementation Committee is proposed, chaired by the Minister for Health and Wellbeing including as members; the Minister for Mental Health, the Director-General (ACT Health), the CEO (Canberra Health Services), the General Manager (Calvary Public Hospital), Health Care Consumers Association of the ACT, relevant unions, Australian Medical Association (AMA), Australian Nursing and Midwifery Foundation (ANMF) and relevant Colleges.

The Implementation Committee should auspice an independent annual external review, with similar methodology to this Review, which measures the extent of success of the implementation of the recommendations and the consequent impact on cultural change within the ACT Public Health System.

Specific recommendations are as follows:

Recommendation 1: 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.

Recommendation 2: That the Health Directorate, in conjunction with Canberra Health Service and Calvary Public Hospital develop an appropriate suite of measures that:

- reflect on elements of a great health service - both culture and strategy
- monitor patient/client perspectives of outcomes/experience
- engage clinicians in their development, and
- measure and monitor progress in clinical engagement.

Recommendation 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 Centre's Patient Advocacy Reporting System (PARS) and Co-worker Observation Reporting System (CORS).

Recommendation 4: The Health Directorate convene a summit of senior clinicians and administrators at both Canberra Health Services and Calvary Public Hospital to map a plan of improved clinical services coordination and collaboration.

Recommendation 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.

Recommendation 6: That the Health Directorate re-establish open lines of communication with the NGO sector and other external stakeholders.

Recommendation 7: The initiatives already underway to develop a valued and more coordinated research strategy in partnership with the academic sector and others is strongly supported. This provides a mechanism to address culture, encourage professional development, education, training, research and other strategic issues.

Recommendation 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 services for joint Ministerial consideration.

Recommendation 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 initiatives.

Recommendation 10: There should be a clear requirement for senior clinicians to collaboratively participate in clinical governance activities.

Recommendation 11: 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.

Recommendation 12: 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.

Recommendation 13: That an executive leadership and mentoring program be introduced across the ACT Public Health System specifically designed to develop current and future Clinical Directors and executive leaders. This program should include both current and emerging leaders.

Recommendation 14: The three arms of the ACT Public Health System should review their HR staffing numbers and functions in light of the concerns staff have expressed regarding timeliness and confidence in current HR procedures, and the future needs for HR, as proposed in this Review.

Recommendation 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.

Recommendation 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.

Recommendation 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 (ACT Health), the CEO (Canberra Health Services), the General Manager (Calvary Public Hospital), Senior Executives across ACT Public Health System and key representative organisations to collectively implement the recommendations of this Review to ensure ongoing cultural improvement across the ACT Public Health System.

Recommendation 18: A 'Cultural Review Oversight Committee' should be established to oversight the implementation of the Review's recommendations. The Committee should be chaired by the Minister for Health and Wellbeing, and include the Minister for Mental Health, the Director-General (ACT Health), the CEO (Canberra Health Services), the General Manager (Calvary Public Hospital), Senior Executives across ACT Public Health System, the Health Care Consumers Association of the ACT, relevant unions, AMA, ANMF and relevant Colleges.

Recommendation 19: That the 'Cultural Review Oversight Committee' 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.

Recommendation 20: As a result of this Review, the 'Cultural Review Oversight Committee' should prioritise 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.

1. Introduction

Purpose

This Interim Report presents the initial findings and a range of recommendations to support improvements to the workplace culture across the ACT Public Health System.

Broad consultation has underpinned the process for this Review and will ensure the final report provides a comprehensive plan for change that can be readily implemented, monitored and measured.

Terms of Reference

In September 2018, the ACT Minister for Health and Wellbeing, Meegan Fitzharris MLA issued a statement on workplace culture which committed the ACT Government to an independent review of the culture within the public health services. This report is the Interim Report, with a final report due before the end of March 2019. Details of the Members of the Review Panel are included at Appendix A.

The Review operated in accordance with the following terms of reference:

- a) 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 should take into account any examples of best practice workplace culture and professional conduct in the delivery of public health care in the ACT, nationally and internationally.
- b) Examine any claims made in relation to inappropriate conduct and behaviours related to the delivery of public health care services in the ACT, and provide advice on:
 - i. best practice responses to such complaints;
 - ii. whether referral of such complaints should be made to any other authority; and
 - iii. what support services should be provided to complainants.
- c) Examine and report on the existing workforce policies and complaints management practices to ensure their relevance and appropriateness in achieving satisfactory outcomes for all parties.
- d) Provide findings and recommendations for:
 - i. further improving workforce culture across the ACT public health system; and
 - ii. additional support systems required for staff and management engaged in the delivery of public health services in the ACT, including processes, training and professional development.

The Terms of Reference specifically indicated that the Review will consider earlier reports and reviews which have been undertaken in relation to workplace culture within the ACT Public Health System, including:

- The 2015 KPMG Report into the Review of the Clinical Training Culture: The Canberra Hospital and Health Services.⁽³⁾
- The 2018 ACT Auditor-General Report on ACT Health's Management of Allegations of Misconduct and Complaints About Inappropriate Workplace Behaviour⁽⁴⁾, and
- The 2018 Report of the Australian Council on Healthcare Standards (ACHS) National Safety and Quality Health Service (NSQHS) Standards Survey of ACT Health.⁽⁶⁾

An overview of the findings of these reports is included at Appendix B.

It should be emphasised that the Review excluded investigation of individual allegations of inappropriate workplace behaviour and bullying and harassment. How such cases were handled as they arose is described in the following Section.

Scope

The scope of the Review encompassed the ACT Public Health System delivered by:

- Canberra Health Services
- ACT Health Directorate, and
- Calvary Public Hospital.

Canberra Health Services incorporates a number of functions, including:

- the Canberra Hospital
- University of Canberra Hospital Specialist Centre for Rehabilitation, Recovery and Research
- three Walk-In Centres for treatment of minor illness and injury
- six Community Health Centres, and
- a range of community-based health services including early childhood services, youth and women's health, dental health, mental health and alcohol and drug services.

The Office of the Review

The ACT Government provided secretariat staff drawn from across the ACT and Commonwealth Public Service to operate the Office of the Review. These staff provided secretariat services and supported the day-to-day administrative and operational functions of the Review.

The Office staff implemented submission and survey arrangements, scheduled and facilitated meetings, forums and teleconferences, analysed submissions and assisted with the provision of documents and information as requested by the Reviewers. Office staff are bound by their obligations and duties as public servants in the way they treat confidential information provided to the Review.

The contribution of the Office staff in skilfully preparing the groundwork for the preparation of this Interim Report is gratefully acknowledged by the Reviewers.

Context

It should be noted that this Review was undertaken at the time of considerable restructuring of the ACT Public Health System. The previous single Health Directorate was split into two agencies in October 2018 - the ACT Health Directorate and Canberra Health Services. The Health Directorate is now largely focused on policy and strategy matters, and Canberra Health Services on providing health care. New Senior Executives (a Director-General and Chief Executive Officer) have been appointed to run these agencies. Similarly, a new General Manager was appointed to Calvary Public Hospital in December 2018.

Early indications are that the new Senior Executives, in recognising the extent of the cultural dysfunctionality they have inherited, are actively engaged in establishing improved workplace environments. The recommendations of this Review are designed to assist them in this regard.

Interstate and International Context

It is important to note that the ACT Public Health System is not alone in the workplace culture issues identified in this report. Bullying, discrimination, harassment and sexual harassment are all prevalent in health care settings throughout Australia and internationally. For example, this is evidenced by the findings of a 2016 survey of trainees and fellows of the College of Intensive Care Medicine of Australia and New Zealand, which found that 32% of those surveyed had experienced bullying, 12% discrimination and 3% sexual harassment.⁽⁷⁾ The Royal Australasian College of Surgeons found in a survey of members throughout Australia in 2015 that 49% of members had experienced discrimination, bullying, harassment or sexual harassment. This figure rose to 63% when surveying trainees. This affected all health jurisdictions and all clinical specialties.⁽⁸⁾ Similar rates of bullying among nurses have been reported in the United States and United Kingdom.⁽⁹⁾

Professional organisations and national and international health services are now focussing increased attention on understanding and addressing inappropriate workplace behaviours.

Definitions

The following outlines the key workplace culture related definitions used by the Reviewers in conducting the Review and writing this report.

Culture

The culture within a workplace is made up of the values and behaviours that people in the workplace share and demonstrate, including their shared attitudes and beliefs. Workplace culture has been described as “the way things are done around here”.⁽¹⁰⁾ Within a health service, this culture impacts on how effectively staff are able to work and the way patients are cared for.⁽¹¹⁾ Research shows that poor workplace culture can impact negatively on patient care and outcomes.⁽¹²⁾

Misconduct/Wrongdoing

Misconduct/wrongdoing is unacceptable or improper behaviour, especially by an employee or professional person and/or the mismanagement or culpable neglect of duties.

Bullying

Workplace bullying is repeated, and unreasonable behaviour directed towards a worker or a group of workers that creates a risk to health and safety.⁽¹³⁾ Bullying can be intentional or unintentional, overt or covert, active or passive.

Bullying behaviours include actions such as shouting and non-action such as purposely not passing on information necessary for doing a job.⁽¹⁴⁾ Bullying should not be confused with legitimate feedback (including negative comments) given to staff on their work performance, or other legitimate management decisions and actions undertaken in a reasonable and respectful way.⁽¹³⁾

Harassment

Harassment is unwanted, unwelcome or uninvited behaviour that makes a person feel humiliated, intimidated or offended.⁽¹⁵⁾ Harassment may include telling insulting jokes about gender, race or disability, sending explicit or sexually suggestive emails, displaying racially offensive material or asking intrusive questions about someone's personal life. Unlike bullying, harassment may involve a single incident.

Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment is any unwanted or unwelcome sexual behaviour where a reasonable person would have anticipated the possibility that the person harassed would feel offended, humiliated or intimidated.⁽¹³⁾ It obviously has nothing to do with mutual attraction or consensual behaviour.

Discrimination

Discrimination occurs when a person or group is treated less favourably than others due to a particular characteristic such as their background or personal characteristics⁽¹⁶⁾ including:

- race, including colour, national or ethnic origin or immigrant status
- sex, pregnancy or marital status and breastfeeding, and
- age, disability, or sexual orientation, gender identity and intersex status.

Duty of Care

Employers have a duty of care under the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011* (WHS Act)⁽¹⁷⁾ to ensure the health, safety and welfare of their employees. This includes identifying bullying and harassment and taking steps to eliminate and prevent it. The WHS Act also requires employees to take reasonable care for their own health and safety as well as for the health and safety of others who may be affected by their acts in the workplace.

2. Methodology

Introduction

A combination of methods was adopted to assess existing workplace culture. The Review sought submissions, held a series of workshops and forums and conducted a wide range of one-on-one meetings. Submissions were received from, and interviews and workshops held with, current and former staff (administrative, medical, nursing, allied health workers, executive and support services) members of the public, non-government organisations (NGOs), unions, health professional bodies and other interested parties. The insight and in-depth understanding gained through these qualitative measures was complemented by data gathered via an all staff workplace culture 'pulse survey'.

It would have been beneficial to analyse HR data, such as unscheduled leave and staff turnover, but this data was not made available in time for the preparation of this Interim Report.

Submissions

To ensure consumers, staff and interested parties were aware of the Review, the opening of submissions was advertised in local magazines and newspapers (including digital) on seven occasions during the submission period. Approximately six hundred posters were displayed in public and restricted areas of ACT Health buildings (Health Directorate, Canberra Hospital, University of Canberra Hospital, Calvary Public Hospital and Community Health Centres). Information about the Review was published on the ACT Health internet and intranet. These activities were supported by advertising on digital billboards across ACT Health sites and screen savers on the ACT Government network.

Emails were sent to all current staff (including those on leave), staff that had left the ACT Public Health System within the last two years and interested parties advising of the submission process. Reminders were sent advising that submissions would soon close. Many NGOs and other external organisations independently informed their membership of the Review.

Consumers were well represented in the submissions lodged either individually or through an NGO. The concerns and opportunities raised in those submissions is included in the analysis below.

In some instances, Reviewers contacted individuals to discuss their submission. This only occurred where the person lodging the submission agreed to being contacted. At times the concerns raised in those submissions, with the agreement of the individual, were referred to an appropriate authority for further action or investigation.

In analysing the submissions, it became apparent that a number of submissions, repeatedly citing bullying and inappropriate behaviours were clustered in a few sections of the ACT Public Health System. As previously mentioned, it was outside the scope of this Review to investigate such allegations.

Nevertheless, where clusters of information about inappropriate behaviour were received, the senior executive of the relevant arm of the ACT Public Health System was advised. The confidentiality of submissions was maintained in these referrals. Similarly, where Reviewers were particularly concerned during interviews about the wellbeing of an individual, with the agreement of that individual, again the relevant senior executive was notified.

Meetings and Interviews

Over the past few months, the Reviewers conducted fifty-five in-person meetings and nineteen phone meetings for individuals and groups. These meetings were at the request of individuals or instigated by Review members. Many of these meetings constituted verbal submissions providing insight into the workplace culture through experiences and examples, and suggestions on how culture might be improved. Individual conversations also took place with consumers and former patients, ensuring their experiences and ideas were heard and included in the findings of this Review.

In addition to these meetings, the Reviewers conducted twenty-seven workshops with groups including nurses, allied health workers, medical practitioners, support and administrative staff, NGOs, Community Health personnel, ACT Health Executives and unions to share information about the Review, discuss areas of best practice, and seek input for change.

These meetings ensured the Review took into account a broad set of perceptions and ideas, thus complementing the information provided in submissions. They provided opportunities for establishing common ground through questioning, discussion and information sharing,⁽¹⁸⁾ and, in particular they enabled conversations about what was working well, what was not, and ways to improve the current workplace culture.

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"I think that this Review is a really valuable process for the organisation to go through because there is a lot of potential for ACT Health to learn from the mistakes that have been made and move towards being a world class health service. I think it needs to start with strong leaders who can build trust in the organisation, give us a shared purpose and goal, demonstrate that everyone is accountable for patient safety, and encourage real collaboration between the areas of the hospital and with our colleagues in other jurisdictions. Significant system and infrastructure changes are needed to enable this."

– Quote from submission

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Staff Survey

An all staff 'pulse survey' was conducted to enable the Reviewers to create a snapshot of the current workplace culture and set a benchmark for tracking workplace culture improvements. The survey replicated a subset of questions used in a 2018 NSW Government People Matter Survey to facilitate some comparisons with NSW Health. The survey was sent to all ACT Public Health System staff. The Review sought permission from the NSW Public Service Commission both to reuse their questions and to compare the ACT Public Health System results against publicly available NSW Health outcomes.

Overall Assessment

There was a degree of scepticism by some staff that this Review would result in any meaningful change in the workplace culture of the ACT Public Health System. The Reviewers were forewarned by a number of external organisations, including the Health Complaints Commissioner, that trust and confidence in the Review process may be low. Such scepticism is understandable; however, others were more positive and the large number of submissions, pleasing response to the survey and willing engagement of staff, unions, professional groups and NGOs in forums to discuss possible changes evidences this.

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“Talking to my ex-colleagues, I have asked a number of them if they wish to make a submission to the Review. They all replied “no” as they believe that nothing will come of it. I want the Review team to prove them wrong, just this one time so we can improve the health of all Canberra residents.”

– Quote from submission

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3. The Evidence

Submissions

A high number of formal submissions were provided to the Review. In total there were 391 submissions of which 353 were from individuals and a further thirty-eight from organisations. The submissions came from a broad spectrum of staff, former staff, members of the public, patients from Canberra Health Services and Calvary Public Hospital, NGOs, health care groups and unions. Each submission was analysed for workplace culture related information (both positive and negative) using a consistent set of criteria. A number of common themes were identified as described in the following tables. It should be noted that virtually all submissions addressed more than one theme.

Table 1: Top themes from individual submissions

Non-supportive manager / leadership	266
Inefficient procedures / processes / complaints management	211
Bullying not addressed	204
Mistrust / dishonest behaviour	148
Lack of opportunities	137
Favouritism	126
Inappropriate Recruitment	119
Poor skills development / insufficient training	103
Hardworking and dedicated staff	82
Supportive team	59

Table 2: Top themes from organisation submissions

Inefficient procedures / processes / complaints management	31
Bureaucratic / process driven	28
Inappropriate Recruitment	22
Non-supportive manager / leadership	22
Poor skills development / insufficient training	19
Micro-managing / poor leadership	18
Bullying / not addressed	12
Repeated unreasonable behaviour	11
Hardworking and dedicated staff	4
Supportive team	3

Submission Analysis

Most of the submissions, both from individuals and organisations, cited issues such as:

- poor leadership and management at many levels throughout the ACT Public Health System
- inefficient and inappropriate HR practices, including recruitment
- inadequate training in dealing with inappropriate workplace practices
- inefficient procedures and processes including complaints handling
- inappropriate behaviours and bullying and harassment in the workplace, and
- inability to make timely decisions.

"I raised numerous complaints with HR, management and the director which were never actioned."

"The management and human resource policies and decisions need to provide for the philosophy of "how can we genuinely assist the worker in this matter."

"Middle management keeps ACT Health afloat as all leaders tend to be in acting positions – leading back to a lack of decision making, lack of leadership, lack of knowledge and lack of management skills."

– Quotes from submissions

A much smaller number of submissions pointed to positive themes, such as supportive leadership and cohesive team work. These submissions tended to relate to specific entities within the ACT Public Health System.

"There are some excellent examples of positive culture [redacted] have put a lot of time into developing a positive culture, supporting new graduates and building clinical leadership skills in their managers."

"My current program is supportive, often acknowledging my achievements and encourages learning and both professional and personal growth. I feel appreciated every day and look forward to coming to work. I no longer hesitate in asking for support and age is not the defining factor of experience and knowledge."

– Quotes from submissions

A full submission analysis is available at Appendix C.

Staff Survey

As mentioned, as part of this Review an online survey of the ACT Public Health System was offered to staff at:




- Canberra Health Services
- ACT Health Directorate, and
- Calvary Public Hospital











The questions mirrored some of the questions included in the 2018 NSW Government's People Matter Survey. The online survey remained open for eight days and 1953 responses were received (which constitutes 20% of the workforce of the ACT Public Health System). The key findings are described below, and full details are at Appendix D.

There was a fairly equal response rate from each of the three services reflecting their workforce. Similarly, the response rate was fairly evenly distributed across occupational categories and is demonstrated in the following tables.

