

## MEDIA STATEMENT

### **Hepatitis ACT welcomes Third Healthy Prison Review of Alexander Maconochie Centre**



28 November 2025

Hepatitis ACT welcomes the release of the ACT Inspector of Custodial Services' third Healthy Prison Review of the Alexander Maconochie Centre (AMC) and commends the Inspector for the comprehensive examination of health and safety conditions in the facility.

The review makes 30 recommendations and 60 findings aimed at improving conditions for detained people, staff, and visitors. Hepatitis ACT is particularly pleased to see the review's focus on harm reduction, culturally appropriate care, and health service delivery.

“We thank the ACT Custodial Inspector for listening to our feedback and for the opportunity to contribute to this important review,” said Sarah Ahmed, Chief Executive Officer of Hepatitis ACT. “The AMC is a priority setting for hepatitis C prevention, testing, and treatment. We have a long-standing working relationship with the AMC and are committed to ensuring people living in the AMC have access to the health services and harm reduction programs they need.”

Hepatitis ACT, together with Hepatitis Australia, submitted a comprehensive joint submission to the review highlighting the critical importance of harm reduction in custodial setting. The submission emphasised that prisons are high-risk environments for hepatitis C transmission and that detained people are over-represented nationally in terms of new hepatitis C cases, total cases, and re-infections post-treatment.

Lucy Clynes, Chief Executive Officer of Hepatitis Australia, emphasised the national significance of prison health reform.

“Australia has committed to eliminating hepatitis C by 2030, prisons are now the major site for transmission of hepatitis C nationally and must continue to be a focal point for Australia's hepatitis C elimination efforts.

“Burnet Institute modelling shows that every dollar invested in a prison needle and syringe program returns \$2.60 in healthcare savings.

“Every person deserves access to quality healthcare, whether they're in prison or in the general community. There are good steps being made within custodial settings nationally to reduce harm from injecting drug use, a prison needle and syringe program

is an important next step which should be developed through close engagement with clinicians and those working in the prison system. We are glad to see that the very necessary discussion with Corrections Officers is part of the recommendation in this Review.”

The joint submission noted that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people represented one-third of Australia’s prison population and face hepatitis C notification rates six times higher than non-Indigenous Australians. Achieving equity for priority populations, including people in custodial settings and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, is essential to meeting national hepatitis C elimination targets by 2030.

Hepatitis ACT particularly welcomes Recommendation 22 calling for the introduction of a needle and syringe program at the AMC. This evidence-informed harm reduction measure aligns with national policy, international human rights obligations, and community health standards, and represents a critical step towards reducing hepatitis C transmission and improving safety for both detained people and staff.

Hepatitis ACT has recently conducted high-intensity testing campaigns at the AMC and continues to collaborate with Justice Health Services, ACT Corrective Services and community partners to deliver education, testing, and support services to detained people.

“We look forward to working with the ACT Government to implement the review’s recommendations and improve health outcomes for everyone at AMC.” Ms Ahmed said.

The review’s central finding emphasises the need for detained people to have access to more education, programs, activities, and employment to fill their days with productive and meaningful things to do.

Hepatitis ACT supports the review’s call for a structured day at the AMC as a priority, which will help promote rehabilitation, reduce reoffending, improve wellbeing, and reduce demand for illicit drugs.

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## **About Hepatitis ACT**

Hepatitis ACT is the leading community organisation providing testing, treatment, education, support, and advocacy for people affected by or at risk of viral hepatitis in the ACT. Our mission is to eliminate viral hepatitis and promote better liver health through harm reduction, testing, treatment access, and community education. For more information, visit [www.hepatitisact.org.au](http://www.hepatitisact.org.au)

## **About Hepatitis Australia**

Hepatitis Australia is the peak community organisation to progress national action on issues of importance to people affected by hepatitis B and hepatitis C. Our members are the eight state and territory community hepatitis organisations. Our vision is to see an end to viral hepatitis in Australia.

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