



DEBATES

OF THE

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

FOR THE

AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

HANSARD

11 May 1989

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Notice convening meeting	1
Requirement for members to be sworn.....	2
Authority to conduct swearing in	2
Instrument of election	2
Swearing in of members	3
Election of Presiding Officer	4
Election of Chief Minister	4
Presentation of letter	4
Standing orders	4
Title of Presiding Officer	6
Standing orders (Amendments)	7
Leader of Opposition (Election)	11
Ministerial arrangements	11
Leadership of other parties	11
Authority to record and broadcast proceedings.....	12
Objectives of the Executive	12
Adjournment.....	16

Thursday, 11 May 1989

Members assembled at 11.00 am.

NOTICE CONVENING MEETING

The Acting Clerk read the notice convening the meeting of the Legislative Assembly for the Australian Capital Territory:

**NOTICE OF FIRST MEETING OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY FOR THE AUSTRALIAN
CAPITAL TERRITORY**

Whereas paragraph 17(1)(a) of the Australian Capital Territory (Self-Government) Act 1988 provides that the Legislative Assembly for the Australian Capital Territory shall meet within 7 days after the result of a general election is declared:

And whereas paragraph 17(3)(a) of that Act provides that where the office of Presiding Officer is vacant, the Commonwealth Minister shall, by notice published in the Commonwealth Gazette, convene the meeting of the Legislative Assembly within that period or, if that is not practicable, within 7 days after that period:

Now therefore I, Allan Clyde Holding, Minister of State for the Arts and Territories, do by this Notice convene the first meeting of the Legislative Assembly for the Australian Capital Territory at 11.00 am on Thursday, 11 May 1989, in the Chamber of the Legislative Assembly, Canberra, in the Australian Capital Territory.

Dated 8 May 1989

(Sgd) Clyde Holding

Allan Clyde Holding
Minister of State for the
Arts and Territories

REQUIREMENT FOR MEMBERS TO BE SWORN

The Acting Clerk announced the requirement in section 9(1) of the Australian Capital Territory (Self-Government) Act 1988 for members to make and subscribe an oath or affirmation before taking their seats.

AUTHORITY TO CONDUCT SWEARING IN

The Serjeant-at-Arms escorted the Honourable Mr Justice Kelly to the Chamber, and the authority to conduct the swearing in was handed to the Acting Clerk.

The Acting Clerk read the authority to conduct the swearing in:

**AUTHORITY TO BE A PERSON BEFORE WHOM MEMBERS
OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY FOR
THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY
MAY MAKE AND SUBSCRIBE
THE OATH OR AFFIRMATION OF ALLEGIANCE**

I, JEFFREY ALLAN MILES, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of the Australian Capital Territory, pursuant to subsection 9(2) of the Australian Capital Territory (Self-Government) Act 1988, hereby authorise THE HONOURABLE JOHN JOSEPH ANTHONY KELLY, a Judge of the Supreme Court of the Australian Capital Territory, to be a person before whom Members of the Legislative Assembly may make and subscribe the oath or affirmation of allegiance as required by subsection 9(1) of the said Act.

dated 27th April 1989

(Sgd) Jeffrey Miles
Chief Justice

INSTRUMENT OF ELECTION

The Acting Clerk presented an instrument notifying the names of candidates elected:

The Hon Clyde Holding, MP
Minister for Territories
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Minister

RESULT OF 1989 ACT LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY ELECTION

In accordance with section 283(b) of the Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918 as applied and modified by the Australian Capital Territory (Electoral) Act 1988 I hereby notify you of the election of the following candidates for the ACT Legislative Assembly:

Rosemary FOLLETT
Paul WHALAN
Wayne BERRY
Ellnor GRASSBY
Bill WOOD
Gary HUMPHRIES
Trevor KAINE
Robyn NOLAN
Bill STEFANIAK
Bernard COLLAERY
Norm JENSEN
Michael MOORE
Hector KINLOCH
Craig DUBY
Carmel MAHER
David PROWSE
Dennis STEVENSON

Yours sincerely

(Sgd) Geoff Marles

Geoff Marles
ACT Electoral Officer

8 May 1989

SWEARING IN OF MEMBERS

The elected members made and subscribed an oath or affirmation.

The Honourable Mr Justice Kelly signed the attestation forms.