The survey focused on the past twelve months, and hence, reflected some leadership turbulence. Overwhelmingly 88% of staff perceive they understand what is required of them in their role. More than 68% feel a sense of accomplishment from doing their job, and more than 64% are motivated to contribute more than is required of them. These results would suggest that ACT Public Health System staff are motivated and care about achieving good patient care outcomes.

There was not a lot of difference between the findings for each of the three arms of the ACT Public Health System. The issues identified were common to all.

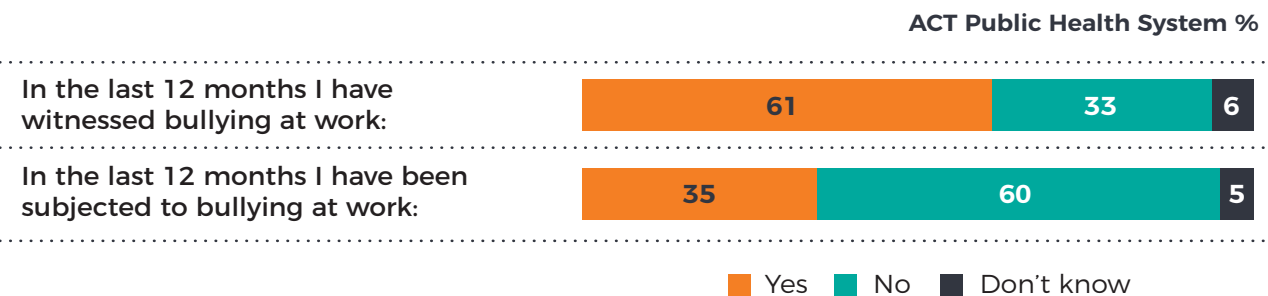
Workplace		Respondents	
		%	No.
Calvary Public Hospital		17	324
Health Directorate		27	520
Canberra Health Services		57	1109

Position	ACT Public Health System %	
Administration		24
Allied Health		17
Clinical support		1
Medical Officer		9
Nursing/Midwifery		33
Support Services		2
Senior Management		7
Executive		1
Another type of position		4
Prefer not to say		2

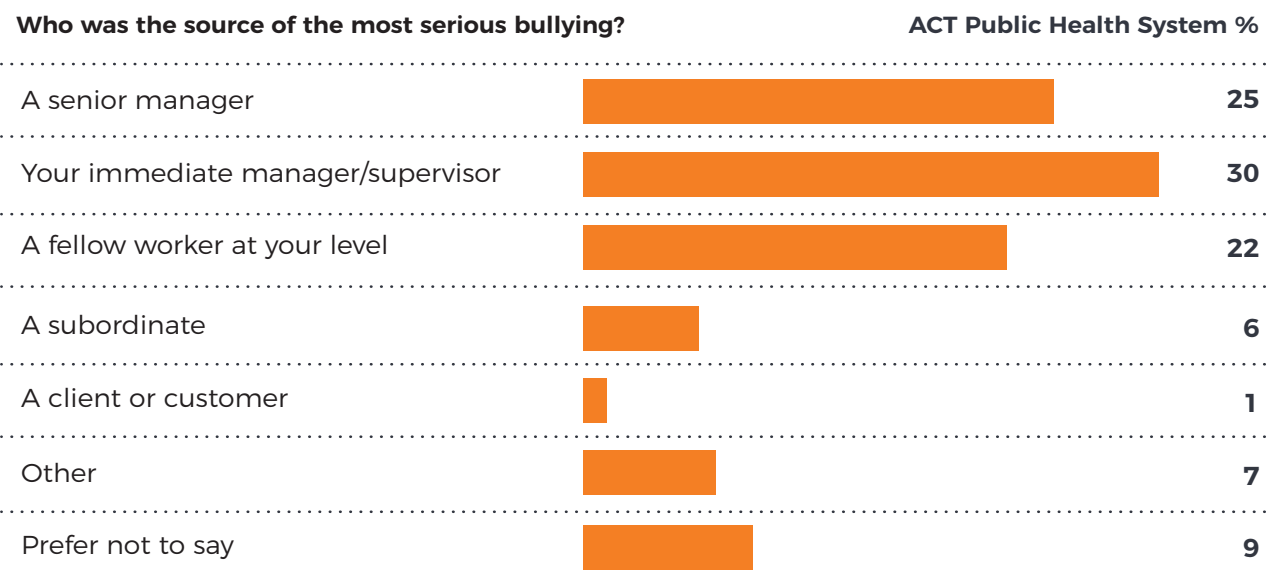
Workplace Conduct



Bullying at Work



Who was the source of the most serious bullying?



Unacceptable Conduct

ACT Public Health System %

In the last 12 months I have been subjected to physical harm, sexual harassment or abuse at work:



Yes No Don't know

Who has been the source of the most serious physical harm and/or sexual harassment or abuse?

ACT Public Health System %

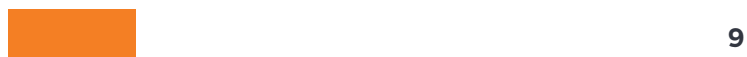
A person at work



A member of the public



Other



Prefer not to say



Complaints Handling

ACT Public Health System %

Have you submitted a formal complaint regarding the incident/s you were subjected to in the last 12 months?



If yes, were you satisfied with the outcome of the formal complaint process?



Yes No Don't know

These survey results are similar to those shared with the Reviewers by the Community and Public Sector Union (CPSU) and the AMA, ACT Branch.

CPSU Survey

The CPSU represents a large number of public sector employees including ACT Public Health System staff. As part of their submission to the Review, they reported on their own 2018 survey of 745 of their members where over half (54%) of ACT Public Health System respondents did not feel adequately trained and supported in their day to day work. Two thirds (68%) disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement that staff are treated fairly and with respect.

Bullying and harassment was identified by respondents of the CPSU survey as being one of the major contributors to the poor wellbeing and workplace culture within the ACT Public Health System. Three quarters (75%) of respondents reported they had been bullied in the workplace and four in five (81%) reported they had witnessed bullying in their workplace. These figures are higher than those reported in the Review survey.

AMA (ACT) Hospital Health Check Survey Summary

Similarly, the AMA in their submission, presented data from a 2018 survey of doctors in training at Canberra Hospital whereby:

- 42% have experienced bullying and harassment
- 39% have witnessed a colleague being bullied or harassed
- 68% feared negative consequences of reporting inappropriate workplace behaviours
- 58% rated staff morale as fair, while 39% rated it poor or very poor, and
- 54% rated the workplace culture as fair, while 29% rated it poor, or very poor.

Comparing ACT with NSW

As mentioned previously, the questions in the 'pulse survey' mirrored those in the 2018 NSW Governments People Matter Survey. Drawing comparisons between the two results should be treated with some caution, as, although the questions were the same, the response rate and the methodology for undertaking the respective surveys varied. Nevertheless, notwithstanding this caveat, a comparison of the two surveys revealed significant variation between the two jurisdictions.

Workplace Culture

Generally, by comparison to the average for NSW Health, staff in the ACT Public Health System have:

- less pride in the organisation
- witnessed or experienced bullying in the workplace at higher levels
- been subject to physical harm or sexual harassment at higher levels, and
- less confidence in how the organisation resolves complaints and grievances.

Comparing ACT and NSW

I would recommend my organisation as a great place to work: % of respondents who agree or strongly agree



I am proud to tell others I work for my organisation



My organisation motivates me to help it achieve its objectives



I have confidence in the ways my organisation resolves grievances



I have witnessed bullying at work

% yes



I have been subjected to bullying at work

% yes



I have been subjected to physical harm, sexual harassment or abuse at work

% yes



Conclusion

The information gathered from submissions, individual and group interviews and the staff survey reveal a worrying and pervasive poor culture across the ACT Public Health System. There are pockets of high performance where staff are proud of the quality of their work and were keen to demonstrate it to the Reviewers.

By contrast, there were areas where a very poor culture had persisted over many years, and where bullying and other poor performance had not been addressed. It is concerning that over 60% of staff that have experienced bullying, harassment or unacceptable behaviour did not report it.

Pride in working for the ACT Public Health System is low, bullying is common and confidence in how the organisation resolves grievances is extremely low.

Whilst the contribution of poor leadership within the ACT Public Health System over the past few years was regularly raised in submissions, it was also generally acknowledged that the poor culture had been a feature of the ACT Public Health System over a number of years.

Cautious optimism was expressed by many regarding the new leadership in the Health Directorate, Canberra Health Services and Calvary Public Hospital. However, it was acknowledged by all that establishing a great health service was a long-term proposition.

The remainder of this report suggests mechanisms for how this may be achieved.

.....

“What is clear is that the issue needs to be addressed. There is a growing body of evidence that there is a direct link between poor communication, bullying and poor patient outcomes. I would urge all those involved in this Review to recognise the ultimate aim of the whole process. That is, of course, high quality health care, with the best possible outcomes for those that have put their trust in us to care for them.”

– Quote from submission

.....

4. Elements of a Great Health Service

What constitutes a great health service and how is it achieved?

Culture

It is increasingly recognised across both the public and private sectors that the combined impacts of culture *and* strategy are the primary levers for organisational effectiveness.⁽¹⁹⁾ It is common for organisations to have detailed plans for strategy development and implementation. Less common is an understanding of the power of culture, which often becomes of secondary importance and not integrated with strategy. The Reviewers believe this is an accurate description of the ACT Public Health System.

Ideally senior leadership of an organisation constantly expresses and lives their stated values – thus promoting the desired culture daily. These values need to underpin strategy documents and operational plans. Similarly, job descriptions for recruitment of senior personnel need to pay far greater attention to the candidates understanding and acceptance of the organisational values.

Culture is the tacit social order of an organisation, which shapes behaviours and defines what is encouraged, discouraged, accepted, or rejected within a group. Such cultural norms, both good and bad, build over many years and are durable.

Effective workplace cultures⁽²⁰⁾ are person-centred, learning-focused and evidence-based, adaptive to changing healthcare requirements and supported by staff who take responsibility for delivering quality outcomes.

In such organisations, staff hold a shared understanding of what they need to achieve individually and collectively. Innovation and creativity are encouraged and supported and appropriate change is driven at all levels of the organisation.

The formal governance arrangements in high performing health services enable continual evaluation of systems and processes, taking on board feedback from staff, patients and stakeholders at regular intervals. Shared governance is in place to ensure evidence from a variety of sources is considered when making decisions.

High performing health services are happy places to work and make for safer patient care and improved staff wellbeing. They display the following traits:

- they deliver outcomes that matter to patients
- everyone is treated with respect and staff trust each other
- collaboration between staff, patients and stakeholders is common place
- there is confidence in leadership
- staff are proud of the service they provide and the place they work, and
- when problems occur, multiple stakeholders work together to identify issues and drive quality improvement.

The evidence presented in the previous Section of this Interim Report reveals public health services that require significant attention towards rebuilding, achieving, and sustaining a healthy culture. This finding aligns with those included in the previous KPMG⁽³⁾ and the ACT Auditor-Generals reports⁽⁴⁾.

Values

How the values of an organisation are understood and adopted broadly by the entire workforce, is a key mechanism to cultural strengthening.

It is worth examining the values of the ACT Public Health System and the degree to which behaviours reflect those values.

The values of the pre-existing ACT Health⁽²¹⁾ state the following aspirations:

Improving the quality of healthcare across the ACT is a key priority for ACT Health, as we aim to be the safest healthcare system in Australia, delivering high-quality, person-centred care that is effective and efficient. We often see people in our community at their most vulnerable. The way we interact with them is extremely important and directly influences their experience of our care.

Care

Go the extra distance in delivering services to our patients, clients and consumers. Be diligent, compassionate and conscientious in providing a safe and supportive environment for everyone. Be sensitive in managing information and ensuring an individual's privacy. Be attentive to the needs of others when listening and responding to feedback from staff, clinicians and consumers.

Excellence

Be prepared for change and strive for continuous learning and quality improvements. Acknowledge and reward innovation in practice and outcomes. Develop and contribute to an environment where every member of the team is the right person for their job and is empowered to perform to the highest possible standard.

Collaboration

Actively communicate to achieve the best results by giving time, attention and effort to others. Respect and acknowledge everyone's input, skills and experience by working together and contributing to solutions. Share knowledge and resources willingly with your colleagues.

Integrity

Be open, honest and trustworthy when communicating with others and ensure correct information is provided in a timely way. Be accountable, reflective and open to feedback. Be true to yourself, your profession, consumers, colleagues and the government.

More broadly, the values and signature behaviours espoused by the ACT Public Service⁽²²⁾ across all agencies are enshrined in the Public Sector Management Standards and describe a system that:

In demonstrating respect

We take pride in our work

We value the contribution of others

We relate to colleagues and clients in a fair, decent and professional manner

In demonstrating integrity

We do what we say we'll do, and respond appropriately when the unexpected occurs

We take responsibility and are accountable for our decisions and actions

We engage genuinely with the community, managing the resources entrusted to us honestly and responsibly

In demonstrating collaboration

We work openly and share information to reach shared goals

We take on board other views when solving problems and welcome feedback on how we can do things better

In demonstrating innovation

We look for ways to continuously improve our services and skills

We are open to change and new ideas from all sources

The Calvary Mission and Values⁽²³⁾ align to the Little Company of Mary and are as follows:

Our Values are visible in how we act and treat each other. We are stewards of the rich heritage of care and compassion of the Little Company of Mary. We are guided by these values.

Hospitality

Demonstrates our response to the desire to be welcomed to feel wanted and to belong. It is our responsibility to extend hospitality to all who come into contact with our Services by promoting connectedness, listening and responding openly.

Healing

Demonstrates our desire to respond to the whole person by caring for their spiritual, psychological and physical wellbeing. It is our responsibility to value and consider the whole person, and to promote healing through reconnecting, reconciling and building relationships.

Stewardship

Recognises that as individuals and as a community, all we have has been given to us as a gift. It is our responsibility to manage these precious resources effectively now and for the future. We are responsible for striving for excellence, developing personal talents, material possessions, our environment, and handing on the tradition of the Sisters of the Little Company of Mary.

Respect

Recognises the value and dignity of every person who is associated with our Services. It is our responsibility to care for all with whom we come into contact with justice and compassion, no matter the circumstances, and we are prepared to stand up for what we believe and challenge behaviour that is contrary to our values.

Some observations on these three value statements are warranted.

- Whilst Calvary Public Hospital is one of the three arms of the ACT Public Health System, the engagement is by way of a Contract for Service Agreement – fundamentally expressed in price/volume terms. It is appropriate, in these circumstances, that the values of Calvary should reflect those of the Little Company of Mary Health Care as specified in the Calvary Network Agreement (see clause 5.3), and not be conflated with ACT Health values. What would be appropriate in future iterations of the contract, however, is to collectively agree and incorporate other aspects in the Service Agreement, which reflect how the needed cultural changes and other areas of collaboration are being initiated and implemented.
- The Health Directorate should adopt the values of the ACT Public Service rather than the values for ACT Health, which are much more service specific. It is understood the adoption of these values is supported by the Director-General.
- The ACT Health values align with the service specific values of Canberra Health Services – care, excellence, collaboration and integrity. It is understood the CEO for Canberra Health Services is commencing discussions with staff regarding the appropriateness of these values given the new organisational arrangements. Such a process is fully endorsed by the Reviewers.
- The organisational arrangements whereby the unified ACT Public Sector Agency reports to a single Head of Service appropriately reflects the relative smallness of ACT compared to other jurisdictions. What is important in such an arrangement is that the Minister for Health and Wellbeing remains fully engaged with the Head of Service in head of agency appointments, contract development and performance monitoring. There is an important role for the Minister in contributing to workplace culture and such involvement enables this to occur.
- There is little doubt that the values of care and excellence (ACT Health) and healing (Calvary Public Hospital) are shared broadly across the ACT Public Health System. As a norm, the vast majority of staff provide high quality care and strive for excellence. As the data in the preceding Section indicated, less embedded are the values of collaboration, integrity and respect.

It is clear that there is a discrepancy between the stated and lived values of each of the three arms of the ACT Public Health System. Addressing this difference will be the key mechanism to establishing a great health service.

.....

“The organisation does not live by its values and the strength of good leadership is not felt.”

“I feel that the core values of ‘Care and Excellence’ are severely compromised by the push for statistics - the need to show increased numbers of referrals and discharges and shorter treatment times. This leads to changes in practices to improve numbers, but which are not necessarily beneficial to clients.”

“When you are overworked and under-resourced your ability to CARE is less, the commitment to EXCELLENCE wanes to the point of doing just enough and your ability to COLLABORATE and act with INTEGRITY at all times is seriously restricted by the need to “just get stuff done.”

“ACT Health does not only need values, it needs to relearn ethical conduct.”

– Quotes from submissions

.....

Focused attention on the organisational values is required.⁽²⁴⁾ The organisational strategy and desired leadership traits across the three arms of the ACT Public Health System should be much more embedded in the stated values. The Health Directorate, in addition to ensuring attention to its own staff, should have a role in facilitating this process across the ACT Public Health System.

Recommendation 1

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.

Measuring Organisational Effectiveness

As emphasised earlier in this Section, organisational effectiveness is the combined impact of culture and strategy. Appropriate measurement and monitoring of performance is a necessary element of demonstrating ongoing and durable changes in the culture of the ACT Public Health System, and hence, building a great health service.⁽²⁵⁾

It became clear during discussions with management and clinicians that, not unlike many other health services in Australia, such performance monitoring/measurement which reflected the organisational values and strategic goals was not in place.

.....

“Collecting data, analysis, developing plans and goals and measuring outcomes against the achievement of goals is fundamental to cultural change. Collecting good, meaningful data is necessary to understanding what problems exist. Change in that data over time can then be used to identify recurring issues or trends, make improvements to systems and processes and allow services to improve their reputation.”

“A process to support the implementation, review and monitoring of [anti-bullying and harassment] policy. Systems must be in place to determine the extent of bullying and harassment behaviours in an organisation or workplace and to understand the perspective and effect on those who have been harassed.”

“We have consistently raised issues with the lack of both planning to evaluate, and the actual evaluation of, policies (including workforce and health service delivery policies) after implementation.”

“Set people up with tools for success. Each unit needs a common reporting line to ensure proper procedures are being followed.”

– Quotes from submissions

.....

