

Alexander Maconochie Reintegration Centre

Executive Summary

Introduction

The Alexander Maconochie Centre (AMC) opened in 2009 as the first correctional facility for the ACT. It is a mixed gender detention facility intended to manage both sentenced and remanded detainees. Since opening, the AMC has been consistently crowded¹, resulting in detainees being housed in sub-optimal accommodation, constraining participation in rehabilitation, education and health programs. In addition to not achieving the desired outcomes for detainees, these capacity constraints have resulted in operational inefficiencies with regard to access arrangements and rehabilitation services.

Need for Investment

The AMC was originally designed to accommodate 270 detainees, this included expected surge capacity for the AMC to operate efficiently. In the 2014-15 budget, the ACT Government committed to funding the construction of new accommodation facilities at the AMC, including a 30 bed special care centre and a 56 bed flexible accommodation unit inside the existing fence line. Construction of the special care centre was finalised in February 2016. It was double bunked prior to opening. The flexible accommodation unit was also double bunked prior to its completion in May 2016.

Once the new accommodation units became operational, there was a total of 539 beds at the AMC. Of these 539, 511 are operational beds for detainee accommodation and 28 beds are designed for special short-term use such as health, mental health or disciplinary requirements.

CURRENT		HISTORIC
(at August 2016)		(at March 2009)
Total Capacity	539	300
Operational Capacity	511	270
Design Capacity	439	270
Special Purpose Beds	28	30

The AMC's Total Capacity increased by 169 beds in 2015-16 via the AMC Expansion Project.

The lower Design Capacity figure reflects the exclusion of special purpose beds and the 72 beds that were added via double-bunking between 2010 and 2015.

Special purpose beds originally included six health beds across three small 'wards'. In 2009 one of these wards was permanently renovated to accommodate additional office space. In 2018 the remaining two wards have been temporarily reassigned as they are subject to building works. This will facilitate roll out of the Winnunga Health Services Model.

However, the current design, management and system configuration are not responsive to the existing demands on the facility. Since opening, detainee numbers have consistently exceeded forecast detainee numbers, causing crowding which compromises the rehabilitation aims of the AMC.

¹ ROGS (2018) Chapter 8 Corrective Services Table 8A.13 Prison

Feasibility Study

In 2017, GHD was contracted to prepare a feasibility study into the needs of the ACT's prison population. The feasibility study was to enable the identification, prioritisation and delivery of future correctional requirements in a staged, cost effective manner. It was to include a draft functional design brief, basic capital works plans, time lines and associated facility detailed business cases. The aim of the study was to put ACT Corrective Services (ACTCS) in a position to provide a detailed Business Case proposal for the 2018/19 budget submissions.

The **March 2018 GHD report** considered the following Options:

Option	Description	Suitability	Budget Order of Magnitude
1	Greenfield Site	Feasible/impractical	Not assessed
2A	Extension to Women's Centre inside the AMC	Feasible/minimal solution	\$55m
2B	Detached Female Annex outside the AMC Extend AMC to provide a Remand Centre	Feasible/maximised solution	Stage 1 Women's \$100m Stage 1 Men's \$129m
3	Redesign Existing AMC	Feasible/impractical	Not assessed
4	Symonston Detention Centre	Not Feasible	Not assessed
5	Re Purpose Bimberi Justice Centre	Not Feasible	Not assessed
6	Transitional Release Centre Expansion (this option was considered by GHD in September 2018)	Feasible	\$36.2m

Feasibility Analysis

Options 1, 3, 4, and 5 were not assessed as suitable for progression to further consideration due to factors such as heightened complexity, excessive costs, etc. ACTCS provided feedback to GHD that saw consideration of Options 2A and 2B taken forward.

Option 2A partially achieves the Priority Outcomes by providing an additional 48 women's beds. The proposed scope would have expanded the secure perimeter of the AMC to give the women's zone appropriate support facilities and did not compromise the existing men's support facilities.

However, noting the growing detention population, it is likely that the additional beds would have been occupied at completion and the matter of overcrowding will not have been adequately resolved.

Option 2B provided a separate and independent Women's Annex in the immediate vicinity of the AMC at Hume, and an extension of the southern perimeter for an increase in area for the men's (remand) zone. Custodial operations would have been supported from the AMC to minimise the duplication of facilities.