ELECTION OF PRESIDING OFFICER

Ballots were conducted for the election of the Presiding Officer.

Mr Prowse was declared elected as Presiding Officer and was escorted to the Chair.

ELECTION OF CHIEF MINISTER

A ballot was conducted for the election of the Chief Minister.

Ms Follett was declared elected as Chief Minister.

Sitting suspended at 11.39 am until 2.30 pm.

PRESENTATION OF LETTER

THE PRESIDING OFFICER: For the information of members, I present a letter dated 11 May 1989 from the Commonwealth Minister for Arts and Territories concerning decisions taken and matters held over during the transition period 6 December 1988 to 5 May 1989 for the ACT government consideration.

STANDING ORDERS

THE PRESIDING OFFICER: I present proposed standing orders for the Legislative Assembly for the Australian Capital Territory. By virtue of section 21 of the Australian Capital Territory (Self-Government) Act 1988, this Assembly has power to make standing rules and orders with respect to the conduct of business. Section 24 of the Act gives the Assembly a link to the House of Representatives. It provides that the Assembly may make laws declaring the powers, including privileges and immunities, of the Assembly and of its members and committees, but so that the powers so declared do not exceed the powers for the time being of the House of Representatives or of its members and committees. Until such a law is passed, the Assembly, its

members and committees are to have the same powers, privileges and immunities as those for the time being of the House of Representatives.

With that background and in order that the Assembly be able to function from the first sitting day, steps were taken to prepare the draft standing orders appropriate to an Assembly of this size recognising its relationship to the Executive as set out in the Australian Capital Territory (Self-Government) Act.

The standing orders were prepared in consultation with officers of the ACT Administration, the Department of the House of Representatives and the Assembly Secretariat.

While the proposed standing orders draw to a large extent on the practice of the House of Representatives, including recent developments, revisions and interpretations, they have been substantially modified to take account of experience gained in other small legislatures such as those of the Northern Territory and Norfolk Island.

Every endeavour has been made to simplify procedures and to eliminate unnecessary practice and archaic language. Those involved in the drafting believe that the standing orders will provide a readily understood and appropriate set of rules for the initial sittings of the Legislative Assembly.

The proposed standing orders provide for the appointment of a procedures committee which will have the task of considering the standing orders and the practices and procedures of the Assembly and recommending any amendments considered desirable. At all times the Assembly will be in control of its rules and the procedures committee will be the forum through which members may raise suggestions and concerns. It is expected that the committee will report from time to time recommending any changes it considers necessary.

I believe it is important for the Assembly to adopt standing orders now so that it will have a structured parliamentary framework in which to undertake its deliberations and discharge its legislative duties. In doing so, the Assembly should not feel bound to retain these standing orders without critical review and change where necessary.

Motion (by Ms Follett) proposed:

That the standing orders tabled this day by the Presiding Officer be adopted as the standing orders of the Legislative Assembly for the Australian Capital Territory.

MR KAINE: I accept the fact that, in order to commence the proceedings of this Assembly today, a set of standing orders was required and has been produced for our consideration. I would like to note, however, that as far as the Liberal Party in this body is concerned they are only interim instructions and as soon as the procedures committee of this Assembly is established I will move a motion at the time that these interim instructions - and I express this very strongly - should be referred to the procedures committee for review and that they be turned into a set of standing orders that are appropriate, not to the House of Representatives of the Commonwealth Parliament, but appropriate to the proceedings of this Legislative Assembly for the Australian Capital Territory.

There are one or two things that I would like specifically to comment upon. For example, I note that, unless some contrary motion is put to the Assembly, this Assembly shall not meet until 2.30 on the afternoon of any day of sitting. That is unacceptable. It is ridiculous that the Assembly should meet from only 2.30 in the afternoon on any day. There is a great deal of work that has to be done by this Assembly in the next month. I am quite sure that the officers of the Australian Capital Territory Administration sitting behind me could produce an enormous amount of work that has been in abeyance pending the establishment of this Assembly. We cannot proceed on the basis that the Assembly will meet only from 2.30 in the afternoon on any sitting day. That matter will have to be amended very quickly, and may not even be permitted to wait until the procedures committee can examine the matter. We should consider at our very next meeting changing that particular element of the interim standing orders to make sure that we do a day's work and produce results that the electorate of this city and this Territory expect of us.