Some of the features cited in the current process for performance monitoring included:

- A compliance approach rather than using performance data for continual system improvement. The way data is fed back to clinicians to enable individual and collective performance improvement is critical.
- A misplaced emphasis on a limited number of measures. Whilst National Emergency Access Targets (NEAT) and National Elective Surgery Targets (NEST) are important access indicators, they need to be balanced against other performance indicators, particularly those that measure outcomes that matter to patients and communities.
- Inadequate engagement of clinicians in developing the appropriate performance measures and monitoring the extent of ongoing engagement.
- Inadequate attention on measures of staff wellbeing and their professional development.
- The desire of patients for best outcomes and optimal experience when receiving care should be essential elements of performance measuring and monitoring. A focus on things that can't be easily measured (care, compassion, comfort and help) is important in addition to quality and timeliness of clinical interventions.

A number of these features were cited in organisational submissions including the AMA.

Recommendation 2

That the Health Directorate, in conjunction with Canberra Health Service and Calvary Public Hospital develop an appropriate suite of measures that:

- reflect on elements of a great health service - both culture and strategy
- monitor patient/client perspectives of outcomes/experience
- engage clinicians in their development, and
- measure and monitor progress in clinical engagement.

5. Addressing Bullying and Harassment

Obligations and Reality

There are a number of relevant ACT and Commonwealth pieces of legislation that directly deal with the obligations of employers to ensure a healthy and safe workforce. Key amongst these is the WHS Act⁽¹⁷⁾ which deals with bullying and harassment through an employer requirement to take all reasonably practicable steps to manage health and safety risk in their workplaces. As submissions to the Review indicated, it is not enough that the ACT Public Health System take 'reasonable steps' to prevent the conduct. Instead, it must take 'all reasonable steps' to have a competent defence against allegations the workplace is unsafe, which requires at least:⁽²⁶⁾

- having a plan to identify and address unacceptable behaviour
- learning to recognise through training what is and what is not acceptable behaviour and what behaviour is acceptable or valued (including likely consequences for wrong behaviour)
- having a bullying prevention policy and procedures to address bullying in the workplace, and
- having processes for managing complaints (both informal and investigative) that are procedurally fair, transparent, timely and allow for external, impartial providers of mediation/investigation.

Similarly, the ACT Public Service Commissioner for Public Administration issued a document in 2010 titled: *Preventing work bullying guidelines – Guide to prevention and management of work bullying* (2010 Guidelines).⁽²⁷⁾ The introduction to this document succinctly states:

"The ACT Public Service (ACTPS) aims to create a positive work environment that is free from work bullying, harassment and all forms of discrimination. Respectful and courteous behaviour is essential to creating great ACTPS workplaces which are productive and effective.

Every ACTPS worker has the right to work in an environment that is free from work bullying, discrimination and harassment and to be treated with dignity and respect. Organisations that value and promote dignity and respect are likely to have reduced occurrences of inappropriate behaviour. Chief Executives, executives, managers, employees and all workers of the ACTPS have a responsibility to ensure that the working environment is safe and equitable by preventing conduct that constitutes work bullying, discrimination or harassment."

The *Public Sector Management Act 1994* (PSM Act) establishes the core values and behaviours expected of all workers. As stated in the PSM Act, workplace bullying is not tolerated and is a breach of the ACTPS code of ethics.

There appears to be a clear disconnect between the obligations of employers described in the WHS Act, the aspirations of the ACTPS Work Bullying Guidelines and the reported evidence of workplace bullying and harassment presented in Section 3 of this Interim Report.

It is apparent that the 2010 Guidelines are not delivering on this strategy in the ACT Public Health System. While broader than the scope of this Review, it would be appropriate for the ACTPS to review the content, agency adoption and implementation of the 2010 Guidelines.

.....

"In my years as a registered nurse, employed in both public and private hospitals across the UK and Australia, the workplace culture within the [redacted] is the worst by far that I have seen."

"The treatment of staff in [redacted], is appalling. I have worked in [redacted] for nearly [xx] years and have never witnessed such a disgraceful approach to work ethics. There has been a number of staff leave the area due to the stress of how they were treated. At ACT Health, we feel there is nowhere to go, no one who will listen, no one who will stand up for us, that shows that Health support the bullying of managers."

"I have been subjected to bullying and witnessed bullying in [redacted] for many years now. I have reported through every means available to me but not one of the following means of reporting has ever been followed through. No outcome has ever come of me making any reports. I believe ACT Health only has these programs to be able to tick the box to say that we have all these programs and no one really cares about what is reported."

"I consider myself to be highly professional, competent and trustworthy. Until recently, I have felt very well supported by those in leadership roles, and I in turn have actively supported them (both past and present leaders) to achieve their vision(s) to improve health care within the ACT. Unfortunately, I now find myself in the position where I am seriously considering progressing a bullying and harassment claim. A disappointing outcome, and one that makes me seriously question my desire to continue to be associated with people whose values appear to be so different to mine."

"The endless emotional abuse and mind games by management has resulted in many staff members feeling like the only way anything will change is if they find work elsewhere. Staff members, including myself, have voiced concerns to other members within the branch over the culture within the unit and the way that people are being treated, however feel that nothing has been done to change the behaviour. Many feel that making a formal complaint would only make matters worse, for fear of later being the target of poorer treatment. I, and others, have been keeping documentation of incidents of poor treatment or those that do not align with the ACT Government's Preventing Work Bullying Guidelines."

"There is ZERO consequence for the bully or even at the least feedback about how their behaviour may be contributing. There is no such thing as mediation. So the person who suffers the most is the person who has been bullied. They suffer more if they report it, because it usually changes their workplace, which is a big upheaval. But the biggest psychological insult is that they are invalidated."

– Quotes from submissions

.....

.....

“When I think about the culture within ACT Health and what I have experienced in my time here, I feel shocked and disgusted. The culture within the division is the most toxic, dysfunctional and prehistoric that I have ever worked in. In the [xx] years I have worked, I feel that I have been a target for bullying from managers and colleagues. As a result, in 2019 I will be looking to leave the public health system.”

“The focus should not be limited to bullying and harassment. There appears to be widespread unprofessional behaviours demonstrated by all professional groups that does not meet the definition of bullying, however it contributes to a negative workplace culture. Previous strategies that have focussed on medical practitioners have not been effective. The solution must include all professional groups and clinical and non-clinical staff.”

– Quotes from submissions

.....

Not all submissions presented such a dysfunctional workplace. Some highlighted very positive or improving work environments while others warned against conflating what might be bullying and harassment to one person as appropriate performance management to another. These submissions, however, were very much in the minority.

.....

“I am proud to say we are respectful and supportive of each other at all times and that by setting the expectation my staff know where we stand in relation to respect at work. What I would say in regard to our own culture is that we are asked to do more and more with no improvement to staffing.”

“I am mindful that when a Review is called that there is a risk of only receiving negative feedback. I have worked for ACT Health for the last [xx] years both in training and middle management jobs, I have never been sexually harassed and mostly very well supported in the job. The department that I work for have been through ups and downs but I viewed that as part of the flux of life. I acknowledge there are wide range of experiences out there but I feel this Review must provide a realistic view on the workplace.”

“Staff members use the term bullying and harassment loosely and may not fully understand the true meaning which then has an effect on the manager and/ or supervisor who is just trying to do their job. I think further information sessions should be held across the board for staff to fully understand the term bullying and harassment with more support provided to managers and supervisors when these matters arise. Staff need to be made aware of making such false allegations will lead to further ramifications against the individual.”

– Quotes from submissions

.....

What practical steps can the ACT Public Health System implement to effect cultural change through making the workplace a safer, happier place? Research⁽²⁸⁾ shows that early intervention strategies can prevent inappropriate behaviour escalating into bullying and harassment.

At the moment, when an incident arises, staff either enter it into RiskMan or it is dealt with locally, by managers who may conduct a Preliminary Assessment (refer to further information on Preliminary Assessments set out in Section 9). RiskMan is a licensed software product which serves as an integrated incident and risk management system. It is understood staff are encouraged to use RiskMan as the first step in notifying a bullying incident, as it allows for it to be logged and for data to be collected and reported. However, the Reviewers found that there was no clear thresholds or guidance on when an incident should be entered in RiskMan, versus managed locally. This has resulted in matters escalating quickly, rather than supporting early intervention.

It is understood Calvary Public Hospital has been working to develop a tailored system which permits a 'staff to staff' reporting stream outside a prescribed hierarchy. A site trial is expected to commence shortly.

“Use RiskMan as intended - a tool for supporting continuous quality improvement, not as a threat to staff or as part of a culture of blame. As part of using effective incident reporting, patients and families should also be able to report incidents in real time.”

“Finally, there is a blame culture that exists at [redacted]. One nurse reported to me that they are too scared to put in RiskMan reports because her friend had been reprimanded and told it was her own time management that lead to the incident she had reported.”

“While working at another facility where lots of medication errors occurred I placed many incident reports to enable improvement of issues which were rarely acted upon and when I left the manager made a comment to me about the number of incidents I put in [RiskMan] as if to say I was a pain and created work for her.”

– Quotes from submissions

A strategy to address early intervention is now described and proposed for widespread adoption throughout the ACT Public Health System.

Early Intervention Strategies

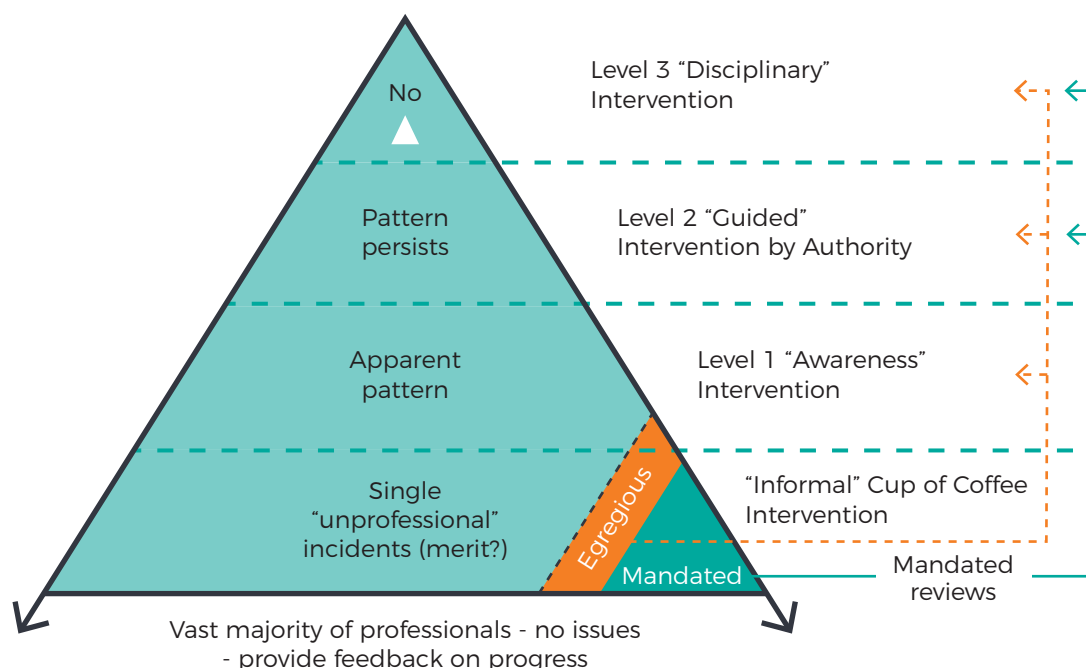
Vanderbilt University Medical Center Programs

Programs such as the Vanderbilt University Medical Center's Patient Advocacy Reporting System (PARS) and Co-worker Observation Reporting System (CORS) are built around early intervention that supports the delivery of “safe, compassionate and reliable healthcare.”⁽²⁸⁾ Implementation of CORS has been shown to significantly reduce the number of complaints that require intervention.⁽²⁹⁾ Combining CORS and PARS resulted in an overall reduction in the number of future complaints.⁽³⁰⁾

The program provides an opportunity for a staff member to receive and consider feedback early and ideally, modify their behaviour. The program employs a graduated coaching model to support the individual in reducing complaints by adjusting their behaviour. The individual is supported in that process, through peer-to-peer coaching, joint action planning and referral to peer reviews.⁽²⁹⁾

The Professionalism Pyramid demonstrates the communication escalation process for unprofessional behaviour.⁽³¹⁾ As illustrated at the base of the triangle (see Figure 1), the Pyramid recognises the vast majority of professionals conduct themselves in exemplary ways. However, for those who don't, the program describes mechanisms for early intervention to reduce the unnecessary escalation to HR as described in Section 9 reducing time spent on preliminary assessments and formal complaints processes.

Figure 1: The Vanderbilt Professionalism Pyramid⁽³¹⁾



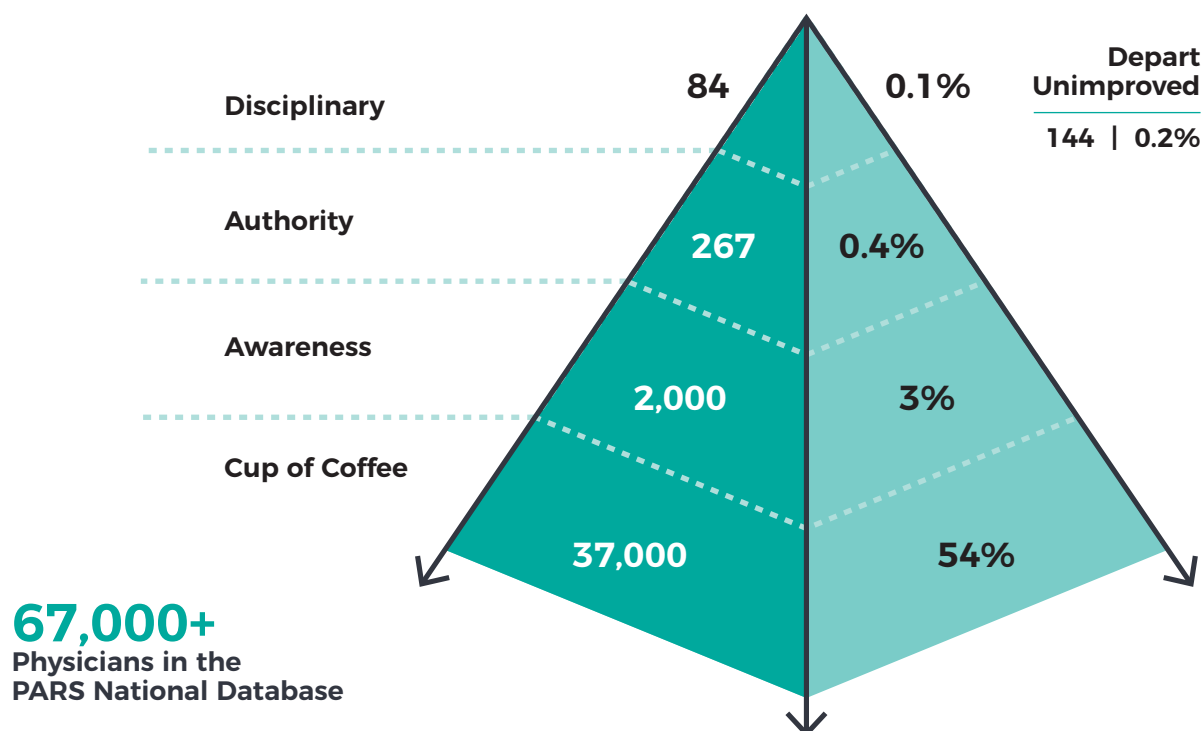
The Pyramid is built on the premise:

- most staff are good people, doing the right thing for the right reasons
- rewards should exist for people who are behaving well (includes acting as leadership symbols)
- of peer accountability, peer messaging and peer comparison
- creating micro/macro environments to intervene early and often
- of data and safety driven interventions, and
- having systems in place to enable the right culture.

Evaluations have been undertaken of the Vanderbilt programs which consistently demonstrate that the programs improve patient outcomes, reduce risk management costs and improve adherence to safety, quality and risk prevention initiatives.^{(30) (32)}

Evaluation also shows that most of the clinicians tracked by the PARS program did not develop a pattern of behaviour requiring disciplinary intervention - the majority, (54% of incidents) were resolved at the initial chat stage.⁽²⁹⁾

Figure 2: Patient Advocacy Reporting System (PARS) Trends⁽²⁸⁾



Programs, some based on the Vanderbilt model exist in the Australian context. Examples include the Cognitive Institute's Promoting Professional Accountability and Speaking Up programs,⁽³³⁾ and the St Vincent's Health Australia Ethos Program.⁽³⁴⁾ Other similar programs have been successfully implemented internationally, examples include the Brigham and Women's Hospital Center for Professionalism and Peer Support which supports a range of programs including the Professionalism Initiative, Culturally Competent Leadership, Peer Support, Disclosure and Apology Coaching, and Wellness training.⁽³⁵⁾

The Vanderbilt Program was designed for physicians in the United States, while both the programs of the Cognitive Institute and Ethos described below have broadened the scope of Vanderbilt to embrace all personnel within a health organisation.

St Vincent's Health Australia Ethos Program

The Ethos program was introduced at St Vincent's Health Australia in July 2017, and is being rolled out across all St Vincent Health's twenty five Australasian hospitals.⁽³⁶⁾ The program takes a pragmatic approach to addressing entrenched cultural problems in the health sector by embedding safe, respectful and professional behaviour and addressing conduct that undermines patient and staff safety. Based on Vanderbilt, the Ethos program includes:

- an accountability pathway, which provides a transparent and equitable way to provide feedback to staff about their behaviour
- a web-based online reporting tool, which is private and confidential and provides a safe avenue for all staff to report either positive or negative behaviours, and
- a package of capability building and training, to equip leaders and staff with the skills needed to role model safe and respectful behaviour.

St Vincent's Health Australia is partnering with the Australian Institute of Health Innovation at Macquarie University to evaluate the Ethos Program. Metro North Hospital and Health Service (Brisbane) has also recently joined this program.

The Cognitive Institute

The Cognitive Institute is a not-for-profit mutual organisation and is part of the Medical Protection Society (MPS) for doctors, dentists and healthcare professionals. It offers two organisation-wide programs to build a culture of safety and quality by empowering staff to support each other and raise concerns; Speaking Up for Safety™ and Promoting Professional Accountability (PPA).⁽³³⁾

Speaking Up for Safety™ aims to help healthcare organisations overcome entrenched behaviours that can lead to poor patient outcomes and achieve cultural change through improved communication. They offer a train the trainer program and recommend implementation of an organisation-wide PPA and speaking up culture. Like the Ethos Program, the Cognitive Institute programs are based on the Vanderbilt model.⁽³³⁾

The Cognitive Institute clients in Australia include public and private hospitals, general practices, mental health services, community health centres and primary health care networks.