At least 68 women's beds would be provided with sufficient capacity inside the premises for future development without compromise of support facilities. A further 240 men's beds would then have been required to be developed in a range of configurations, and in stages, to suit the ongoing development of the AMC.

The March 2018 GHD report made the following recommendations:

- Commence Environmental Impact Assessment at the AMC
- Conduct an analysis at P50 cost confidence
- Consider Option 2A as a minimal solution
- Consider Option 2B as a long term solution
- Develop a masterplan that considers the 30 year future of the site.

Following the receipt of the March 2018 GHD report another lower cost option was raised and GHD prepared a supplementary report on that option (Option 6) which was received in September 2018.

That option, Transitional Release Centre (TRC) Expansion, was subsequently progressed through an investigative process which recognised the need to increase efforts to reduce recidivism through better preparation of detainees to successfully reintegrate into the community. The outcome was a recognition that this initiative gave priority to reducing crowding at the AMC and its associated risks over further investment in building maximum security facilities and was more closely focussed on building communities and offender reintegration.

During this investigation the TRC Expansion concept required to reconsider a more descriptive name for the centre to be better reflective of all detainees who would reside there. The TRC Expansion was renamed to the Alexander Maconochie Reintegration Centre (AMRC). Transitional Release could therefore remain as a program type conducted within the AMRC.

The existing Transitional Release Centre (TRC) is a minimum security open campus style accommodation providing 15 male beds at full capacity, located outside the secure perimeter of the AMC. Its purpose is to support detainees in their preparation for community reintegration, including the establishment of a transition plan, building community connections and participation in education, programs and work. This model allows for supervised day release into gainful employment and training. In order to transfer into the Transitional Release program, male detainees must meet certain eligibility criteria including satisfying a risk assessment. This means that they broadly fit the profile of adult males at a later stage in their sentence period, who are able to live in a minimum security environment.

The new AMRC will:

- Increase accommodation for male minimum security detainees by expanding the existing TRC
- Optimise the existing AMC facility by drawing off eligible male minimum security detainees from the existing medium and maximum security units
- Implement a wide range of rehabilitation programs to be delivered in partnership with non-government and government specialists
- Create additional female capacity by adjoining the Remand Cottage 2 with the Special Care Centre via fencing
- Facilitation of the AMRC requires interconnected works such as Support and Administration Buildings and Gatehouse accessibility.

The project will improve detainee living conditions inside both the AMC and AMRC, enhance the delivery of detainee programs and the realisation of community reintegration outcomes. Collectively, the project seeks to ultimately support reduced recidivism; creating safer communities for all Canberrans.

This document has been developed in the context of existing strategies adopted by the Territory, and is in alignment with government's decision to reinvest monies that would otherwise be used for building high security accommodation at the AMC towards targeted programs designed to reduce recidivism; and the *Parliamentary Agreement for the 9th Legislative Assembly for the ACT* item regarding the target to reduce recidivism by 25% by 2025. It considers previous activities, analyses and studies undertaken to progress the development of the AMC, including the Feasibility Study Future Plans Options Report (Feasibility Report) completed in 2018 and the Investment Logic Mapping Workshop (ILW) undertaken in 2017 and updated in 2018 to reflect the transfer of women detainees into the special care centre and the Feasibility supplementary report that explored the expansion of the TRC.

Building Communities Not Prisons

The ACT Government is considering a range of options aimed at reducing reoffending and improving community safety for all Canberrans. This work is underpinned by the ACT's Justice Reinvestment approach and under the banner of Building Communities Not Prisons (BCNP). Justice Reinvestment represents a four-year commitment to developing an evidence base and on the ground initiatives that drive a smarter, more cost-effective approach to improving criminal justice outcomes by reducing crime and diverting offenders, and those at risk of becoming offenders, from the justice system. (BCNP) led by Justice and Community Safety (JACS) seeks to reinvest criminal justice funds that would otherwise have been considered to expand high-secure capacity at the AMC to other parts of the human service system. BCNP aims to deliver cost effective reductions in crime, victimisation and repeat offending while reducing overcrowding at the AMC and the risks associated with overcrowding as a priority over further investment in building secure facilities at the AMC

BCNP aims to urgently address and reverse the rising number of people detained at the AMC by strengthening service responses for key groups to reduce the time a person may be detained in custody.

