

Request for Costing an Election Commitment

Name of proposal:	Better Access to Mental Health - Expanded PACER Program
Person requesting costing:	Alistair Coe MLA
Date of request:	15 October 2020
Summary of proposal:	The Canberra Liberals will continue funding for the Police, Ambulance and Clinician Early Response (PACER) program.
Issue the proposal will address:	The PACER program will provide better, more timely and more empathetic services to people with mental health problems.

What are the key assumptions that have been made in the proposal?

Note: The costing will be developed on the basis of information and assumptions provided in the costing request. The professional judgment of the Under Treasurer will determine whether these assumptions are adopted in the costing of the proposal.

The Canberra Liberals will fund the PACER program for another 12 months to provide services for seven evenings per week.

[On 2 July 2020, the Minister for Mental Health and Minister for Police and Emergency Services jointly announced](#) a package of \$720,000 to increase the PACER service from four to seven days a week until December 2020. The service operates for 10 hours between 2:00pm and midnight each day.

According to an [ABC news report](#) on 7 September 2020, “Even during that time there are dozens of cases the PACER team cannot attend.”

Recent amendments to the *Mental Health Act 2015* to improve the flexibility of processes involving apprehensions of mental health patients will enhance the ability of the PACER teams to achieve positive outcomes in the cases they handle.

Costings are based on the funding of \$720,000 for an additional three days per week, 2:00pm to midnight for the period of July to December 2020.

It is assumed that cost for each additional day over six months is approximately \$240,000; and encompasses all staff and other associated costs. On a pro rata basis, funding for six months of the program is \$1,680,000. It is assumed that the bulk of the costs are wage based and have therefore have been indexed at WPI.

This proposal extends funding to continue the PACER program until 31 December 2021. Funding beyond 31 December 2021 will be considered in a future budget.

What are the estimated revenue and operating costs each year (if available) and what are the capital requirements for this proposal and estimated costs each year (if available)?

	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	Total
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
Revenue ^(a)					
Expenses ^(a)	-1,680	-1,709.4			-3,389.4
Capital					
Depreciation					
(a) A negative number indicates a decrease in revenue or an increase in expenses. The expenses row does not include depreciation costs.					

Has any specific information or data been utilised in generating the proposal?

Costing has been based on figures announced by the [Minister for Mental Health and Minister for Police and Emergency Services on 2 July 2020](#).

Where relevant, is funding for the proposal to be demand driven or a capped amount?

N/A

Will third parties, for instance the Commonwealth or other State/Territories, have a role in funding or delivering the proposal? Does the proposal provide additional funding to, or redirect, any existing Commonwealth/State or Territory funding arrangements?

ACT Policing has a role in the PACER program.

Will funding/the cost require indexation?

Yes, Wage Price Index.

Who will administer the proposal?

The proposal will be administered jointly by ACT Policing, ACT Emergency Services Agency, ACT Health Directorate, and Canberra Health Services.

How will the proposal be administered?

The proposal will be administered jointly by ACT Policing, ACT Emergency Services Agency, ACT Health Directorate, and Canberra Health Services. The PACER program involves police, ambulance and clinical services.

Is the proposal part of a broader package?

This proposal forms part of the Canberra Liberals Policy on Better Mental Health Services.

Has an allowance been made for expenses necessary to support the implementation of this proposal?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – If no, will the government agency be expected to absorb expenses associated with this proposal? – If yes, please specify the key assumptions.
The relevant entities will absorb any additional administrative costs associated with this proposal.
Will the proposal generate savings or offsets?
<p>There are the potential savings on the public health and justice systems. The 2 July 2020 media announcement noted that:</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Since the program began, there has been a decrease in emergency apprehensions and the number of people transported to the emergency department for assessment due to mental health concern or crisis.</u></p> <p>These proposed savings or offsets have not been costed.</p>
Has the proposal been previously costed by an external (third) party? Will a copy of this material, including any assumptions, be made available to Treasury?
N/A
What are the community impacts associated with the proposal? Who and how many people will be affected?
The proposal will deliver improved mental health outcomes as well as relieve pressure on emergency departments and adult mental health services.
Are there any transitional considerations associated with implementation of the proposal? If so, how will they be managed?
N/A
What is the intended implementation date of the proposal?
1 January 2021
When is the proposal expected to be fully operational? Please provide details such as the start and end dates, the level of commitment during each period etc.
The proposal will be fully operational from 1 January 2021 to 31 July 2021.
Will the proposal cease, and if so, when?
Extended PACER program will run until 31 December 2021. Funding beyond 31 December

2021 will be considered in a future budget.

Is there any additional information relevant to this proposal?

N/A