Proposed Approach

It is proposed that a program based on the Vanderbilt Model be implemented as a matter of priority throughout Calvary Public Hospital, Canberra Health Services and the Health Directorate. This proposal aligns with the suggestions put forward by individuals working in the hospitals, medical and nursing staff participating in round table discussions held by the Reviewers and external organisations including NGOs and Unions. The program should be jointly developed and simultaneously implemented and evaluated across all three arms of the ACT Public Health System. As these programs include mechanisms for early intervention and resolution of issues and complaints, they are expected to reduce unnecessary escalation to HR and effort on preliminary assessments and formal complaints processes.

Recommendation 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 Centre's Patient Advocacy Reporting System (PARS) and Co-worker Observation Reporting System (CORS).

6. Partnerships and Relationships

When considering mechanisms to improve workplace culture, the importance of partnerships cannot be ignored.

There are a number of partnerships and relationships that the ACT Public Health System needs to foster and grow in order to provide high quality health care. The Reviewers found opportunities for improved engagement exists both within the ACT Public Health System and with key external bodies.

Internal relationships include those between:

- Canberra Health Services, Calvary Public Hospital and the Health Directorate
- the acute care sector and the community-based health services, and
- the Clinical Divisions at Canberra Health Services.

Critical external relationships include those with:

- universities
- peak NGOs
- professional bodies
- NSW Health, and
- consumers.

Internal Relationships

Calvary Public Hospital

It is clear that the relationship between Calvary Public Hospital, the Health Directorate and Canberra Health Services deteriorated over the past few years. Examples were cited in submissions and interviews of alleged inappropriate behaviour and disrespect to Calvary Public Hospital Executive and clinical personnel by previous senior ACT Health Executives – behaviours starkly discordant with the stated values of both organisations. Other examples were cited of inappropriate behaviour of Calvary Public Hospital Executives toward Executives at the Health Directorate and Canberra Health Services.

There has recently been an improvement in those relationships particularly reflecting new executive appointments at both Calvary Public Hospital and the Health Directorate and this change is positive. Notwithstanding these improvements, a number of areas were identified in submissions where further improvements, particularly in clinical coordination could be achieved, thus breaking down what is still, to many, an “us and them” mentality.

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“Relationships between the key stakeholders in the ACT Health care system are fraught and strained.”

“There is a distinct lack of strategic planning or direction due to the inability of [redacted] to effectively plan and poor relationships between the two services. This makes it very hard for individual departments to plan, grow, innovate and attract staff and challenge staff in an effort to keep them engaged (recruitment and retention strategies).”

“There have often been issues with appropriate rostering of rotating doctors [redacted] often seems to be allocated staff based on “what is available” which can be questionable at times.”

– Quotes from submissions

.....

There is a lack of coordination between the two hospitals in clinical services planning and provision. This extends from simple coordination of clinical services between the two hospitals and the more complex barriers to cooperation and coordination of services for an ACT wide approach. Reportedly, clinical service planning has historically been disjointed, overly prolonged, and uncoordinated. This has created a high level of distrust, confusion and angst from clinicians who are asked to deliver services in an environment that they either do not understand or have had little opportunity to be consulted on.

Secondly, performance management between the two hospitals needs to be more transparent with negotiated outcomes based on one set of guiding principles for all and clear accountability.

Thirdly, there needs to be greater clinician employment flexibility between the two hospitals including opportunities for Calvary Public Hospital staff to be welcomed at Canberra Hospital training sessions.

It is understood that some of these areas of concern are being actively addressed, but even these still require greater inter-hospital collaboration. It is proposed that, in the interests of ACT residents and staff at both hospitals, a summit be convened by the Health Directorate with senior clinicians and hospital administrators to map a plan of improved coordination.

Recommendation 4

The Health Directorate convene a summit of senior clinicians and administrators at both Canberra Health Services and Calvary Public Hospital to map a plan of improved clinical services coordination and collaboration.

Community Health Sector

Unlike most other States and Territories of Australia, Canberra Health Services operates a number of comprehensive Community Health Centres (CHCs) that provide a range of general and specialist health services to people of all ages.

Forums with staff at two CHCs indicate a generally positive culture within the centres. However, there are two major concerns – firstly that their services are shrinking given the demands of the acute sector and, related to this concern, that the community health contribution to alleviating the pressures on acute care is neither fully harnessed, nor recognised.

“The acute sector treats the community sector with disrespect. Patients are discharged home without correct discharge processes/information being followed. The hospital wards do not care as it is not their problem once the patient has gone. Patients are told that they will receive home visits even when they are not eligible even though we provide constant education that this is not the case. Community nurses then have to deal with irate and rude patients who tell us that they have been promised home visits. Patients who could self-care at home are not taught and are discharged home, and community nurses have to teach patients to do the task that the hospital should have taught them to do. This is a waste of community nursing time and demonstrates the lack of respect the hospital has for community nurses.”

– Quote from submission

The various clinical groups within community health (for example: mothers and children, aged care, mental health), organisationally sit within the divisional structures of Canberra Health Services thus, in principle, providing the potential for an integrated service. Many community health staff however, do not consider they are adequately involved in divisional discussions. This concern should be assessed and, if necessary, addressed by the CEO and Executive of Canberra Health Services.

Recommendation 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.

Inter Divisional Relationships

One issue which became apparent during clinical discussions was the lack of interactions between the Clinical Divisions of Canberra Health Services. In recent years a productive forum has not existed to enable such discussions to occur. Many individuals and submissions commented on the “deep narrow” silos between Clinical Divisions.

It is encouraging that the new CEO of Canberra Health Services is quickly rectifying this anomaly.

A range of mechanisms to improve communication and engagement across the divisional structures are being developed by the CEO. These include a:

- proposed clinician council
- medical advisory committee
- nursing advisory council, and
- medical unit directors forum.

These initiatives to break down barriers between Clinical Divisional structures are strongly supported and should be sustained.

External Relationships

Non-Government Organisations (NGOs)

One of the prime mechanisms available to the ACT Public Health System to help reduce avoidable demand for health services, facilitate better care coordination and enable a broader range of views to be incorporated into strategic development, is through their relationship with NGOs and peak bodies. Discussions revealed historical dissatisfaction with ACT Health's alleged lack of commitment to its own value of collaboration.

A number of NGOs claimed they have experienced, over the years, a lack of respect, professionalism and responsiveness from ACT Health staff. Meetings allegedly have been difficult to schedule and are often cancelled at short notice, or ACT Health representatives do not attend. There are reportedly, very poor response times to emails, phone calls are not answered, voicemail messages are not actioned, and staff do not follow through on agreed actions.

Many NGOs pinpointed 2015 as the time when relationships declined significantly. Even with the establishment of a new executive structure within the Health Directorate, some mentioned there is still significant room for improvement.

It is emphasised that NGO health care groups play an important care coordination role across the ACT. Greater collaboration and input on the design, funding models and governance of strategies to improve health policy is needed from:

- service organisations such as Winnunga Nimmityjah Aboriginal Health
- Capital Health Network, PHN ACT - which represents those working at the coalface, including GPs and other primary healthcare clinicians, and
- peak body organisations such as the Mental Health Community Coalition (MHCC) and the Alcohol Tobacco & Other Drugs Association (ATODA) ACT.

The reviewers received a joint Peak's statement from ATODA and MHCC outlining concerns about their relationship with ACT Health, and a proposed set of practical steps to improve engagement. Their statement (attached in full at Appendix E) notes:

"Health services delivered by NGOs are an essential component of our ACT health system. The impact of systemic issues and workplace culture within ACT Health has adversely impacted relationships with NGO stakeholders, resulting among other things in reduced quality of policy outcomes and contract management relationships across sub-sectors.

The ACT Health Directorate needs to rebuild its corporate knowledge, relationships and specialist expertise in multiple sub-sector areas to enable genuine health service planning and implementation going forward; this will take considerable time, resources and processes."

A concerted effort will be required to regain trust and reopen lines of communication.

Recommendation 6

That the Health Directorate re-establish open lines of communication with the NGO sector and other external stakeholders.

Consumers

The Reviewers received a range of submissions from consumer advocacy groups, individual consumers and family members of former patients.

Feedback received from the Health Care Consumer Association (HCCA)—the peak health care consumer association in the ACT—indicated that consumers want health care that is timely, of a high quality and focused on consumer needs. They want health care teams to work collaboratively to ensure a consumer-centred approach to care. Key issues raised included; insufficient staff resulting in limited time for care of consumers, communication delays, unbalanced focus on targets and accreditation processes rather than sustained quality of care, and limited options for reporting and addressing staff related issues including bullying. They also expressed a dissatisfaction with handling consumer-initiated complaints.

Submissions received from individual consumers and family members of patients of both Canberra Hospital and Calvary Public Hospital identified a number of inappropriate workplace interactions between staff members and poor communication with patients and family members. This highlights the importance of a health care system, where staff trust each other and communicate freely about the needs of patients.

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“I was in the ED that made me wonder about the culture – one was when I fell over and couldn’t get back up again, no-one saw me for quite a while, even though I was trying to call out and they were standing at the end of my bed, second was the bullying behaviour of the surgeon who came to assess me. So although I felt that I was given a high level of care, I noticed that there seems to be some elements in the system who are not team players – and honestly, raised voices and bullying don’t have any place in the workplace.”

“A friend of mine recently had surgery at [redacted]. During her patient in stay she witnessed nurses bullying a nurse. It was so relentless that she, the patient said “will you stop bullying her!” The nurses were surprised and momentarily stopped. My friend was recovering and unwell and spoke to the nurse who was bullied about putting a complaint in. The nurse begged her not to complain because she said, “it will just make my life harder”.

– Quotes from submissions

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“Overwhelmingly, consumers observed that health professionals seemed rushed, or were often too busy to talk or listen to a consumers’ concerns. Some consumers had witnessed bullying and harassment of staff, including disrespectful behaviour between colleagues in the presence of patients. Tension between doctors and nurses in particular, was mentioned as an area requiring better cooperation and respect.”

“I have requested on several occasions that [redacted] hospital take direct action in relation to staff bullying. I have requested, in writing and verbally to the CEO and senior executive staff, that they conduct a compulsory programme for all clinical and emergency medical staff in respectful staff communications, particularly in stressful situations”

– Quotes from submissions

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Universities

Many submissions highlighted the need for a much more coordinated research strategy across the ACT Public Health System noting a lack of support for research in the face of service demands. Research partners such as the Australian National University (ANU), and the University of Canberra (UC) are important to the future quality of health services in Canberra.

A more coordinated research strategy will improve reputation, offer opportunities for research and help bring or retain the best health workers within the ACT.⁽³⁷⁾ It will mean there is competition for positions and the ACT will become an increasingly sought-after place to work. Research needs to be supported, valued, planned for and governed. A strong research agenda significantly enhances clinical engagement, which in turn contributes to improved culture.

The ACT Public Health System needs to include research and growing the research base as part of its health strategy. A collaborative strategy would take advantage of opportunities and raise the profile and output of research. The focus for research should particularly include translational and health system research, in addition to opportunities for basic research. The recent research summit, under the auspices of the Minister for Health and Wellbeing is a positive initiative.

With three excellent universities in close proximity (ANU, UC and the Australian Catholic University (ACU)), the ACT Public Health System has a unique opportunity to build a learning culture and promote the importance of academic learning within its workforce. The Reviewers found evidence that to date developing a learning culture within the ACT Public Health System was not valued, and that striving for academic excellence and greater academic output was often not encouraged. This situation needs to be rectified.

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“There is a real culture of not participating in education and not allowing Junior Medical Officers time to attend education opportunities.”

“We have a medical school etc we do research, but you don’t feel this in the hospital.”

– Quotes from submissions

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Recommendation 7

The initiatives already underway to develop a valued and more coordinated research strategy in partnership with the academic sector and others is strongly supported. This provides a mechanism to address culture, encourage professional development, education, training, research and other strategic issues.

NSW Health

One of the main complexities of Canberra Health Services is that it comprises a University Teaching Hospital with a relatively small population base within ACT. There is consequently heavy dependence on the significant net inflow of NSW patients into Canberra Hospital in order to sustain the breadth of clinical subspecialties.

Interactions between NSW Health and the ACT Public Health System significantly revolve around the end of year financial adjustments from NSW to ACT to reflect the net value of NSW residents receiving clinical care in the ACT.

It is argued that some of the long-standing cultural issues are attributable to the relative isolation of the ACT Public Health System. The culture of the ACT Public Health System could be enhanced through broader clinical and executive experience in, and exposure to other health services – and given the importance of patient flows, particularly NSW Health. Initiatives could include:

- wider clinical experience of trainees/junior doctors across NSW hospitals
- greater ACT participation in NSW clinical policy development and safety and quality initiatives
- greater collaboration in translational and health service research
- participation in NSW Executive Leadership programs
- specific mechanisms to improve workplace culture
- a better understanding of catchment populations for Canberra Hospital and relationships with other NSW hospitals within that catchment population, and
- better understanding and planning for patient flows both into and out of the ACT.

It is proposed that discussions at a senior level take place between the two services with a view to developing a MoU of collaboration for joint Ministerial consideration.

Recommendation 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 services for joint Ministerial consideration.

Specialist Medical Colleges

Developing and sustaining relationships and ongoing dialogue with the Specialist Colleges is important for the ACT Public Health System.

Specialist Medical Colleges conduct education and training for doctors on a pathway to become consultants. They accredit hospital units through regular inspections and by providing feedback on the experience of their trainees. While the trainee may be an employee of the ACT Public Health System, the College is responsible for their selection and for assessing their progression through the specialist training program.

Australian Colleges are increasingly taking bullying, discrimination and harassment very seriously.⁽³⁸⁾ Modules covering these workplace issues are included in the training they provide. Specialist units have recently been discredited where a particular college has identified issues with workplace bullying.⁽³⁹⁾

When an allegation of discrimination, bullying or sexual harassment is made there is a requirement for both the employer (the Health Service) and the training body (the College) to investigate. There is a need to share relevant information as the College cannot send trainees to a unit or hospital where they are at risk, nor should a trainee who is a persistent bully be allowed to continue training. For example, to facilitate this type of information sharing, the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons (RACS) is putting in place MOUs with Health services across the country.⁽⁴⁰⁾

7. Clinical Engagement and Governance

Clinical Engagement

A necessary prerequisite to good clinical governance in any health system is clinical engagement.

The Review found the need for greatly improved clinical engagement across the ACT Public Health System. Issues cited in submissions and workshops included; a lack of clinical engagement in development and monitoring of the performance measures, and clinician frustration at overly burdensome administrative processes.

A number of very dedicated clinicians, including medical clinicians, have fully engaged with this Review, even though some expressed reservations regarding the Review's likely impact. However, it was apparent that, unlike nurses and allied health workers, the significant majority of the medical workforce did not engage. This was indicative to the Reviewers that such disengagement is symptomatic of clinicians' general disengagement from the management of the hospitals and health services.

Clinicians who are disengaged usually continue to provide high quality care to their individual patients, which is why these hospitals still achieve good clinical outcomes. However, such disengagement means that the health system does not benefit from the knowledge and input of individual clinicians who provide no consistent input to opportunities to improve the quality of care across the system. This point was made by a number of organisations representing medical and nursing staff. Engagement brings clinicians into strategic decision making, helps inform the response to near misses, complications or adverse events, identifies opportunities to learn from them, and ensures they will help drive implementation of changes to improve the safety and quality of care.

In a disengaged system, doctors, nurses and allied health workers carry out their duties, putting their patients first, as is appropriate. Despite the positive feedback they receive from their patients and recognising at an individual patient level the outcomes they achieve, disengaged clinicians are usually cynical, distrustful of the system, lack pride in their organisation, and are often unhappy in the workplace. Their interactions with bureaucracy are in consequence frustrated, sometimes angry, and breed resentment.

Many examples were put to the Reviewers of both inappropriate clinician behaviour in the workplace and of administrative red tape contributing to a disengaged clinical workforce.

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“Morale is low, we are fatigued from chronic under-staffing, and we are experiencing debilitating instability. Administrative processes are onerous and obstructionist, and I am genuinely shocked when someone has enough reserve to actually help me when I am desperate enough to ask.”

“I have seen and experienced countless examples of poor leadership which arguably affect patient care and team morale. Whether it be a senior colleague on the end of the phone who has no patience for a consult, or a disorganised ward round with a rushed consultant who fails to adequately convey their intent or take the time to engage their team, staff at all levels seem to accept this as the norm.”

“I know from discussions with colleagues that it is the interesting patient case load that we manage that largely keeps a lot of us coming to work rather than the great team environment. The outdated systems used within ACT Health, the lack of adequate administration processes and well-trained staff to undertake these tasks adds to the low morale within the service.”

“There are many examples of invitations to valuable planning and information sessions being delivered at short notice. This precludes the involvement of clinicians in decision making processes and is a missed opportunity to receive valuable input on the design of patient services, leading to the promulgation of poorly considered policies and service designs. It also leads to a lack of awareness and frustration among clinicians about decisions made.”

– Quotes from submissions

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The progressive delegation of responsibility for sensible decision making about appropriate approvals is needed as one tool to re-engage with the clinical workforce. One strategy to do this is discussed in the following Section.

A focused attempt in improving clinical engagement across the ACT Public Health System is critical. Better clinical engagement was advocated for by a number of organisations including the RACS and the AMA. It is noted that the senior executives at both Canberra Health Services and Calvary Public Hospital are appropriately endeavouring to address this issue. Their success needs to be measured and monitored. Participation in safety, quality and improvement meetings, as well as willingness to attend meetings scheduled at reasonable times of the day to discuss system / service / divisional performance should be some of such measures.

The onus to engage should be equally recognised and acknowledged by both the individual clinicians and the system in which they work.

Recommendation 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 initiatives.

Visiting Medical Officers (VMOs)

The Visiting Medical Officers (VMOs) represent a skilled and valued element of the health service workforce that need to be engaged and included in governance activities. One specific issue raised in the submission from the ACT Visiting Medical Officers Association was the perception of VMOs in the workplace. Their submission stated...

“Frequent claims, often from senior clinical academics, are that VMOs will not participate within the subspecialty unit, are not interested in education or research, and make no contribution other than doing paid clinical work. These claims are false.”