Given the significant and growing economic and social costs of incarceration, there is a strong and compelling case for the ACT Government to increase investment in developing appropriate and more effective community supports to reduce reoffending, to promote safe and sustainable bail and to strengthen alternatives to imprisonment. Indeed, this will be essential to meet the commitment to reduce recidivism by 25% by 2025.

The development of the AMRC will directly contribute to the BCNP initiative by reducing the time a person may be detained in custody through increasing the capacity for detainees to gain parole and, once released, to successfully reintegrate into the community with increased skills and strategies to address the causes of their criminogenic behaviours.

The purpose of this document is to provide an overview of the options considered including the benefits and risks for the project. This document is designed to support the ACT Government in its investment decision deliberations in connection with the project.

Alexander Maconochie Reintegration Centre Vision and objectives

The project vision for the AMRC is:

'to improve the safety, security, efficiency and functionality of the existing AMC and TRC by providing appropriate and effectively managed accommodation for restricted minimum security detainees that supports ACT Government efforts to reduce recidivism.'

Six project objectives have been identified for the project which are outlined below.

Figure 1 Project objectives

	REDUCED RECIDIVISM Improve reintegration outcomes and support broader ACT Government initiatives designed to reduce recidivism in the Territory
	LIVEABILITY Improve liveability for detainees, both within the AMC secure perimeter and within the TRC
	INTEGRATED SENTENCE MANAGEMENT Improve efficiency and functionality of the AMC and TRC, allowing for more effective sentence management by ACTCS
	PROGRAM DELIVERY Enhance the efficient delivery and accessibility of detainee rehabilitation programs primarily in partnership with non-government organisations
	MASTER PLAN Investment that supports a staged master plan approach to the development of the AMC and TRC in line with current and forecast demand requirements
	VALUE FOR MONEY Deliver the Territory an affordable project solution that delivers additional accommodation for restricted minimum security detainees, optimising existing AMC investment and providing a value for money outcome

Reduced recidivism

By providing greater access to programs and rehabilitation services of a higher quality, this project will facilitate improved detainee reintegration outcomes, thereby supporting broader ACT Government efforts to reduce the rate of recidivism in line with the Territory's goal to reduce recidivism by 25% by 2025.

Reduced recidivism will be achieved by providing an environment for detainees close to the end of their sentence that is designed to support deinstitutionalisation and providing the rehabilitation programs, education and training necessary to support reintegration with the community. Some examples of the rehabilitation services and programs that may be provided as a part of the project include (but are not limited to):

- Reintegration support
- Relationship counselling
- Alcohol, tobacco and other drug rehabilitation
- CV writing and life skills.

- Education, training and gainful employment

Liveability

Increasing accommodation at the AMRC will not only provide additional minimum security beds and necessary interconnected infrastructure, it will also improve the living conditions at the existing TRC and have flow on benefits for the AMC, improving liveability for all detainees by increasing the ability to house them in appropriate accommodation.

Improving detainee living conditions and reducing crowding may support a reduced likelihood of anti-social behaviour and assaults (among detainees and between detainees and staff). A reduction in the number of assaults would lead to better workplace health and safety for both staff and detainees.

Integrated sentence management

Creating additional restricted minimum security capacity at the AMRC will support improved sentence management activities by ACTCS for all detainees by allowing for the better alignment of detainee accommodation with their security classification, as well as facilitating access to appropriate programs and services. Additionally, increased capacity will increase ACTCS' ability to manage cohort separation.

These constraints also impact on the incentive for detainees to progress against their case management goals as options for progression are limited. However, by expanding the AMRC, there will be a greater motivation for detainees to comply with their case programs as there will be a clearer pathway to release.

More efficient and functional support services at the AMC and AMRC will also result from the new Support and Administration Buildings, as well as the Gatehouse efficiency of access upgrade.

Program delivery

The project includes funding to enhance the efficient delivery and accessibility of detainee programs in partnership with non-government organisations (NGOs) and government specialists, supporting improved reintegration outcomes when detainees are released on parole.

