

MEDIA RELEASE

Meredith Hunter MLA, ACT Greens Parliamentary Leader

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RoGS 2012 - Greens welcome positive impact on services

ACT Greens Leader, Meredith Hunter MLA, has welcomed the positive impact on Mental Health and Education in the 2012 Report on Government Services which have come about from the ALP/Greens Agreement.

“The ACT is on the whole very impressive and the envy of other states in a lot of areas,” Ms Hunter said.

“There are some areas where we are behind, and that can often be because of particulars of Canberra, such as high demand in particular areas or the high costs of providing services here.

“The Greens, through legislation and initiatives in the ALP/Greens Parliamentary Agreement, have made clear improvements to vital services.

“A key plank of the Agreement was a boost in funding for mental health services, with a goal of 12% of overall health expenditure. We’re still not there yet, but the increases we have achieved have already resulted in far better outcomes on the ground.

“We may also be starting to turn the corner on addressing the Achievement Gap in our education system, flowing from changes recommended by an inquiry commenced in 2009 in accordance with the ALP/Greens Parliamentary Agreement.

“RoGS data shows very high retention rates for indigenous students in ACT public schools.

“There are always areas that need more work highlighted by RoGS reports. There is a clear need to improve care and protection services, childcare availability and affordability and surging private rental costs.

“The Greens will continue to make a positive contribution to improve services in the Territory,” Ms Hunter said.

Re-offending rates remain unknown

“The Greens are concerned that we still don’t have a clear picture of re-offending rates of prisoners released back into the ACT community. The ACT Government is not providing the Productivity Commission with data.

“The high per-prisoner cost of the Canberra Prison may be justified if we can see a positive impact on community safety resulting from low re-offending rates.

“Tackling recidivism should be a cornerstone of our justice system, but without the data, we are not able to assess the performance of our rehabilitation efforts,” Ms Hunter said.