This statement highlights the possible tensions between VMOs and the salaried medical workforce (not uncommon in the Australian health industry) and the need for improved clinical engagement to actively include both groups of the medical workforce.

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If VMO's are not engaged and participating in the decision making of the hospital then that is a very dangerous situation. If you can't comment as the expert then the health system is missing out on your knowledge and expertise.”

“VMO's often don't know about things that are going on – I don't know how to access the system as I have never had an orientation.”

– Quotes from submissions

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Clinical Governance

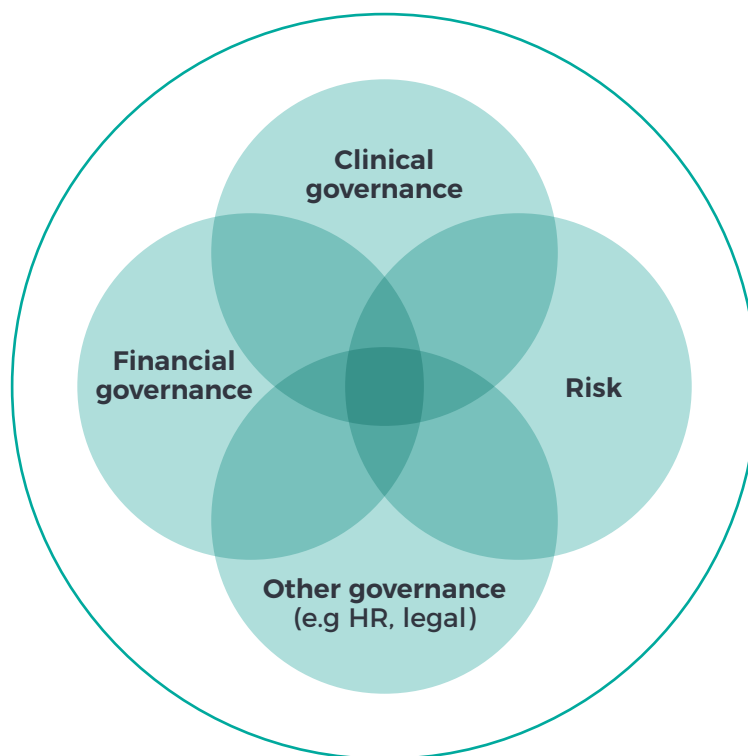
As previously stated, improved clinical engagement enables better clinical governance.

Clinical governance is the set of relationships and responsibilities established by a health service organisation between the Ministers, owners (for Calvary), executive, clinicians, patients, consumers and other stakeholders to ensure good clinical outcomes.⁽⁴¹⁾ It ensures that the community and health service organisations can be confident that systems are in place to deliver safe and high-quality health care, and continuously improve services.

Clinical governance is an integral component of corporate governance of health service organisations which ensures that everyone – from frontline clinicians to managers and members of governing bodies, such as boards – is accountable to patients and the community for assuring the delivery of health services that are safe, effective, integrated, high quality and continuously improving.

Good corporate governance cannot be achieved in a health service organisation without appropriate clinical governance – this is one of the key messages that prompted the Australian Commission for Safety and Quality in Healthcare to develop a National Clinical Governance framework.⁽¹¹⁾ Financial, Medico-Legal, Risk and HR governance overlap and must be integrated with clinical governance. Figure 3 highlights the overlapping of governance responsibilities in a health setting.

Figure 3. Clinical Governance as part of the Governance Responsibilities



National Model Clinical Governance Framework

All clinicians should participate in clinical governance in line with the five following principles.

1. **Systems awareness** – which involves an understanding of the complex network of diagnostic, primary care, acute care and post-acute care settings that patients need to negotiate.
2. **Teamwork** – whereby effective teams perform better and produce better results.
3. **Effective communication** – required not just between patient and clinician, but between clinicians and management.
4. **Ownership** – whereby staff within health services are empowered to take responsibility, solve problems and effect change.
5. **Leadership** – effective leaders are required within all levels of management and clinical structures. Such leaders need to be provided with the appropriate skill set to be effective.

Reportedly, across the ACT Public Health System there is currently good acceptance of this responsibility by nursing and allied health workers, but less so amongst medical specialists. For the medical workforce, both salaried doctors and VMOs, this requirement should be as part of the terms and conditions of employment / contract. In addition to health workers, the involvement of consumers in clinical governance is vital. As part of clinical governance, all senior clinicians should be provided with regular data which monitors the delivering of care according to agreed protocols and measures clinical outcomes.

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“Consumer and family complaints, concerns and compliments provide a rich source of information about where improvements may be needed and what patients appreciate. These provide an active opportunity for learning and action.”

– Quote from submission

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When clinicians are disengaged from the health system, the principles guiding good clinical governance are compromised.

Recommendation 10

There should be a clear requirement for senior clinicians to collaboratively participate in clinical governance activities.

Choosing Wisely

Choosing Wisely, an initiative of the National Prescribing Service (NPS) Medicine Wise⁽⁴²⁾ is an excellent mechanism for clinical engagement. This program has widespread adoption throughout Australia, but not in the ACT Public Health System. Implementing an initiative of this type would provide opportunities to focus clinical engagement on practical issues, thus contributing to better clinical and corporate governance.

Improved consumer care is the core objective of Choosing Wisely as the initiative focusses on improving the safety and quality of patient care by reducing unnecessary tests, treatments and procedures. While the primary focus is on improving care, the initiative also has the capacity to reduce inefficiencies and costs associated with unnecessary test and treatments.

Medical colleges and professional societies participate in Choosing Wisely by developing and disseminating the lists of tests and treatments thought to be overused or misused.

Many Australian health services and hospitals are also implementing Choosing Wisely through clinician-led initiatives. This may involve bringing specialists, or champions of evidence-based care, from across a hospital or broader health service to work collaboratively to identify opportunities to reduce unnecessary tests, treatments and procedures.

The Choosing Wisely program should be considered for adoption within the ACT Public Health System.⁽⁴³⁾

Recommendation 11

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.

8. Clinical Leadership

The previous Section highlighted the extent of clinical disengagement in the ACT Public Health System and proposed mechanisms to enhance such engagement. One consequence of enhanced engagement is the capacity and desire for improved clinical leadership. The lack of clinical leadership was considered by some to be a root cause of the current poor culture within the ACT Public Health System.

The voice of clinicians, particularly the senior medical workforce, needs to be amplified throughout the ACT Public Health System.

Leadership Structure

At the time of preparation of this Interim Report, the CEO of Canberra Health Services had announced a proposed new organisational structure, which reduces the number of Clinical Divisions to seven:

- Cancer and Ambulatory Support
- Community, Aged Care and Rehabilitation
- Critical Care
- Mental Health, Justice Health and Alcohol and Drugs Services
- Women Youth and Children
- Surgery, and
- Medicine

This slight reduction in Clinical Divisions, coupled with the creation of a cross Divisional Clinical Council, is fully supported as it will help moderate the silos that have evolved to the detriment of a good corporate culture. Each division in the current and proposed structure is led by an Executive Director. Currently there is no requirement for that Executive Director to have a clinical background from within the relevant division.

One frequently mentioned feature of the existing organisational structure is that there is limited devolved autonomy to the Divisional Executive Directors / senior clinicians.

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“Clinical excellence requires the careful development of people, their skills, ambitions, and the service framework which enables their talent.”

– Quote from submission

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Clinical Leads

There are various organisational models which would better amplify the senior clinical voices within hospital governance structures. One model, favoured by the Reviewers is that progressively, Divisions all become clinically led by a senior clinician from within the Division and that increased autonomy is accorded to those Divisional Directors.⁽⁴⁴⁾ Such clinically led arrangements are common elsewhere in Australia and internationally. Each Divisional Director should be supported by a Business Manager. It should not be assumed that the Divisional Directors will be medically qualified, though many will be, there may sometimes be co-director arrangements in place with a registered

nurse or midwife or allied health professional. It could also be more appropriate in some Divisions for the lead to be a nurse or allied health worker. Again, this is common in other hospitals.

Earned Autonomy

This should be an 'earned autonomy' arrangement where the Clinical Director demonstrates his or her attributes to lead a division with clear strategic goals within budget and demonstrating the desired culture of the health service.

To provide the skills to facilitate this earned autonomy, a targeted senior leadership and mentoring program should be developed and implemented – available to participants in medicine, nursing, allied health and executive personnel. This leadership and mentoring program should facilitate participation by Calvary Public Hospital clinicians and executive and be specifically designed to develop current and future Clinical Directors and executive leaders. It is worth noting that this approach aligns with the recommendations of the previous KPMG Culture Review of ACT Health.⁽³⁾

Growing Clinical Leaders

Initially there should be a discovery process with the Executives of both health services, with input from the Ministerial 'Clinical Leadership Forum' that will help guide the program design. This recommended approach aligns with the findings of the previous KPMG Culture Review.⁽³⁾

Elements of such a program emanating from this discovery process may include:

- 360° feedback to increase self-awareness
- personal development programs
- mentoring by external senior clinicians
- one on one executive coaching
- opportunities to connect and collaborate with cross industry peer level leaders
- conduct of strategic projects to drive clinical, cultural and financial performance across the services, and
- an improved understanding of the health industry and use of budget setting using activity-based funding.

Recommendation 12

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.

Recommendation 13

That an executive leadership and mentoring program be introduced across the ACT Public Health System specifically designed to develop current and future Clinical Directors and executive leaders. This program should include both current and emerging leaders.

To successfully implement a more autonomous clinically led Divisional structure will require ready access to understanding of and response to safety, quality and business data.

9. Role of Human Resources

Workforce Strategy

The role of the HR function in assisting the resetting of the culture within the ACT Public Health System is critically important. Improving workforce recruitment and training strategies, and the underpinning policies and processes that apply to them, are all essential elements of meaningful workplace culture change. Indeed, a core deliverable of HR, should be an alignment of workforce strategies with the needs of the ACT Public Health System by helping to acquire, develop, and retain talent essential in building a strong health system with shared, collective perceptions, attitudes and behaviours among its employees.

Supporting Staff

Submissions from both individuals and organisations to the Review highlighted the inadequacy of the HR practices across all levels of the ACT Public Health System, particularly around HR systems and the local implementation of policies and procedures. Consistently raised themes include, inappropriate recruitment practices, lack of “customer” focus by HR staff, opaque, often heavy-handed processes of complaints handling, a perception of insufficient and uncoordinated training programs and general inefficiencies and duplication of HR processes and practices.

This is a clear reflection that leaders, managers and HR staff have a number of challenges to address in improving the workplace culture of the ACT Public Health System.

Looking after employees by providing a safe workplace is a legal requirement of all Australian workplaces.⁽¹⁷⁾ Research has shown that there is a close relationship between employee’s engagement in the workplace (such as participating in cultural change or simply participating as a member of a workplace team) and their health and wellbeing.⁽⁴⁵⁾ Dealing with inappropriate behaviours, bullying, harassment and workplace violence appropriately and quickly is an essential element of a safe workplace for employees.

Unfortunately, within the ACT Public Health System, employees do not have confidence in how such issues are dealt with – only one in five respondents to the workplace survey indicated confidence in how grievances are resolved. This is well below the 40% of NSW health employees – a figure which is itself unsatisfactory.

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“When getting assistance from HR, it is common to get different advice from different HR managers.”

“There is a lack of trust with HR and HR processes”.

“When contacting HR the advice is often conflicting, never in writing and dependent on who you talk to. I do a significant amount of fact checking after receiving advice”.

– Quotes from submissions

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Work Already Underway

At the time of preparing this Interim Report, a number of initiatives were underway designed to improve staff welfare. For example, the Ministers for Health and Wellbeing and for Mental Health announced the *Nurses and Midwives: Towards a Safer Culture – the First Step – Strategy*⁽⁵⁾ in mid-December 2018. This strategy supports the fundamental rights of nurses and midwives to be safe and protected in the workplace. This work outlines the vision where staff, patients and visitors are protected from harm and feel safe at all times across Canberra Health Services and Calvary Public Hospital.

Similarly, the new CEO of Canberra Health Services informed the Review of strategies she is implementing in areas such as:

- reducing occupational violence
- establishment of an employee advocate role, and
- targeted facilitated workshops for teams and departments with recognised disharmony and poor culture.

All these initiatives are supported by the Reviewers. However, it needs to be emphasised that effecting the necessary improvements will be a long process that will require sustained attention.

The reorganisation of ACT Health has seen a clearer distinction of the functions of workforce policy and macro workforce planning now residing within the Health Directorate, whilst the operational aspects of capacity building and HR functions reside in Canberra Health Services and Calvary Public Hospital.

The Reviewers witnessed endeavours in each of the three arms of the ACT Public Health System to now strengthen the HR collaboration. Such collaboration will be a major contribution to the sustained improvement of workplace culture throughout the ACT Public Health System.

Future Focus

HR has an important role to play in positioning the ACT Public Health System into the future. There are a number of principles⁽⁴⁶⁾ that help maximise the contribution of HR:

1. **Organisational alignment:** The HR strategy and function must be informed by the current and future needs of the ACT Public Health System. As emphasised earlier in this report, those needs are reflected in the complex interplay of values, strategy and leadership.
2. **Agility:** a coordinated, agile, flexible approach across all of the ACT Public Health System is necessary for maximising organisational performance.
3. **Engagement beyond the ACT Public Health System:** engagement with unions, NGOs and the education sector is essential in understanding future demand, changing health practices, technological improvements and consumer requirements. This knowledge must be embedded in workforce strategies and the way HR operates.

By building upon these principles, HR will contribute to the ACT Public Health System being best placed to establish an agile and adaptable workforce ready to meet the changing demands of its community.

HR Staff Numbers

Through its deliberations, it became clear to the Reviewers that the number of designated HR staff may not be adequate to support the necessary strategic workforce planning requirements as well as the ongoing operational requirements. Underestimating the role of HR in workplace culture change, may well undermine the success of any program of change embarked upon. The Reviewers consistently heard that there does not appear to be the staff to complete the work that needs to be done.

It must be noted that every organisation is unique, and within ACT some HR related services are provided by the ACT Government Shared Services. However, the Reviewers recommend a review be undertaken in a timely fashion of HR staffing numbers to ensure there are sufficient HR staff to address both the existing HR requirements and those arising from this Review.

Recommendation 14

The three arms of the ACT Public Health System should review their HR staffing numbers and functions in light of the concerns staff have expressed regarding timeliness and confidence in current HR procedures, and the future needs for HR, as proposed in this Review.

Recruitment

The Reviewers heard about many concerns and issues that resulted from high numbers of long-term acting arrangements within the ACT Public Health System. The issues included inability to make decisions, long-term career uncertainty and what many described as a lack of meritorious recruitment processes.

Recruitment practices within the ACT Public Health System were cited in submissions as inconsistent and lacking transparency leading to dissatisfaction from both successful and unsuccessful applicants.

According to ACT Recruitment Policy:⁽⁴⁷⁾

Recruitment processes in ACT Health must follow the principles outlined in the Enterprise Agreements, Public Sector Management Act (1994) and Standards, and relevant Procedures. The principles that must be demonstrated by any selection process are:

- *Selection is based on merit*
- *Procedural fairness*
- *Clear advertising and opportunity to apply*
- *Accountability*
- *Privacy and confidentiality.*

In its Recruitment Procedure,⁽⁴⁷⁾ ACT Health states:

To comply with legislation, managers are reminded that permanent officers must be considered for a temporary vacancy in the first instance. Where a suitable permanent officer can undertake a temporary role, this must take precedence over a temporary employee undertaking that role.” Refer section 106 Public Sector Management Act.

A tension exists between the principles of providing upskilling opportunities for existing staff and applying merit-based selection for vacancies/new positions.

Subsequently, it was argued to the Reviewers that there is lack of opportunity for external applicants to enter the services and ultimately secure permanent positions. The ability to refresh and grow the workforce is consequently inhibited. Recognising legislative compliance, enterprise agreements and policy requirements, has given rise to a system with many people occupying ‘acting’ roles, often over long periods. Substantive roles are not relinquished, further creating an insular workforce.

In addition, submissions to the Review maintained the process of recruitment is often protracted resulting in good people being ‘lost’ from the system and inconsistency in recruitment practices leads to a culture of suspicion with people allegedly appointed to positions without due process.

.....
“Recruitment is not consistent throughout the organisation. There has been a number of examples of poor recruitment decisions.”

“Recruitment does not appear to be open and transparent. There are examples of when employees have been put into positions, without a position being advertised.”

“Recruitment is micromanaged and takes months to sort, we cannot recruit anyone good.”

“Recruitment, selection and promotion practices should be open, competitive and based on merit.”

“While overall merit should be the overriding consideration of any application for appointment or employment, organisation should have in place a range of positive strategies and initiatives to attract doctors from diverse backgrounds to its workplace, profession and speciality.”

“Every director and executive director resigned and was replaced with an acting person and that is still occurring, people are still acting.”

“We need a greater focus on recruiting skilled people and developing skills in the junior staff.”

“Recruitment processes take too long as the delegations for sign off are too high.”

– Quotes from submissions:

.....
Notwithstanding the tension cited earlier, greater transparency in adherence to the recruitment processes and principles by the ACT Public Health System would, in addition to ameliorating some of the staff and union concerns, enhance organisational culture.

Recommendation 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.

The impact of adopting this recommendation would be an overall reduction in the number and length of acting arrangements. This data should be part of the metrics that are monitored.

Whilst the above comments relate to all ACT public health system staff, there is a specific recruitment issue concerning the Junior Medical Workforce (JMW) recruitment process. The general recruitment cycle of the JMW in Australia runs on an annual basis, with the clinical year usually commencing in the second or third week of January and finishing fifty-two weeks later. Most junior doctors are offered a twelve month temporary contract requiring further application to roles half way through their intern year.

Most State and Territory health authorities advertise junior doctor posts centrally, usually during the preceding June or July. In addition, there is frequent communication advising when recruitment will be open. It is a highly competitive marketplace, with many hundreds of applications being received for limited positions. Not surprisingly, most jurisdictions have a specific section for junior doctor recruitment on their websites improving access and transparency.

The Junior Medical Officers (JMOs) have advised that in the ACT training opportunities are advertised after NSW and Victoria. The positions are not differentiated from general recruitment and time of advertising is not generally known. There appears to be considerable room for improvement in the JMO recruitment cycle within the ACT Public Health System.