Risks

In considering the implementation of Option 6 (AMRC), key risks relating to construction and operational phases were identified. The most significant operational risk relates to a greater likelihood of major security breaches due to the increased number of people accommodated in the AMRC. Detainees may fail to return from work or training release or, due to the minimum security nature of the facility, may abscond from the AMRC itself. This risk would be mitigated by the level of scrutiny of detainees being considered for placement in the AMRC. Those who are successful will have to meet certain eligibility criteria including satisfying a risk assessment. This means that they will broadly fit the profile of adult males at a later stage in their sentence period, who are able to live in a minimum security environment. In addition, the perimeter fence is being built to a medium security level standard.

Additionally, a detainee who absconds from custody is guilty of a criminal offence and would face the legal ramifications of that conduct. That detainee would lose all eligibility for placement in the AMRC. This would also apply to detainees who fail to comply with the daily regime of the AMRC – they would be returned to the high security area of the AMC with no prospect of returning to the AMRC.

It has been proposed and costed in the AMRC that the living standards would be highly incentivised encouraging positive detainee behaviour.

ACTCS Master Plan

This project aligns with an internal master planning exercise undertaken by ACTCS in late 2018 to address crowding issues at the AMC in the short, medium and long term. A high level indicative roadmap including previous and planned activities is outlined in Figure 2, setting out the key milestones towards providing a phased increase in accommodation facilities.

The completion of the AMRC represents the opportunity to deliver tangible results through a flexible solution that addresses capacity issues in the short term. While Medium and Long term options were detailed, the intervention provided by the Building Communities Not Prisons initiative is expected to delay, if not eliminate, the need to pursue them fully in the current planning considerations. Further phased movements of detainee cohorts around the existing and planned future campus will also be required in the short to medium term to ensure ACTCS remains responsive to factors out of its direct control such as changes in sentencing practises and criminal prosecutions.

Figure 2 Steps taken to date and indicative roadmap for the AMC

2014-16	September 2017	December 2017	March-September 2017	Short term (2021)		Medium term (3-5 years)	Long term (< 10 years)
Two additional accommodation blocks, a multipurpose centre, additional laundry facilities and bakery	Investment Logic Mapping Workshop	Women's accommodation relocated to newly built special care centre	Feasibility Study Future Plans Options and feasibility for the supplementary option	Completion of the Transitional Release Centre Expansion	<i>Building Communities Not Prisons (BCNP) Intervention is expected to diminish the need to pursue Medium and Long term options</i>	Additional female facilities	Separate remand facility
Steps taken to date				Roadmap going forward			

Value for money

The project will provide additional restricted minimum security detainee accommodation at the AMRC, providing a least cost option for Government to address immediate capacity constraints, while supporting the improved efficiency and functionality of Government's existing investment in the AMC.

The project will allow for more restricted minimum security detainees to be transferred out of the secure perimeter into accommodation more appropriate for their security classification. This in turn will optimise Government's existing investment in the AMC by better aligning detainee security requirements with existing AMC infrastructure and allowing detainees to be housed in appropriate accommodation for their security classification. Further consideration of the needs of female detainees is being developed to maximise the benefits of the proposed TRC expansion.

Key problems addressed by the project are:

- **Problem 1 – Occupancy at AMC is over 100% (as defined by design capacity of 439 beds)² so there is no surge or contingency capacity and both staff and detainees are frustrated by a lack of program resources.** The high occupancy results in the limited ability to separate detainees, a lack of surge and contingency capacity and compromises compliance with the AMC's human rights objectives. Due to the limited resources at the AMC as a result of crowding, coupled with the requirement for the separation of cohorts, detainees have been housed in units that were not intended to be used for permanent detainee accommodation. This means that the units are not available for their intended use, reducing flexibility and constraining the AMC staff's ability to safely manage detainees.
- **Problem 2 – Crowded facilities limit detainees' participation in rehabilitation and reintegration activities, cycling the burden to the justice system.** The AMC was designed to operate according to a planned Rehabilitation Framework. The crowded system results in challenges in meeting these objectives and compromises the overall rehabilitation aims of the centre. In addition, detainees experience reduced access to rehabilitation, educational and training programs, and both staff and detainees experience a lower standard of living and work utility, impacting their wellbeing.

