



Emma Davidson
Minister for Mental Health

Dear Minister

Please find attached our funding proposal seeking partnership funding to maintain the ACT Mental Health Navigation Database.

At a recent meeting with Prof Luis Salvador-Carulla, you noted the ongoing value of this database to the Territory's efforts to build a more organised mental health service system, enabling planners to make better decisions and enabling consumers to more easily find the right care.

You encouraged us to consider making a funding submission, seeking ongoing support for the maintenance and development of the database.

Please find this submission attached, for your kind consideration. We would welcome the opportunity to discuss it in further detail with you or departmental officials.

Your sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rachel Davey".

Prof Rachel Davey

Director Health Research Institute

Maintaining the ACT Mental Health Navigation Database

Aim

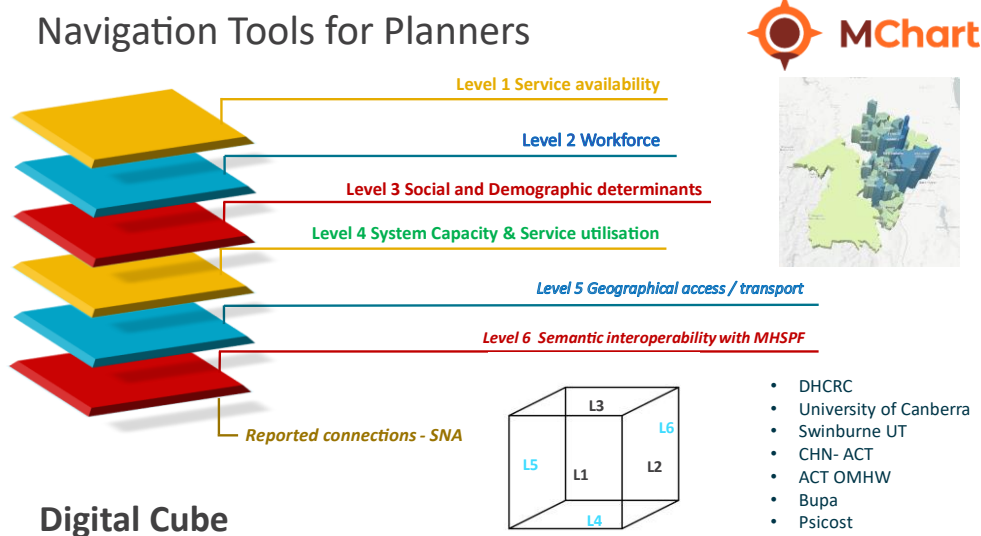
To seek engagement of ACT Health, both practically and financially, in the ongoing maintenance of the ACT Mental Health Navigation Database.

Background

A recurring problem facing mental health in the ACT is the fractured nature of our service system. This makes it hard to bring together all the pieces to form a coherent understanding of the service landscape and form a structured plan for improvement. It also makes it difficult for consumers to find the right service at the right time.

Recent years have seen the Mental Health Policy Unit and the VIDEA Lab at the University of Canberra work with partners to build a rich understanding of the changing shape of mental health care in the ACT. This work has included:

- Development of three Atlases of Mental Health Care
- Development of the Social Network Analysis of the Psychosocial Sector in the ACT
- Comparison of the Psychosocial Sector Before and After Introduction of the NDIS
- The development of the MChart Navigation tool, including data on service availability, workforce, utilisation, capacity and location (see below).



All this work is predicated on the establishment of a relational database. This database is a repository for all the source 'code' material we gather in the course of development of these navigation tools.

We understand that this navigation database is now in use across the ACT in several ways, including by MindMap and others.

These developments are welcome, in that they indicate increased enthusiasm for adoption of navigation tools in mental health, helping the sector become better organised to more efficiently meet the needs of Canberrans.

Maintaining the database

The navigation database underpinning this work has been developed over several years, drawing on grant and project funding. Currently, the work to maintain and build the database is funded from MChart, which is a project run as part of the Digital Health Cooperative Research Centre (DHCRC). The DHCRC, in turn, is funded through the Commonwealth Department of Industry, Science and Resources' Cooperative Research Centres Program. This funding is due to lapse in 2025. The ACT Office of Mental Health and Wellbeing has contributed \$60,000 to the DHCRC and the MChart project and the Capital Health Network have also contributed.

Maintaining the database requires attention both technical and administrative, to ensure the database functions correctly and is populated with the most up to date information, including on services, providers and other data. At least three separate data sources are necessary to ensure the database reflects current practice in the ACT: data on services, on workforce and on the social determinants of health. This proposal would maintain these three layers going forward.

Opportunities Arising

1. ACT Health would fund the staffing time necessary for UC to ensure existing database elements are updated and available to all ACT users (MindMap, others).
2. The MChart Expert Panel has met on several occasions, dating back to 2023. This proposal would see ACT Health provide funding to UC to continue to support this panel as it evolves following MChart, becoming an ACT Mental Health Navigation Community of Practice (NavCoP). Several areas of ACT Health are already active participants in the MChart expert panel, including data, planning, policy and mental health areas. This proposal would see NavCoP build members capacity to:
 - Refine database data collection processes
 - Build and use navigation tools to support better decision-making
 - Identify new uses for the database.

The composition and governance of NavCoP would be agreed between UC and ACT Health.

3. This funding would also enable development of training in navigation and related tools. Materials and an ACT-specific syllabus would be developed as a training package, enabling planners from different service providers to better understand the navigation database and how it, and other tools, could help in their work.

Risk Arising

By way of counterfactual, the risk associated with failing to maintain and update the navigation database is significant. The ACT would not capitalise on investments already made. More significantly, the currency of the navigation database would be lost, rendering it progressively less useful to planners over time. The steps taken to increase the structure and organisation of mental health planning in the ACT would also be lost.

A Broader Workplan

It would be possible, on the back of this foundational support for the navigation database, for the NavCOP to devise a program of work seeking funding from elsewhere, to further build on the existing infrastructure. For example, NavCOP could seek funding to add a map of primary care to the existing mental health database. It could also lead a project designed to create a consumer-specific version of the database, in addition to maintaining this version designed for planners.

Budget

This proposal sets out a three-year funding cycle, with a review scheduled at the halfway point to ensure all parties are satisfied with project progress.

Item	Description	Cost			Total
		\$ Yr 1	\$ Yr 2	\$ Yr 3	
Database technician	0.2 FTE (Level 7)	28,743	29,749	30,790	89,282
Project manager	0.2 FTE (Level 8)	29,750	30,791	31,868	92,409
Secure Server	To be provided in kind by UC	0	0	0	0
NavCOP establishment	Development of operating guidelines, provision of logistics and admin support for community of practice (room hire, webinars etc.)	5,000	5,000	5,000	15,000
Development of navigation database training package	Online and other materials to enable development of tailored training to ACT planners in mental health.	10,000	0	0	10,000
UC Admin Costs		13,698.50	13,107.95	13,531.73	40,338.18
Total		87,191.02	78,647.70	81,190.37	247,029.10

Sustainability Plan

Over the three years of funded support for this project, NavCoP will develop a proposal for the ongoing sustainability of the database that will ensure its ongoing availability to mental health planners and funders in the ACT.

Conclusion

The mental health navigation database is proving itself an increasingly indispensable element of the ACT's mental health planning infrastructure. It is driving a more organised approach to what is typically characterized as a fractured system, hard to navigate.

We believe that the establishment of ongoing support for the database, together with the NavCOP represent vital, worthwhile investments in better mental health planning and better outcomes for Canberrans.