Attraction and Retention

The challenges of attracting and retaining highly skilled workers in the ACT are similar to those challenges experienced in other jurisdictions. A more coordinated, or even integrated approach with NSW Health could be considered as part of the proposed MoU between ACT and NSW Health discussed in Section 6.

In addition, the Review received many examples of staff not being supported to attend training. This limits staff opportunities for professional development within the system. Many staff advised they were looking to leave the ACT Public Health System and join an organisation that would support them in developing their skills.

.....
"It is difficult for nursing staff to get study days, support and funding around conferences."

"Trainees have reported strict administrative rules in relation to work hours, which impede clinical exposure and limit learning and training."

"We have no learning culture – we think mediocrity is ok."

– Quotes from submissions

.....

One strategy to achieve improved attraction and retention is to enable greater mobility of staff between Canberra Health Services and Calvary Public Hospital so that staff can upskill and increase capability within the ACT Public Health System. Many submissions and discussions pointed to the complexities and inconsistencies in the application of the existing policy and procedures applied to staff seeking temporary transfers between the two hospitals. At the local level this leads to dissatisfaction and disengagement within the workplace.

For example, access to entitlements is not consistent across the ACT Public Health System (or even within each of its arms). This can create tension between staff and managers due to perceived inequity.

Consistent application of entitlements will facilitate greater staff mobility between services through secondments, temporary transfers, higher duties and ongoing employment arrangements.

“Staff at Calvary are not offered the same training opportunities as staff at Canberra Hospital.”

“A staff member was required to resign their position from Canberra Health Services to take up a non-ongoing opportunity at Calvary. They had to have all their leave arrangements paid out and were not able to transfer or take leave without pay to accept the position and improve their skills.”

“Attracting and retaining staff is very difficult.”

– Quotes from submissions

Where possible, there should be greater consistency of HR policies and practices, and their application across Canberra Health Services and Calvary Public Hospital. Such improved consistency will aid recruitment, retention, mobility and staff satisfaction.

Preliminary assessments

The ACTPS Enterprise Agreements⁽⁴⁸⁾ allow for managers to undertake preliminary assessments (PA) of staff members' work performance or conduct in cases where an allegation of inappropriate behaviour is made. In this situation, a PA is used to determine whether further action is required. The manager or supervisor chooses if they will inform HR of the assessment and may also seek the assistance of HR in the assessment process.

The application, timeframe and management of PAs was raised consistently in submissions and the consultation process as confusing for both the manager and the staff member. The outcomes delivered through the conduct of PAs was consistently called out as being opaque, unsatisfactory and in many circumstances damaging to both the manager and the staff member. Many managers and staff were not sure of how formal and reviewable the PA process was. Understanding of how the PA process aligned with formal investigations also varied greatly.

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“The application of Preliminary Assessments is a very bureaucratic approach to managing human behaviour.”

“Too many issues are escalated to HR, as a first point of call. They become blown out and this causes damage to the relationships of the people involved”

“The PA process is more like an investigation process. It is heavy handed for minor issues that may be better managed by and early facilitated discussion between parties.”

– Quotes from submissions

.....

The Reviewers heard many examples of matters that should/could be resolved over a cup of coffee being escalated, rather than de-escalated as a result of a PA process. Not only does this seem to have impacted on resolution timeframes and workload, but evidence to the Review indicated it has frequently caused psychological harm to both parties involved. This Review is not the first to identify issues in the understanding and application of PA and performance management processes. Similar issues were raised in the 2018 Auditor-General’s Report.⁽⁴⁾ Several managers noted that the process ended up with them having a bullying claim brought against them, and staff who had undergone an assessment, reported that they were not advised of outcomes for months or in some cases, years.

The proposed introduction of the Vanderbilt based model of early intervention in Section 6 is designed to significantly reduce those grievances which are formally escalated to HR and result in a PA. This is expected to reduce the issues caused by the PA process and ensure greater appropriateness of PA referrals and, hopefully, improved timeliness of their resolution in the future.

Enabling Systems and HR Data

A high degree of frustration was expressed across the sector on duplication of effort by managers to administer basic payroll systems. Leave applications may be entered into three separate systems and rostering and reconciliation processes are reported as time consuming and cumbersome. When HR management systems are not functioning, capacity to manage at unit level is inhibited and scope to use incentive schemes to engage and motivate employees is limited.⁽⁴⁹⁾

Unfortunately, the Reviewers were unable to access information on HR metrics such as staff turn-over and unscheduled leave, which are often used to measure the health of an organisation’s culture.⁽⁵⁰⁾

The Reviewers experience was also shared by managers across the ACT Public Health System. Frustration at the inability to access meaningful HR data for effective decision making and action by managers was repeatedly expressed. This coupled with the lack of transparency and complexity of processes was identified as frustrating and disengaging for managers. This core data will be important for the ACT Public Health System to closely monitor and report on during the implementation of cultural change activities.

Over time, the ability to deal with issues at a local level has diminished. Many reasons have been cited that have contributed to the current state, but a common important thread is lack of access to meaningful HR data.

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“There are a number of managers who come into work on weekends to complete the fortnightly payroll acquittal.”

“The manager spends 40 hours per month on rostering staff onto shifts.”

– Quotes from submissions

.....

ACT Government Shared Services is cognisant of these deficits with a vision for improvement which has stated an intention to:

“evolve the HR capability through the implementation of an integrated technology backbone to improve process efficiency and effectiveness, allowing resources to focus on higher value add activities.”

It is recognised that a large body of work has been recently commissioned that will hopefully provide useful data dashboards on such information as turnover, staffing profiles and unscheduled leave. The new system would allow users to drill down to the individual level and access trending and comparison data.

There is opportunity to further develop management capability in making this information available to all managers to create a management culture of ‘accountability with autonomy’ as described in Section 8.

Development of key performance indicators is acknowledged as an essential first step. Transparency, interpretation and regular monitoring of these indicators will be essential in understanding and responding to those trends at a local and organisational level.

Against this back drop of perception, there is also opportunity. The Reviewers believe that there is a genuine appetite by HR management and many staff to do things differently – to do things well!

HR creates value by building capability in that it helps create a culture that fosters innovation, and it helps mitigate ‘people risks’. Every HR activity; recruiting, on-boarding, training, leadership development, performance management, compensation and benefits, rewards and recognition, is in service to one or more of these goals. This perspective provides the building blocks for the narrative for telling a smarter story.

The recent commissioning and development of HR data dashboards is important. This data should be available as a set of KPIs which also should monitor the enabling of devolved management.

Leadership Training

Building capability

A common theme emerged throughout the consultation and submission process was the opportunity to improve the skill levels of the various management groups in terms of people management.

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“Appropriate management and leadership training must be provided and should be a requirement for those in leadership and supervisory roles. This includes education in performance management, providing constructive feedback, communicating about difficult issues and effective complaints management to prevent issues escalating where possible.”

“Where an organisation’s leaders are insensitive, or of poor standard, inconsistent, unfair, stale or not transparent and/or where its people are not aware of their rights and how to enforce them safely, the opportunities to enhance clinical team efficiency, maintain quality and develop employer of choice characteristics is reduced.”

“Building leadership competency in medicine should form part of the process towards cultural change.”

“Leadership courses and mentors/coaches should also be made available. Leadership competence should be taken into account more strongly during the recruitment process.”

“There is clear evidence in our organisation of not adequately responding to underperformance or not knowing how to address unacceptable workplace behaviour. The sense is that senior leadership lacks willingness to have difficult conversations and that these are either poorly focussed or targeted at the individuals concerned or simply overlooked.”

– Quotes from submissions

.....

Ongoing guidance and education is required for all staff at all stages of their career to recognise and address inappropriate workplace behaviour. This should include the appropriate management and escalation of complaints. As identified by the AMA in their submission:

“Training in appropriate behaviour, resilience, performing under pressure and how to speak up when bullying and harassment occurs, needs to be embedded in all education and training programs. The link between appropriate behaviour, and patient safety should be incorporated into ACT Health’s induction program, particularly for new managers.”

An array of training opportunities exists within the health sector in the ACT which address people management skills deficits. However, the Reviewers were not convinced these programs represented a coherent whole, and believe it would be timely to reflect on the purpose, target audience, curriculum and training styles of such programs. Such a review would be particularly timely in the light of the findings of this Review.

Any additional or more coordinated training should complement and incorporate the requirements of the recommended roll-out of the Vanderbilt based Program across the ACT Public Health System.

Recommendation 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.

10. Implementation

There was a degree of scepticism expressed in both submissions and meetings with staff that any recommendations arising from this Review would be aggressively pursued. On the basis of history, this scepticism is well founded.

Introduction

Should the recommendations be accepted, a sustained, transparent and measurable approach to their implementation is required. First and foremost, amongst these should be a collective public statement of commitment by all parties involved to ongoing cultural improvement.

Recommendation 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 (ACT Health), the CEO (Canberra Health Services), the General Manager (Calvary Public Hospital), Senior Executives across ACT Public Health System and key representative organisations to collectively implement the recommendations of this Review to ensure ongoing cultural improvement across the ACT Public Health System.

Committing Publicly

Consideration could be given for this public commitment to be expressed by way of a signed agreement between the Ministers, the Director-General (ACT Health), the CEO (Canberra Health Services), the General Manager (Calvary Public Hospital), relevant unions and Specialist Medical Colleges.

Tracking Implementation

Structural mechanisms are required to collectively oversight the implementation of the recommendations. The Health Directorate, Canberra Health Services and Calvary Public Hospital should each develop their own internal mechanisms – the nature of these mechanisms is more appropriately the remit of the respective senior executive teams. However, across the ACT Public Health System, it is proposed the Minister for Health and Wellbeing establish and chair a ‘Cultural Review Oversight Committee’ for collective oversight. This Committee should have a defined lifespan (for example, three years) with membership including the Ministers, the CEO, the Director-General, the General Manager, relevant unions, the AMA, Healthcare Consumers Association of ACT and Specialist Medical Colleges.

This Committee should not allow alternate membership and should issue a regular joint public statement on progress (for example, every six months).

The Minister for Health and Wellbeing’s proposed Clinical Leadership Forum should also have an important role in contributing to the implementation of the Review recommendations. Their area of interest would particularly relate to the Sections on Clinical Engagement and Clinical Governance.

Recommendation 18

A 'Cultural Review Oversight Committee' should be established to oversight the implementation of the Review's recommendations. The Committee should be chaired by the Minister for Health and Wellbeing, and include the Minister for Mental Health, the Director-General (ACT Health), the CEO (Canberra Health Services), General Manager (Calvary Public Hospital), Senior Executives across ACT Public Health System, the Health Care Consumers Association of the ACT, relevant unions, AMA, ANMF and relevant Colleges.

Independent Review

In addition to the proposed internal mechanism for overseeing the Review recommendations, it is proposed an independent, external review be conducted, using the same methodology as this Review, once a year over at least the next three years. This should be under the auspices of the 'Cultural Review Oversight Committee'.

This external review should also include input from quantitative findings from staff surveys conducted across the three arms of the ACT Public Health System. Such a staff survey could include metrics such as the one last undertaken in 2015.

Recommendation 19

That the 'Cultural Review Oversight Committee' 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.

Communicating Outcomes

An obvious aspect that will need to be addressed by the 'Cultural Review Oversight Committee' are the mechanisms for talking with staff, patients and the community concerning the findings of this Review and progress towards implementation.

Communication will be necessary, not only on those recommendations seeking to address inappropriate cultural practices, but also highlighting positive areas of cultural improvements.

Recommendation 20

As a result of this Review, the 'Cultural Review Oversight Committee' should prioritise 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.

Appendix A: Reviewer Biographies

Mick Reid (Chair)

Mick Reid has undertaken many roles in the Australian health system during a career that spans four decades. His experience includes bureaucrat, consultant and academic, giving him a breadth of experience and depth of knowledge of the Australian health care system.

Mr Reid was Director General of Health in two States. For five years until 2002, he held the position of Director General of New South Wales Health. More recently, until 2011, he spent three years as Director General of Queensland Health.

When not engaged in the public sector, Mr Reid is Principal of his consulting company, Michael Reid & Associates, which has undertaken health and science projects throughout Australasia, for governments in Asia and the Pacific and with UN organisations.

Broad areas of consultation have related to macro health systems development and evaluation, health workforce reform, clinical engagement, services planning, indigenous health, coordination and translation of health and science research, and performance analysis. He provides mentoring services to many people engaged in senior positions within the health sector.

Mr Reid holds Adjunct Professorships in both the Faculty of Medicine at the University of Sydney and the School of Science and Health at the University of Western Sydney and is an Honorary Fellow of the Australian College of Nursing. In 2011, he was awarded the AHHA Sidney Sax Medal for contributions to Australian Health Services.

Fiona Brew (Member)

Fiona Brew is a senior health executive with more than 10 years' experience managing public health services and aged care in various senior roles.

With a background in nursing and regional health, she is an advocate for strong partnerships and collaboration in meeting the health needs of all clients.

Ms Brew is a values based leader and an expert in reforming culture in health services with a long-standing passion for governance, service improvement and hospital performance. She applies her knowledge through service redesign, models of care and health informatics to achieve improvements and is a passionate advocate of education for health professionals and workforce innovation to meet the changing needs of the health environment.

Ms Brew understands the complex relationship with Visiting Medical Officers and other staff who are not permanently based or employed, and how the nursing culture can positively or negatively affect that and patient outcomes.

Ms Brew has been acting in a number of health service CEO roles, focusing on improved governance and culture to bring about significant changes to improve safety in clinical delivery.

David Watters AM OBE (Member)

David Watters was President of the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons (RACS), from 2015 to 2016. During this time, RACS established an Expert Advisory Group to combat discrimination, bullying, and sexual harassment in the health sector. This included looking at how RACS could lead the elimination of bullying and harassment from hospitals and health departments.

Professor Watters has a strong interest in workplace culture and professionalism issues across the health sector.

Professor Watters is Professor of Surgery at Deakin University working at Barwon Health and the University Hospital Geelong.

Professor Watters chairs the Safety and Quality Committee for the surgical and critical care program at Barwon Health and is a member of the Board Safety and Quality committee. He is a general surgeon with interests in general, colorectal and endocrine surgery, actively engaged in advocating for global surgery after spending almost 20 years working in many developing countries prior to migrating to Australia in 2000.

He is an Edinburgh University graduate with over 150 peer reviewed publications and six books including *Stitches in Time - Two centuries of Surgery in Papua New Guinea (PNG)* (Xlibris, 2012) and the recently published *Anzac Surgeons of Gallipoli* (RACS 2015).

In addition to the FRACS, David is a fellow of the Edinburgh, Hong Kong, and East Central and Southern Africa Colleges of Surgeons and was awarded a Life Membership to the Medical Society of PNG (2017), the title of Alfred Deakin Professor (Aug 2016) and appointed Honorary Member of the Asian Surgical Association (2015).

In recognition of his contribution to surgery and surgical training in PNG he was awarded the OBE (2012) and Rotary's Paul Harris Fellowship (2000). He was recently awarded (Queen's Birthday June 2018) the AM for significant service to surgery and professional organisations.

Appendix B: Previous Reports

Introduction

The Culture Review Terms of Reference outline the reasons for, and parameters of, this Review. The Terms of Reference refer to three earlier reports which have been undertaken in relation to workplace culture within the ACT Public Health System.

Those reports are:

- The KPMG Review into the Clinical Training Culture in ACT Health (2015)
- The ACT Auditor-General Report – ACT Health’s management of allegations of misconduct and complaints about inappropriate workplace behaviour (2018), and
- Report of the ACHS National Safety and Quality Health Service (NSQHS) Standards Survey of ACT Health (2018).

This Review has taken the findings and recommendations of these reports into account when conducting its activities and writing this report. This appendix summarises each report, outlining its key findings and recommendations.

The KPMG Review into the Clinical Training Culture in ACT Health (2015)

The KPMG Review was conducted over four weeks, it received 54 submissions and held focus groups with 62 internal stakeholders and three external stakeholders. At the time, The Canberra Hospital and Health Directorate were combined along with Calvary Public as a single organisation – ACT Health.

The Review focused on organisational culture (not individual behaviour), and asked the following questions:

- To what extent is there a culture that supports bullying, discrimination and/or harassment?
- What is contributing to the culture that exists?
- What can be done to shift behaviours and improve the overall culture of the hospital?

KPMG Review Findings

The Review found cultural factors evidenced at the Canberra Hospital and Health Services Directorate that were similar to other medical work environments. That is a culture that accepts or condones bullying and harassment behaviours (76% of submissions observed a culture of accepting bullying and harassment). The Review found variability across the organisation in the cultural issues identified.

The elements found to be driving the culture included:

- a lack of compliance with legislation and policies and a lack of action around non-compliance
- less than desirable inter-personal skills and inappropriate performance feedback, and
- fears of victimisation and limited support for individuals experiencing bullying.

Disharmony amongst consultant staff was found to impact on trainees, including confusion about correct medical management. Attracting specialists to Canberra was considered challenging and efforts to retain senior consultants included not challenging inappropriate behaviours. Trainee's sign 12-month contracts and feared raising concerns would result in their contract not being renewed.

Trainee welfare was raised in the report as a major concern. Evidence of a power differential in the organisation and fewer numbers of supervisors was thought to lead to a greater likelihood of inappropriate conduct.

These factors were considered to be exacerbated by frameworks and policies that were not easily accessible, understood by staff or complied with consistently. In addition, the KPMG Review found:

- Perceptions that action to resolve issues were ineffective and untimely, inappropriate behaviour was considered normal and therefore accepted or excused, some staff did not speak up as they were fearful of detrimental consequences and there was a lack of support mechanisms and strategies to assist those with a complaint or issue.

Recommendations

The KPMG Report provided seven high level recommendations:

- Work with the Executive and Clinical Directors to conduct further detailed analysis of those areas noted in this Review as having a culture that accepts or condones bullying, discrimination and/or harassment.
- Engage senior leaders and staff across TCH and HS in developing a statement of the desired culture for success.
- Using the statement of desired culture as the basis, to develop, implement and embed a 'saturation' communications campaign.
- Adjust reward and performance measures for leaders to reflect desired leadership behaviours and capabilities.
- Develop and institute mandatory leadership and management training for all clinicians who hold a leadership or management position.
- Review governance structures in relation to the accountabilities and reporting requirements associated with bullying and harassment.
- Strengthen policy statements to clarify and commit to consequences for unacceptable behaviour.

