



**Simon Corbell MLA**  
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Mr B. McConnell  
PO Box 195  
CIVIC SQUARE ACT 2608

Dear Mr McConnell

Thank you for your letter of 22 December 2006 on behalf of the Community Coalition on Corrections (the Coalition). I note your concern that the operational regime for the Alexander Maconochie Centre (AMC) will not support the 'Government's commitment to provide more humane and safer accommodation for ACT remandees and prisoners'. In the following paragraphs, I will endeavour to address the issues you have raised.

In your letter it was stated that the ACT Corrective Services (ACTCS) Drug, Alcohol and Tobacco Strategy (AOD Strategy) emphasised security at the expense of prisoner health and rehabilitative objectives. While the Coalition's concerns are noted, the ACTCS AOD Strategy should not be viewed in isolation but should be read in conjunction with the following documents:

- The AMC Functional Brief (Available on the AMC website)
- Vocational Educational and Training and Rehabilitative Programs in the AMC 2006 (Available on the AMC website)
- The ACT Health Corrections Health Services Plan - to be published later this year.

Together, these documents demonstrate the emphasis on rehabilitation in AMC planning. The Functional Brief outlines the approach to rehabilitation and was compiled with the assistance of experts across Australia.

Also of note is ACTCS's establishment of a Human Rights Working Group, which includes representatives of the Human Rights Commissioner and the Ombudsman. This group has been meeting over the past few years and has contributed to the development of AMC operational procedures to ensure compliance with the *ACT Human Rights Act 2004*.

The need to integrate the ACTCS AOD Strategy and the Corrections Health Services Plan has been acknowledged and, as such, development of the former was done in consultation with ACT Health. ACTCS recognises that further work is required on planning for through care to the community and in determining which community agencies might provide the appropriate services. Further work will be undertaken on this matter in the coming months.

A further concern raised in your letter was the perceived lack of '...indicators such as recidivism or changes in health status by which rehabilitation can be judged'. With respect, I believe that the Performance Indicators proposed for the AMC, as detailed in the ACTCS AOD Strategy, sufficiently address this concern.

The Performance Indicators have been developed in line with the Vocational Educational and Training and Rehabilitative Programs in the AMC 2006 and the three pillars of the National Drug Strategy, being supply reduction, demand reduction and harm reduction. The Performance Indicators will have to be read in conjunction with details in the ACT Health Corrections Health Services Plan when it is finished later this year.

There has to be a realistic understanding by the community of what it can expect ACTCS in general, and the Alexander Maconochie Centre in particular, to achieve with respect to the many problems presented by prisoners. This should not be interpreted as any weakening of the commitment to rehabilitation in the AMC. However, we understand that there will always be community debate about 'what works best' in rehabilitating prisoners and, as such, input such as your own is extremely welcome.

Thank you for raising these matters with me. I trust that this information is of assistance. Should you have any further queries, the Director of the AMC Project would be happy to attend one of the Coalition's meetings.

Yours sincerely

Simon Corbell MLA  
Attorney General

16.3.07