I simply foreshadow that, although they may be acceptable for today's purposes as interim standing orders, they will not remain so for very long. They need radical amendment and we will be asking for them to be amended.

MR COLLAERY: The parties in this Assembly have already agreed to Mr Kaine's proposal, as far as I know, and the leaders of the parties in this Assembly have already agreed that the business of the day should commence perhaps at 11 am. I thank Mr Kaine for conveying the message from the Chief Minister.

Question resolved in affirmative.

TITLE OF PRESIDING OFFICER

MS FOLLETT (Chief Minister) (by leave): Sub-section 11(2) of the Australian Capital Territory (Self-Government) Act

1988 provides that the Assembly shall determine the title of the Presiding Officer. I move:

That the title of the Presiding Officer of this Assembly be Speaker.

Question resolved in affirmative.

STANDING ORDERS (AMENDMENTS)

MR WHALAN (by leave): I move:

That the following amendments be made to the standing orders:

New standing orders

After standing order 5 insert the following new standing orders:

"Election of Leader of the Opposition

5A. On the first day of meeting of the Assembly after an election, or whenever the office becomes vacant, a Member, not being a Minister, may be elected by the Assembly to be the Leader of the Opposition.

How Elected

5B. The election of the Leader of the Opposition shall be conducted by the Presiding Officer in a similar manner to the election of the Chief Minister."

Standing order 69

After "Deputy Presiding Officer" insert "or Leader of the Opposition".

MR COLLAERY: I rise on a point of order, Mr Speaker. There has to be debate on this issue certainly. I believe that the matter should be debated in the customary fashion.

MR SPEAKER: Yes, Mr Collaery. You have the floor.

MR COLLAERY: This is a profound departure from normal parliamentary procedures. This outrageous proposal identifies the seal on the thirty pieces of silver that were exchanged somewhere between midnight and this morning. The fact is that this procedural motion enables the Liberal Party to secure the minuscule gain that it sought by giving away and abandoning the speakership and the leadership of this Assembly. The fact is that the proposed standing

order provides in this democratic Assembly for those in power to vote in those who will be in opposition and the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr Kaine - the man on my left, and I say that advisedly - has arranged, certainly with support, for this motion to be put. The Residents Rally expresses its very deep concern, and my party joins all democrats who will deplore across this country the travesty that is now taking place. The Residents Rally predicts that the Chief Minister, who of course has more qualities than to involve herself fully in this, will abstain with her party from a vote on this issue. The arrangement reached between the Liberal Party and the No Self Government grouping will ensure a majority vote for the election of the opposition leader. Abstaining is a vote in itself. The Residents Rally firmly opposes this amendment which will promote the return to this capital of machine politics.

MR Kaine: I object most strongly to Mr Collaery's remarks. I can assure the Assembly that the only action that took place between midnight last night and this morning that might in any way be called Machiavellian was an approach by the Residents Rally to the Liberals to pick up the negotiations that they failed to complete yesterday. There were no other negotiations of any kind. If we are going to sit on the floor of this Assembly and listen to these accusations of party politics, then Mr Collaery better be careful of the sand that he is standing on. Mr Collaery and his party are the only ones that have been playing the big power politics game in the last week or so and I resent the comments that he has made. He has made an implication of impropriety on my part, and I suggest that he has made the same implication about the name of the Chief Minister. There is no foundation for it whatsoever. I am sure you are well aware that the proposal that we put forward for this amendment was specifically that the leader of the opposition should be elected by the parties in opposition in this Assembly. I understand that for technical reasons that proposition was regarded as being contrary to another provision in the existing interim standing orders that requires members to vote and would have been inconsistent. That is why the motion has been put forward in its present form.

There is no implication of any prior arrangement. Mr Collaery needs to back off and withdraw his remarks. On the very first day in the very first debate in this Assembly he is establishing a position of adversarial relationships. I had thought that he and I had been talking for some weeks about a co-operative form of government in which we would all participate, and I thought we were heading towards that. Mr Collaery has made his position quite clear and the electorate out there ought to listen very carefully in the future to the position that Mr Collaery adopts. He presents himself as the knight in shining armour on the white horse, fighting against the two big party machines. His party machine is stronger than

mine. His executive gave him more directions in the past few weeks than mine gave to me. He misrepresents himself and he misrepresents me and I resent it.

