



ACT AUDITOR-GENERAL'S OFFICE



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Performance Audit Report

Management of Feedback and Complaints

The ACT Auditor-General, Mrs Tu Pham, has today presented a Performance Audit report titled '**Management of Feedback and Complaints**', to the Speaker for tabling in the ACT Legislative Assembly.

The audit examined the effectiveness of feedback and complaints management in the Department of Territory and Municipal Services (TAMS). The audit included consideration of Canberra Connect, which is a part of TAMS, and its role in providing a mechanism for the receipt and dissemination of feedback and complaints relating to ACT Government agencies generally.

Although Canberra Connect receives feedback and complaints for all of the ACT Government, the majority of feedback and complaints relate to TAMS.

Audit Conclusions and Key Findings

The audit found that TAMS and Canberra Connect have a sound framework within which they can recognise and respond to feedback and complaints provided by the ACT community, including a good management information system.

Most issues raised by ACT residents through various communication options were considered in a timely manner and in most cases, action was taken by the responsible business areas within TAMS. There was, however, a lack of ongoing communication with the providers of feedback and complaints to keep them informed of action taken.

Policies, procedures and guidelines for staff involved in handling complaints and feedback were not adequate, and there were shortcomings in ongoing monitoring, review and analysis of feedback and complaints. These, combined with the limited use and roll-out of the management information system, can impair the ability of TAMS and other ACT Government agencies to effectively use information provided through feedback and complaints to improve business practices and services delivered.

The audit also found:

- TAMS and Canberra Connect's public information material consistently referred to *feedback*, and it was not easy for the public to find specific guidance to make *complaints*. When searching for *complaints* on ACT Government web-sites (www.tams.act.gov.au, www.act.gov.au and www.canberraconnect.act.gov.au), users were led to formal options such as those of the Human Right Commissioner, which may not be the appropriate avenue users were looking for.
- TAMS and Canberra Connect provided minimal public information on the administrative processes associated with handling feedback and complaints. This may deter customers

from providing complaints and feedback. Providing more information to the public will also increase transparency in the way the complaints are handled and assist TAMS and Canberra Connect in managing the expectations of customers on issues to be resolved.

- There was a lack of policy and procedural documents for the use and reference by Canberra Connect staff, which increases the risk that feedback and complaints communicated to Canberra Connect are not recognised and recorded, or directed to the right business units.
- The Integrated Customer Support (ICS) system (a key management information system for receiving and recording information relating to feedback and complaints) has significant capacity to facilitate the effective management of feedback and complaints across the ACT Government, but its limited use and roll-out diminished this capacity. Currently the system is under-utilised, with 31 ACT Government users having access, compared to its capacity of up to 62 users on current licence arrangements.
- A lack of policy and procedural guidance for the management of feedback and complaints led to inconsistency across the organisation in the way that feedback and complaints are managed as well as differing levels of customer service.
- Ongoing communication with correspondents was generally poor, with a lack of information communicated to keep them 'in the loop' on progress and actions taken in response to their concerns. This has led to frustration on the part of ACT residents, and potential administrative inefficiencies in TAMS as in some cases, ACT residents escalated their issues and concerns to Ministers and other Members of the Legislative Assembly.
- There was limited monitoring of feedback and complaints received across TAMS. This has impaired TAMS' ability to analyse and identify emerging patterns or trends.
- TAMS and Canberra Connect sought to review aspects of feedback and complaints processes, but did not directly assess satisfaction of providers of feedback and complaints with the way their feedback or complaint was managed.
- TAMS did not have any performance indicators for its management of feedback and complaints, for reporting and evaluation purposes.

Recommendations

The audit made nine recommendations to address the issues raised. TAMS agreed to eight recommendations and agreed in part to one recommendation.

Further Information

For further information, please contact Rod Nicholas, Director, Performance Audits and Corporate Services on 6207 0827. Copies of the report are available from the ACT Auditor-General's Office (Level 4, 11 Moore Street, Canberra City) and from its website, www.audit.act.gov.au.