The key benefits to be delivered by the project diverting funding from further high security buildings include:

- **Benefit 1 – Increased community safety,** resulting from a reduction in crime rates, net costs incurred from crime, the likelihood of unrest and assaults, unnecessary detainee transports, and recidivism rates. Released detainees are also more likely to find employment and engage in pro-social relationships as a result of the rehabilitation programs, education and training they receive in the AMC.
- **Benefit 2 – Increased detainee and staff safety,** as a result of reduced crowding and its associated problems, including violent behaviour, transmission of disease, and psychological problems.
- **Benefit 3 – Rehabilitation Framework can be achieved,** through the provision of various rehabilitation, education and training programs and a focus on integrated sentence management. This will also provide the critical enabling works to roll out Detainee Positive Behaviour Incentives (i.e. incentive based regime).

AMRC Solution

The AMRC is comprised of a series of works, including the expansion of the capacity at the existing TRC and the provision of other necessary interconnected infrastructure. The project also includes a scope of services, such as all custodial and non-custodial operations and maintenance activities connected with the operation of the AMRC.

² Note: Overflow (deemed to be above 439 detainees) is managed by the placement of detainees in the Management Unit, Crisis Support Unit, Health wards, the use of trundle beds on occasion, repurposing of program rooms and other facilities within the Centre.

The tables below provide an overview of the scope of works and scope of services that are proposed to be delivered in the new facilities.

Table 1 Scope of works

Project Components	Scope of Works - Brief Description
AMRC Accommodation	New buildings able to accommodate additional detainees. As outlined, two options have been proposed to provide an additional 60 (three Accommodation Buildings) or 80 beds (four Accommodation Buildings)
AMRC Support Building	Building housing necessary to provide support services for the AMRC, including entry, detainee visits, health, administration and program rooms
Security infrastructure	Security works associated with providing a secure perimeter that is appropriate for the number of detainees at the AMRC, including fencing, CCTV, equipment and systems
Administration Building	Office space and staff facilities
Stores Building	Stores Building catering for the AMRC and AMC
Gatehouse efficiency of access upgrade	Efficiency upgrade of the existing Gatehouse at the AMC, including security equipment and installing separate staff and visitor entrances and exits to improve efficiency
Other works	Other infrastructure and utilities works required to support the delivery of the project, including the car park expansion, utilities works, fencing, recreation works, landscaping and footpaths

Table 2 Scope of services

Project Components	Scope of Services - Brief Description
Operations – programs	All activities undertaken to support the delivery of programs for detainees in the AMRC
Operations – custodial and non-custodial	All custodial, non-custodial and administration activities required to support the operation of the AMRC
Operations – health	All health activities required to support the ongoing operation of the AMRC
Hard Facilities Management	Ongoing repairs and maintenance activities to keep the capital works fit for purpose
Soft Facilities Management	Services, such as cleaning, waste management and other activities to keep the facilities operational

Economic Analysis

A qualitative economic analysis has been undertaken in accordance with Treasury guidelines drawing upon research, designs and data provided by ACTCS, analysis of local ACT data and precedent projects both nationally and globally. The qualitative analysis demonstrates that the project has the potential to generate economic value for the ACT.

The economic benefits can be broadly categorised into the following three economic outcomes, which deliver economic benefits to a range of recipients including detainees, staff, the community and government.

- **Reduce recidivism and improve detainee conditions** – The AMRC will increase capacity and implement a more structured regime. This will improve rehabilitation outcomes for detainees, supporting a reduction in the recidivism rate. Detainee conditions will also improve as detainees are housed in more appropriate accommodation
- **Improve service delivery** – The AMRC will ensure that there are sufficient facilities for current and estimated future detainees as part of ACTCS' staged master plan for improving facilities. This will reduce the need to stretch services, enabling more efficient, productive and improved service delivery at the AMC and AMRC
- **Safer and more prosperous communities** – Community safety may be increased, as the AMRC will allow detainees better access to programs, supporting smoother reintegration into the local community and potentially increasing their contribution to the local economy. This may also improve the community's confidence and perception of the ACT justice system