

REPORT SNAPSHOT
Specialist assessment services for dementia and cognitive decline
Why did we do this audit?

Dementia is a progressive, irreversible neurocognitive disorder that is increasing in prevalence as Australia's population ages. Dementia Australia estimates that as of 2025, 6,100 people were living with dementia in the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) and this is predicted to increase to 12,300 (an increase of 102 percent) by 2054.

Timely access to specialist assessment services has potential benefits for those diagnosed with dementia or cognitive decline and their care partners, as timely treatment can slow functional decline, provide opportunities to plan for the future and enable access to community-based supports.


What did we find?

- Planning and reporting for the delivery of CHS' specialist assessment services for dementia and cognitive decline can be improved.
- There was variability, and instances of significant delay, in the delivery of communication from the services to referring medical practitioners, which may pose a risk to clients receiving timely and appropriate care.
- CHS could better support clinicians in their decision-making in relation to advice, information and supports relevant to each client by developing a repository of information that they can easily access and provide to clients and care partners.


What are the key issues?

- Limitations of the Digital Health Record (DHR) and a lack of standard operating procedures for inputting information in the DHR is impacting CHS' ability to collect and consistently use data for service planning and service delivery and demonstrate it is meeting the community's needs.
- Across the services there are underdeveloped relationships with, and support pathways to, key support services in the ACT that are critical to providing clients and their care partner(s) with comprehensive and consistent support options.


What did we recommend?

- The audit made nine recommendations that aim to improve CHS' planning and delivery of specialist assessment services for dementia and cognitive decline and the management of consumer feedback.