Opportunities

The Review found it would be important for the organisation to demonstrate a commitment to eradicating inappropriate behaviours and suggested a focus on engaging with staff in improvement activities to ensure a safe, positive culture. The Review suggested ACT Health focus on driving improvements through:

- Improving Leadership
- Building a culture of acceptance
- Increasing awareness and understanding, and
- Implementing a process to resolve inappropriate behaviours.

The ACT Auditor-General Report – ACT Health’s management of allegations of misconduct and complaints about inappropriate workplace behaviour (2018)

In this report the ACT Auditor-General found that ACT Health did not effectively manage allegations of misconduct initiated by former Director-General and former Deputy Director-General, Corporate (Executives) against two former employees. These employees prepared performance data and reports and the accuracy of these had been of concern to the Executives. The audit also considers allegations of inappropriate complaint handling by the Executives in relation to complaints made by the employees of inappropriate workplace behaviours by the Executives.

The issue arose when:

- in mid to late 2016 concerns about the accuracy of ACT Health’s performance information and reporting were raised by the Executives
- on 1 July 2016, the employees complained about inappropriate workplace behaviour by those Executives, and
- on 29 July 2016, ACT Health wrote to the former employees to notify them of misconduct allegations against them and suspend their employment.

These matters were referred to the ACT Government Professional Standards Unit for investigation. That investigation found that one of the employees had not engaged in misconduct. There was no formal resolution for the second employee, as their employment contract with ACT Health had expired by this time.

Audit Findings

The Auditor-General found:

- The decision to initiate a misconduct investigation into the former employees was precipitous. There was insufficient documentation to justify the investigation or the potential misconduct. Documentation to support the investigation was not produced until three weeks after the decision to investigate and suspend the employees was made.
- ACT Health’s management of complaints regarding inappropriate workplace behaviours (including allegations of bullying) made by the former employees was ineffective. The intent of the procedure was not followed by the Executives.
- Key discussions between HR and the former employees regarding the complaints were not adequately documented. This is particularly important if the allegations are related to executives.
- While the former Public Sector Standards Commissioner implemented appropriate process in response to the complaints, the communication advising the two former employees of a determination that the matters did not constitute a public interest disclosure was confusing.

Recommendations

The Report provided three recommendations, as follows:

1. **Training for executives and managers:** ACT Health should implement training for executives and managers for the handling of allegations of potential breaches of the ACT Public Sector Code of Conduct. This training should include:
 - a) managing and documenting the conduct of preliminary assessments
 - b) the need to fully consider options available prior to proceeding with a misconduct investigation, and
 - c) processes for managing and documenting allegations of breaches of the ACT Public Sector Code of Conduct.
2. **Professional standards unit guidance material:** The Public Sector Standards Commissioner should review guidance materials for ACT Government Agencies with respect to the documentation of allegations of potential breaches of the Code of Conduct, and should address:
 - a) the need to document the relevant and clear connection between an employee's behaviours and any alleged breach
 - b) the role of Directors-General to consider and investigate the actions and conduct of staff in the first instance and refer allegations that are particularly serious or complex to the Commissioner in a timely manner, and
 - c) the need to communicate with the Professional Standards Unit as early as possible when allegations of potential breaches may be referred to the Commissioner for action.
3. **Receiving and managing allegations of inappropriate workplace behaviours:** ACT Health should implement awareness training for executives and managers to reinforce requirements for receiving, document and managing reports of inappropriate workplace behaviours.

Opportunities

In going forward, the Auditor-General found that ACT Health needs to confirm and articulate the desired culture and the values to be fostered across the organisation. There should be an emphasis on how allegations of misconduct are to be managed, including the processes to be used for making and responding to complaints of inappropriate workplace behaviour.

Additionally, it would be timely for the Public Sector Standards Commissioner and the Professional Standards Unit to raise awareness of their roles and the merits of early contact with them, especially for allegations of serious misconduct.

Report of the ACHS National Safety and Quality Health Service (NSQHS) Standards Survey of ACT Health (2018)

In July 2018, the organisation was assessed against the National Safety and Quality Health Service (NSQHS) Standards and achieved ACHS accreditation.

The survey found the organisation had changed dramatically since its interim survey in March 2018. During the period between the two surveys, ACT Health had implemented sustainable systems and processes that provided direction and strong governance. The surveyors

acknowledged the extensive work undertaken to achieve this result. ACT Health had moved from a fragmented divided organisation to one that was client focused and cohesive. While the survey notes this work must be sustained over the longer-term, the new systems and processes will drive towards excellence and safety. All recommendations made in the interim survey were addressed and closed.

Survey Findings

The Survey found that a number of significant workforce culture activities had been undertaken:

- The Strategic Corporate Plan 2018 – 2023 now provides direction, strategic objectives and goals that align with Business Plans.
- The new Corporate and Clinical Governance Framework 2018-2023 was rolled out and provides clear guidance on role definition and accountabilities.
- A new centralised governance process was introduced for the management of clinical pathways to ensure organisational consistency.
- The new Quality Framework has been implemented and supported by an Implementation Plan and Measurement Framework 2018-2020.
- New systems and process have given assurance that staff are aware of their delegated safety and quality roles and responsibilities.
- An Independent External Review of the Mental Health Justice Health and Drug Services (MHJDADS) was conducted and tabled on 1 June 2018 to respond to workplace issues and the number of suicides over the past three years.
- A Mental Health Review Advisory body was established.
- The new Workforce Strategy is under development and will include workforce accountabilities and responsibilities supported by education to ensure awareness of roles.
- The generic performance development tool updated to make it suitable for the clinical workforce following consultation with clinical leads - the template now incorporates specific performance review criteria for Health employees.
- Risk Management Policy, Framework and Guidelines were updated and endorsed. The organisation now has a single Risk Register which has been reviewed and updated to reflect current risks and accountabilities with ongoing monitoring.
- Employees are receiving calls to acknowledge and thank them for their work. This has been very powerful in assisting with cultural change.

Opportunities

The survey also identified a number of opportunities to build upon the actions taken already and these include:

- Establishing mechanisms for engaging consumers and/or carers in organisational governance, as well as strategic and operational planning for ACT Health services.
- Implementing a system to identify and track disclosures related to or following an investigation.

Appendix C: Submission Analysis

Table of Submissions from Individuals

Individual Themes	Occasions mentioned
Non-supportive manager / leadership	266
Inefficient procedures / processes / training	211
Bullying / not addressed	204
Micro-managing / poor leadership	203
Repeated unreasonable behaviour	201
Bureaucratic / process driven	165
Mistrust / dishonest behaviour	148
Lack of opportunities	137
Favouritism	126
Inducing fear / anxiety	119
Inappropriate Recruitment	119
Exclusion / Isolation e.g. from meetings	104
Poor skill development / insufficient training	103
Reprisal e.g. using roster as punishment	94
Humiliation	74
Conflict / verbal abuse	64
Hardworking and dedicated staff	82
Supportive Team	59
Good training	43
Supportive leadership	37
General improvement	34
Solid procedures	28
Lack of diversity	28
Offensive Behaviour	25
Sex-based / gender bias	20
Sexual Behaviour	15
Racism	11

Table of Submissions from Organisations

Organisation Themes	Occasions mentioned
Inefficient procedures / processes / training	31
Bureaucratic / process driven	28
Inappropriate Recruitment	22
Non-supportive manager / leadership	22
Poor skill development / insufficient training	19
Micro-managing / poor leadership	18
Bullying / not addressed	12
Repeated unreasonable behaviour	11
Conflict / verbal abuse	11
Offensive Behaviour	10
Mistrust / dishonest behaviour	10
Lack of opportunities	10
Inducing fear / anxiety	8
Favouritism	6
Reprisal e.g. using roster as punishment	6
Exclusion / Isolation e.g. from meetings	5
Humiliation	5
Hardworking and dedicated staff	4
Racism	3
Sex-based / gender bias	3
Supportive team	3
General improvement	3
Supportive leadership	2
Good training	2
Solid procedures	2
Lack of diversity	1
Sexual Behaviour	0

Appendix D: Survey Results

Survey Results

1. Workplace

Calvary Public Hospital

17%

Health Directorate

27%

Canberra Health Services

57%

2. Position

Administration

24%

Allied Health

17%

Clinical support

1%

Medical Officer

9%

Nursing/Midwifery

33%

Support Services

2%

Senior Management

7%

Executive

1%

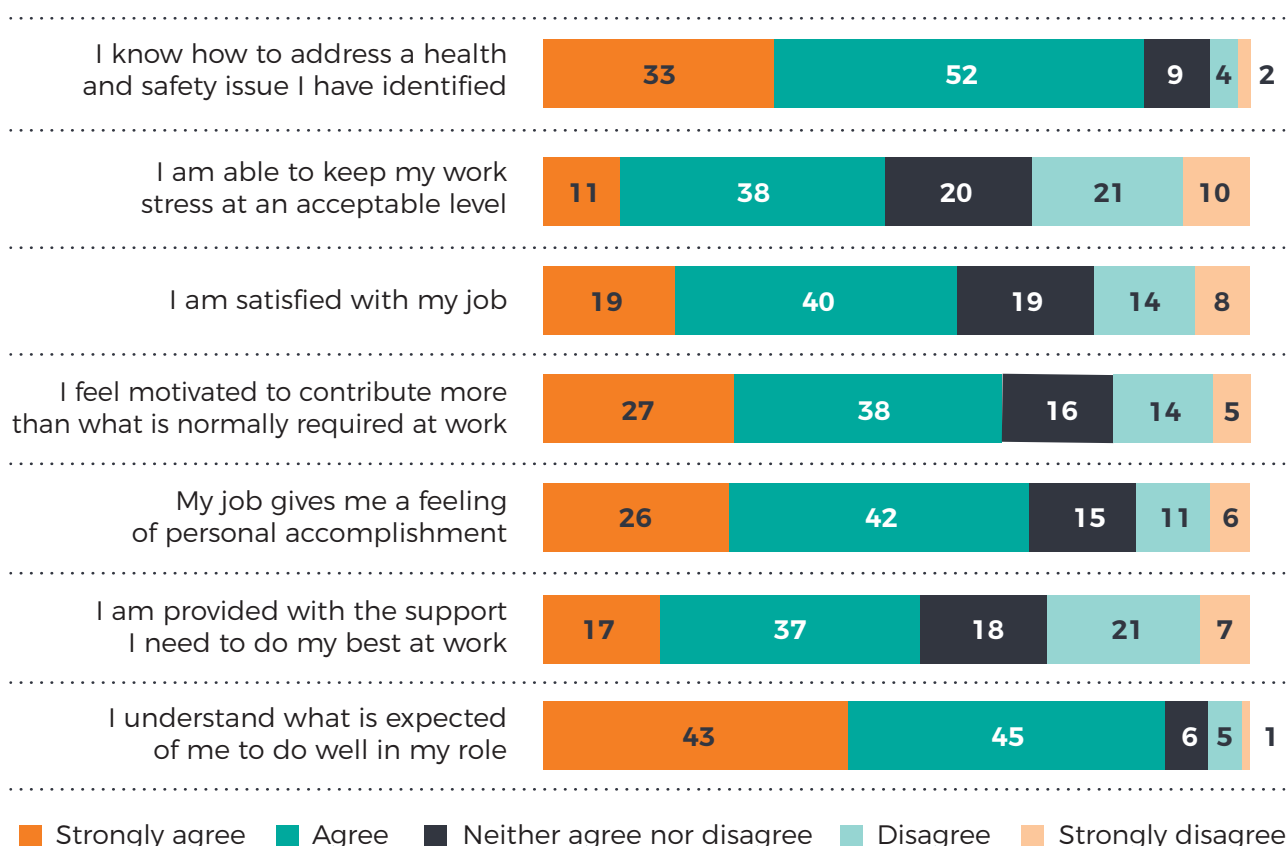
Another type of position

4%

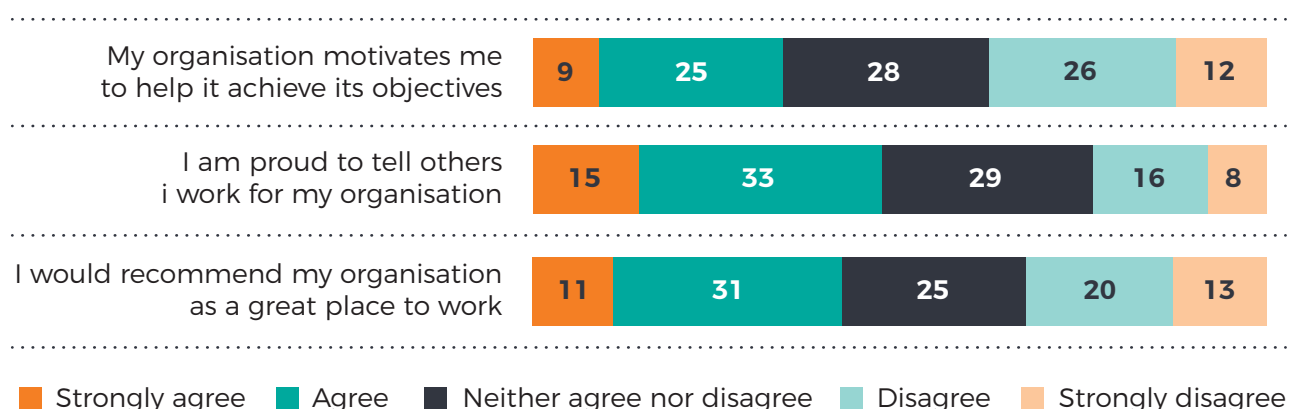
Prefer not to say

2%

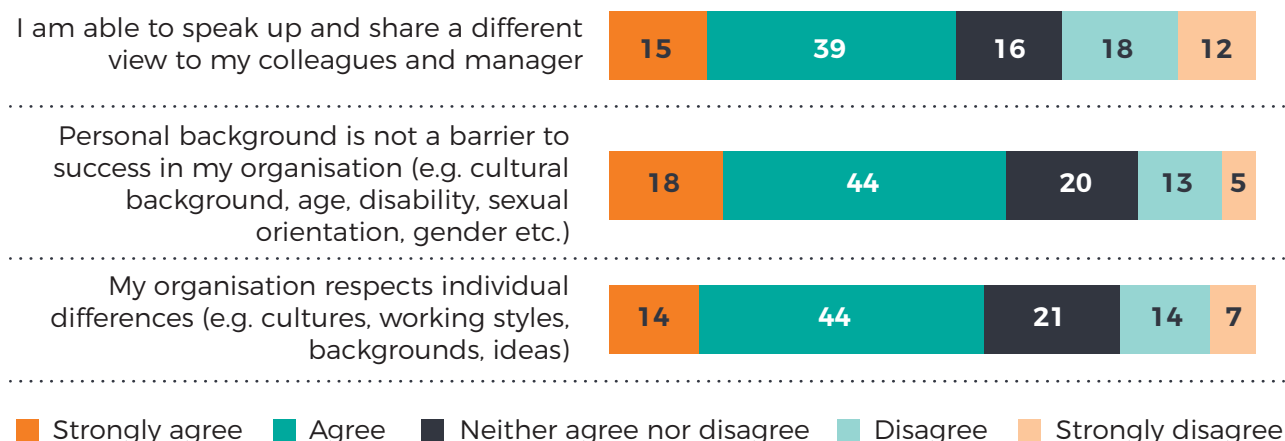
3. How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements?



4. How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements?



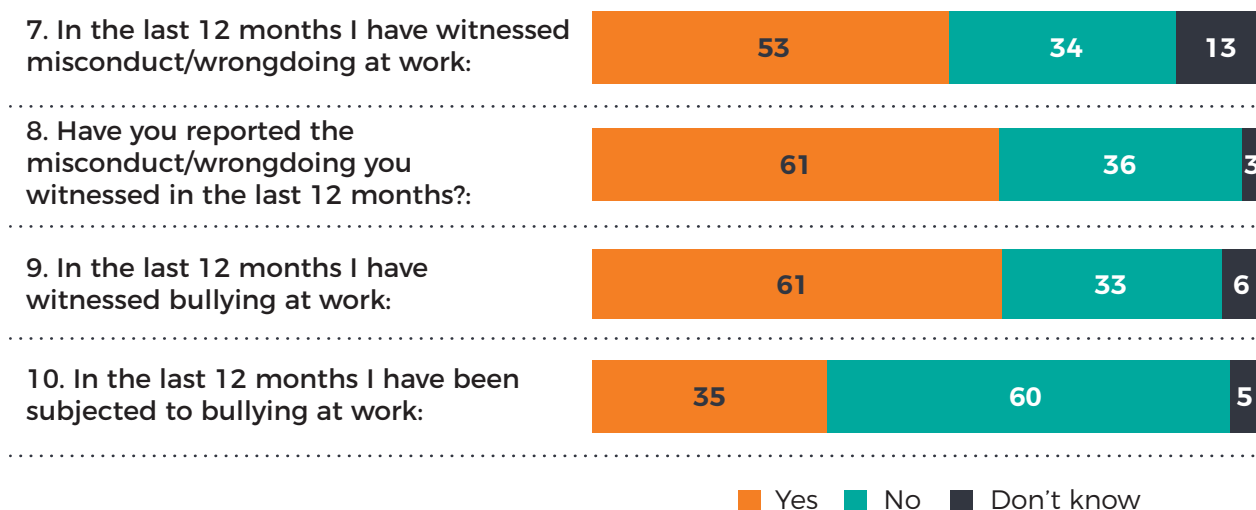
5. How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements?



