**Directorate: Health**

**18/244 - Establishment of the Office for Mental Health**

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| **Summary of Impacts** |
| * The Office for Mental Health (the Office) will have a number of positive social and economic effects.
* The most significant impacts of the Office will be improving the mental health outcomes for the ACT community. This will be achieved by the improved coordination and integration of mental health services available across the entire continuum of mental health care.
* Improving mental health outcomes will help to improve the physical health of people with co-morbidities. This can also help to reduce the utilisation of healthcare resources in the ACT.
* A focus of the Office, as detailed in this Submission, will be working across ACT Government to address the social and economic determinants that can influence a person’s mental health. These determinants include insecure housing, lack of employment or poor employment, experience with the judicial system and educational attainment.
* Rates of mental illness are higher amongst Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and in the LGBTIQ community. There are also gender differences in relation to how men and women experience mental illness and what support services they require. In the multicultural community, refugees and migrants have often experienced trauma, which can impact on mental health and some cultures do not encourage help-seeking behaviours.
* All of these social factors will need to be considered when establishing the Office to ensure services are appropriate for the different needs of people across the ACT community.
* Additionally, working to address these determinants with relevant stakeholders of the Office will lead to economic benefits such as improving the education and employment outcomes of people with mental illness.
* Environmental impacts of the Office have been considered and none have been identified.
* Without concerted effort to address the ‘upstream’ determinants of mental health, the demand for, and cost of, acute mental health services will continue to grow.
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**Social**

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| **Health** | * The Office will have significant impacts on the coordination of mental health services in the ACT. This will enable people to more readily access support across the entire continuum of mental health.
* People with mental illnesses are more likely to have worse physical health than the general population. As a result, treating and reducing rates of mental illness and improving mental health outcomes can reduce the demand for mental and physical health services and acute care expenditure.
* These benefits of the Office will be increasingly important to reduce the overall patterns of growth in health expenditure, which have been experienced by the ACT and across the other states and territories.
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| **Justice and rights** | * The Office will have a number of positive impacts on social factors. This includes working towards addressing and improving the outcomes associated with the social and economic determinants that influence mental health.
* These determinants include appropriate housing, educational attainment, level of employment and previous experience with the criminal justice system.
* The Office will work across the whole of the ACT Government to drive action to address these determinants and to develop a coordinated approach to mental health policy across the Government.
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**Economic**

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| **ACT Government Budget** | * The Office will have an important role in improving the coordination and integration of mental health services in the ACT. This will help to streamline the usage of health resources, improve their efficiency and reduce demand for services.
* Over time, the Office is expected to have positive impacts on the ACT Budget.
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| **Productivity** | * Impacts on productivity have been considered and no impacts have been identified.
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| **Investment** | * Impacts on investment have been considered and no impacts have been identified.
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| **Competition** | * Impacts on competition have been considered and no impacts have been identified.
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**Environmental**

Nil impact