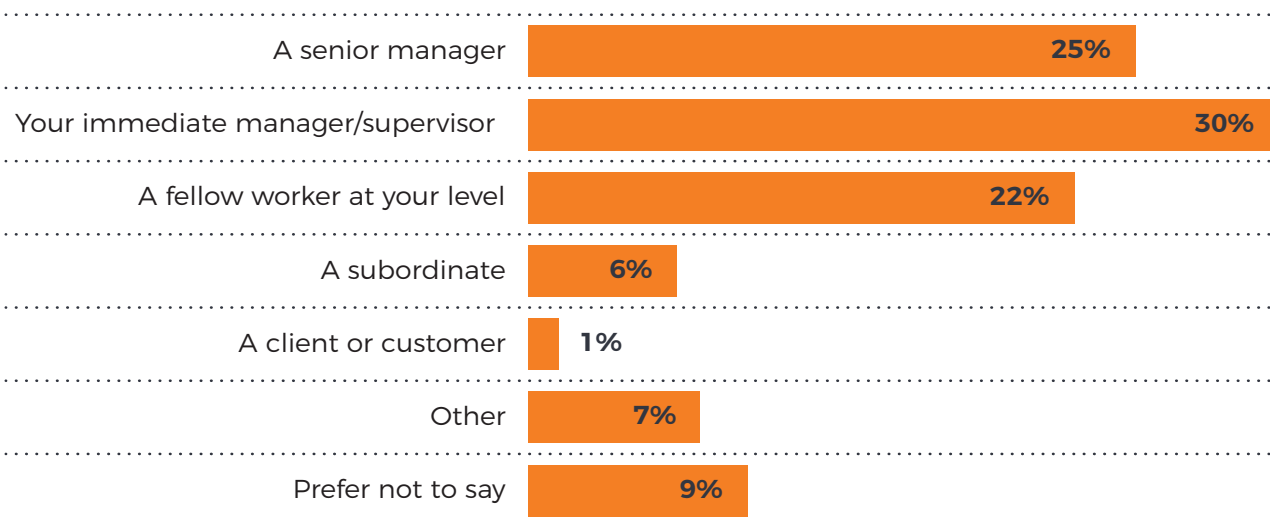
Resolving Grievances



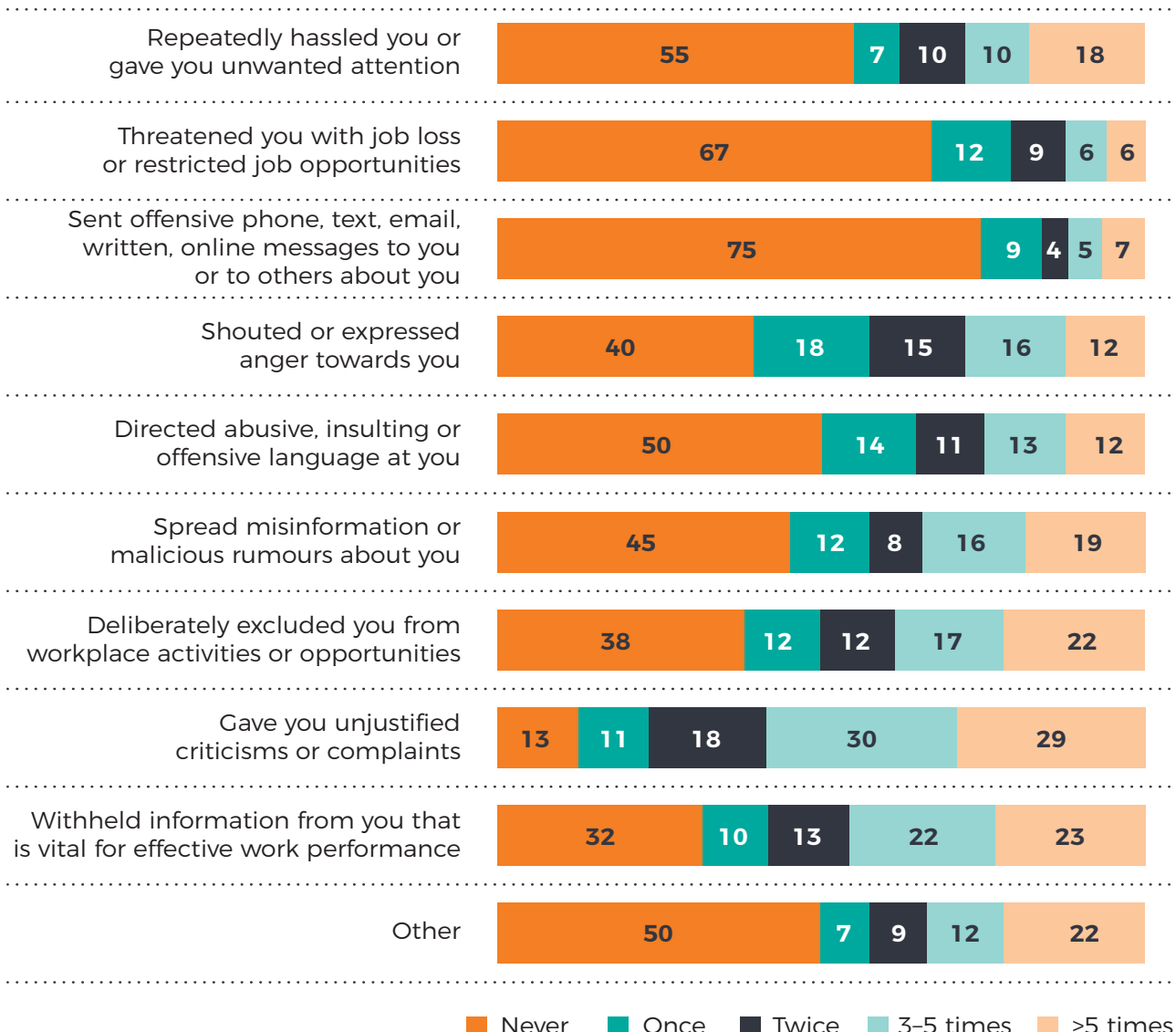
Workplace Conduct



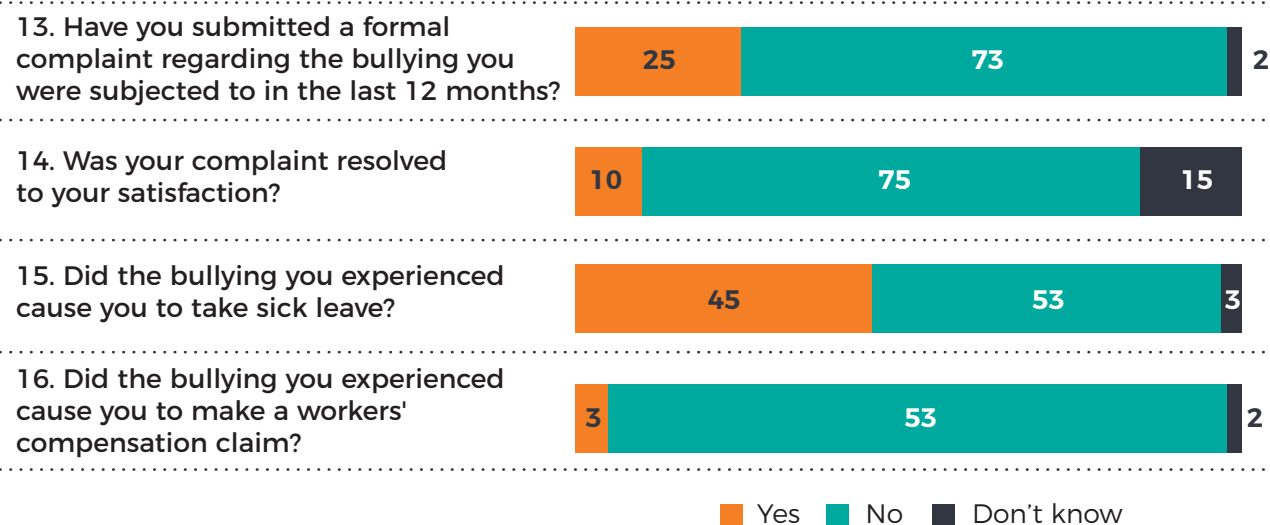
11. Who was the source of the most serious bullying?



12. How frequently did this person engage in the following repeated and unreasonable behaviour



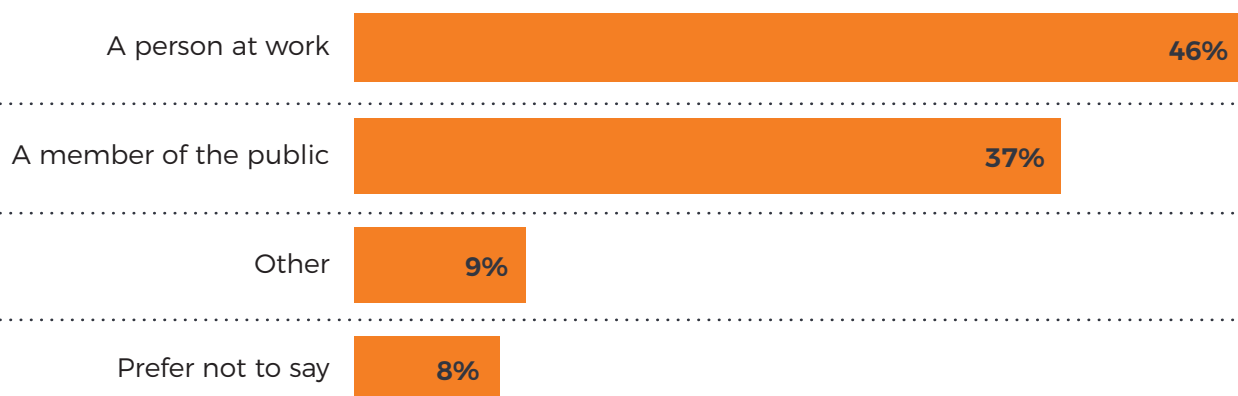
Complaints



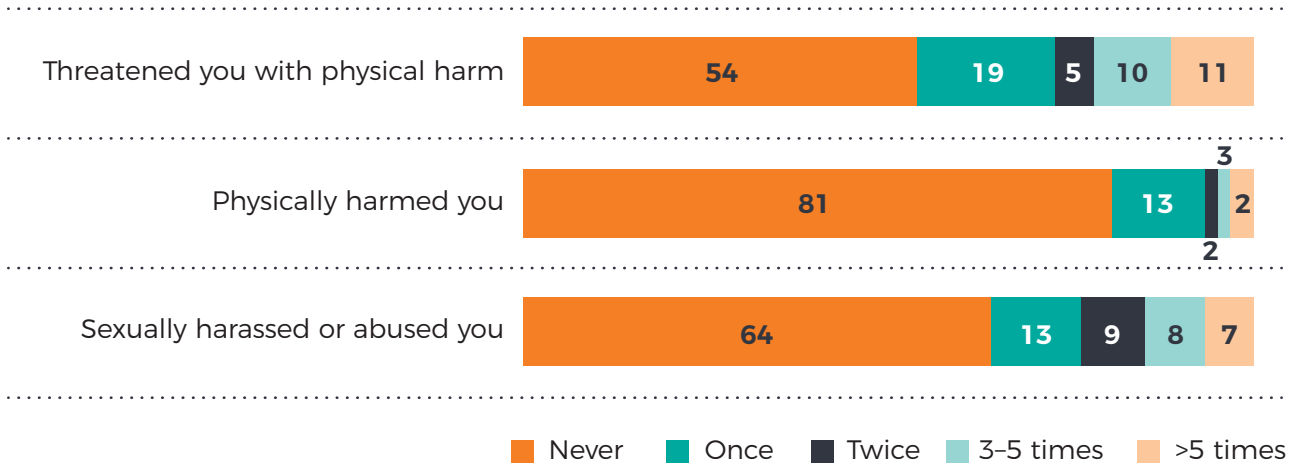
Unacceptable Conduct



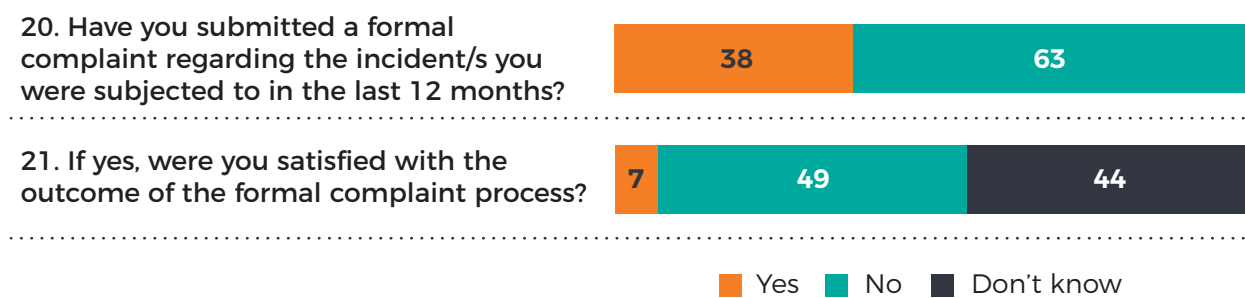
18. Who has been the source of the most serious physical harm and/or sexual harassment or abuse?



19. How frequently did this person engage in the following repeated and unreasonable behaviour?



Complaints Handling



Comparing ACT and NSW

I would recommend my organisation as a great place to work: % of respondents who agree or strongly agree



I am proud to tell others I work for my organisation



My organisation motivates me to help it achieve its objectives



I have confidence in the ways my organisation resolves grievances



I have witnessed bullying at work

% yes



I have been subjected to bullying at work

% yes



I have been subjected to physical harm, sexual harassment or abuse at work

% yes



Appendix E: Joint Peak's statement



Shared statement on opportunities for action to improve outcomes and relationships between the ACT Health Directorate and community non-government organisations

Follow up briefing to ACT Health's *Independent Review into the Workplace Culture within ACT Public Health Services* (the Review).

January 2019

About this document

This statement has been prepared by the health peak bodies the Alcohol Tobacco and Other Drug Association ACT (ATODA) and the Mental Health Community Coalition ACT (MHCC ACT).

This statement has been developed following ATODA's meeting with the Chair of the Panel for the Independent Review in the Workplace Culture within ACT Public Health Services in December 2018. It seeks to provide a brief summary of immediate opportunities for action to improve outcomes and relationships between the ACT Health Directorate and community non-government organisations (NGOs). The information contained focuses on the organisational level relationships with NGOs and the ACT Health Directorate, and as such, does not seek to address issues or resolutions as they relate to the community or workforce engagements in the Review.

Health services delivered by NGOs are an essential component of our ACT health system. The impact of systemic issues and workplace culture within ACT Health has adversely impacted relationships with NGO stakeholders, resulting among other things in reduced quality of policy outcomes and contract management relationships across sub-sectors.

The ACT Health Directorate needs to rebuild its corporate knowledge, relationships and specialist expertise in multiple sub-sector areas to enable genuine health service planning and implementation going forward; this will take considerable time, resources and processes. It is hoped, however, that a commitment to some immediate actions as outlined in this briefing, will make solid steps and reparations that will allow NGOs to work effectively with the ACT Health Directorate towards the values of care, excellence, collaboration and integrity.

Opportunities for action

NGOs should be acknowledged and engaged as key stakeholders within the ACT Health Directorate's ongoing change management process, it is recommended that in the short term the following steps are undertaken:

- Review and re-affirm ACT Health Directorate's commitment to *The Social Compact: A relationship framework between the ACT Government and Community Sector*,

which sets out a vision for the ACT Government to “build Canberra as a place where all people reach their potential, make a contribution and share the benefits of an inclusive community.”ⁱ The Social Compact “is intended to promote mutual understanding and guide community sector and Government representatives to adopt processes and behaviours that value the role, contribution and expertise of both the Government and community sector.” Further, it notes that “the two sectors need to plan, learn and work together, building on existing strengths, encouraging innovation and making sound decisions informed by evidence.”

- Re-convene or establish appropriate governance mechanisms to engage with peak bodies representing community NGOs and stakeholders, many of which have fallen by the wayside in recent years.
- Commence regular formal communication with all the NGOs funded by the ACT Health Directorate including providing details of the transition arrangements of ACT Health into two organisations, a revised organisational chart and identification of key contacts.
- Implement training for ACT Health Directorate employees to build a culture of, and competence in, NGO engagement, consultation and collaboration in policy making and implementation. This training could be modelled on previously provided Social Compact training and would include:
 - Ensuring that all officers who work with NGOs understand that NGOs are typically organisations with limited resources and capacity, and that appropriate expectations and timeframes are required in all engagement.
 - Acknowledging the crucial role of NGO partners in the ACT health system and understanding the nature of genuine partnership.
 - Acknowledging and redressing existing power imbalances between government and NGO partners, particularly as it relates to access to information and decision making.
- Undertake to get back to NGOs with information or documentation within promised timelines. If the timelines can’t be met, NGOs should be advised of changes and provided with new information about revised processes including dates.
- Establish mechanisms for community NGO stakeholders to provide feedback on the ACT Health Directorate as it undertakes its change processes, and monitor and solve problems as they arise. This could include anonymous annual surveying of NGO stakeholders with results to be analysed collaboratively with NGO critical friends.
- Formally establish a Non-Government Organisations Leadership Group (e.g. of peaks) to facilitate this new partnership moving forward, as was recommended by ATODA, ACTCOSS and MHCC ACT in correspondence to ACT Health in December 2018.

ⁱ Community Services Directorate, *The Social Compact: A relationship framework between the ACT Government and Community Sector*, ACT Government, Canberra, 2012

Acronyms and Abbreviations

ACHS	Australian Council on Healthcare Standards	KPI	Key Performance Indicators
ACT	Australian Capital Territory	NEAT	National Emergency Access Targets
ACTPS	Australian Capital Territory Public Service	NEST	National Elective Surgery Targets
ACU	Australian Catholic University	NGO	Non-government organisation
AH	Allied Health	NPS	National Prescribing Service
AHHA	Australian Healthcare and Hospitals Association	NSQHS	National Safety and Quality Health Service
AHRC	Australian Human Rights Commission	NSW	New South Wales
AM	Member of the Order of Australia	MHCC	Mental Health Community Coalition
AMA	Australian Medical Association	MHJDAD	Mental Health Justice Health and Drug Services
ANMF	Australian Nursing and Midwifery Foundation	MLA	Member of the Legislative Assembly
ANU	Australian National University	MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
ATODA	Alcohol Tobacco & Other Drugs Association	MPS	Medial Protection Society
CEO	Chief Executive Officer	OBE	Order of the British Empire
CHC	Community Health Centre	PA	Preliminary Assessment
CHN	Canberra Health Network	PHN ACT	Primary Health Network ACT
CORS	Co-worker Observation Reporting System	PARS	Patient Advocacy Reporting System
CPSU	Community and Public Sector Union	PNG	Papua New Guinea
DG	Director General	PPA	Promoting Professional Accountability
eMR	electronic Medical Record	PSM Act	Public Sector Management Act 1994
FRACS	Fellow of Royal Australasian College of Surgeons	PSSC	Public Sector Standards Commissioner
GPs	General Practitioners	RACS	Royal Australasian College of Surgeons
HCCA	Health Care Consumers' Association	UC	University of Canberra
HR	Human Resource	VMO	Visiting Medical Officer
JMO	Junior Medical Officer	WHS Act	Work Health and Safety Act 2011
JMW	Junior Medical Workforce		

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