For some reason, unexplained to me, and known only to the Commonwealth Parliament which put the Act in place, it is prescribed that the Chief Minister shall be elected from the floor of the Assembly. It is the only parliament in Australia where that provision is contained in the enabling legislation. It is equally sensible that the leader of the opposition be so elected. There is no inconsistency in the proposition whatsoever. There is nothing Machiavellian in the proposal. It was our intention that it be done by the parties in opposition and that the party in government should not participate because we believe it is inappropriate that it should.

I suggest that Mr Collaery might like to withdraw the implication and the imputation that he has made about my character and that of the Chief Minister of this Assembly. If he is not willing to do so, he is declaring his intention in this Assembly to set up a situation of adversarial relationships, of confrontation and conflict, despite the things that he has been talking about to his electorate and my electorate about a co-operative form of government.

Mr Collaery is on the wrong track. He needs to reconsider his position and he certainly needs to see, from right now, his implication of some sort of underhanded treatment or activity. I do not accept it. I do not believe the Chief Minister does. Mr Collaery needs to consider his position very carefully.

MR MOORE: Mr Kaine has suggested that there is no basic conflict in this concept because it is consistent with the election of the Chief Minister. We have the election of a Chief Minister first by a majority on the floor of the Assembly, and that same majority now is to appoint its own opposition and its own opposition leader. That is the sort of concept of democracy that we believe came out of countries like Russia and so forth 50 years ago. The concept of appointing your own opposition leader when you are in government is totally unpalatable to any person with a reasonable sense of democracy.

MR WHALAN: It is quite extraordinary, in two aspects, that the leader of the Residents Rally should speak in the manner that he has today. The first is the feigned

surprise that this matter had sort of come up in this particular way. Secondly, he referred to machine politics. Both matters are concerned with the Australian Labor Party's relationship with the Residents Rally.

For several weeks now the Australian Labor Party has been in extensive and detailed negotiations with the Residents Rally in an endeavour to meet our commitment to stable government in the Australian Capital Territory. As recently as lunchtime yesterday we had essentially reached agreement with the Residents Rally on an arrangement which would have allowed for an alliance or a coalition between the Residents Rally and the Australian Labor Party. The administrative committee of the Australian Labor Party was called together to endorse that proposal and the proposal included detailed discussions on the casino issue. We reached agreement on the casino issue and indicated that the proposal put forward by the Residents Rally was acceptable as the basis of a proposition to be put to our administrative committee. We reached agreement on a range of ministerial responsibilities and fair portfolios within that coalition.

Subsequently, the Australian Labor Party was called to a meeting with the Residents Rally and the Residents Rally notified the Australian Labor Party that it had been instructed by its executive to break off negotiations with the Labor Party and to enter into no arrangement with the Labor Party. The faceless men and women of its administrative organisation, its executive, instructed its democratically elected members how they should behave in their relationships in this place. Manipulation of elected representatives by these outsiders is totally unacceptable. It worries me that that will be the pattern from now on, that that will be the way in which the Residents Rally will conduct its affairs in this Assembly.

During these negotiations with the Residents Rally last Monday the present Chief Minister, Rosemary Follett, raised with the Residents Rally this very proposal. It was handed to Mr Collaery before one of the meetings which we held with the Residents Rally and at the meeting Mr Collaery said, "We have no problems with this proposal" - his very words. So Mr Collaery was on notice about this matter and he agreed to the proposal in the negotiations that we were conducting. Since then he has raised no objection to it whatsoever. The Australian Labor Party will not be participating in this election because we do believe that it is appropriate that only members who are not part of the government should participate in this sort of a ballot.

The Assembly proceeded to vote.

AYES, 13

Berry, W.B.
Duby, C.J.
Follett, R.
Grassby, E.J.
Humphries, G.J.J.
Kaine, T.T.
Maher, C.A.
Nolan, R.M.
Prowse, D.J.
Stefaniak, W.G.
Stevenson, D.R.
Whalan, P.R.
Wood, B.

NOES, 4

Collaery, B.J.E.
Jensen, N.A.
Kinloch, H.G.
Moore, M.J.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

LEADER OF OPPOSITION (ELECTION)

A ballot was conducted for the election of the Leader of the Opposition.
Mr Kaine was declared elected as Leader of the Opposition.

MINISTERIAL ARRANGEMENTS

MS FOLLETT (Chief Minister): Mr Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to announce the composition of the first Government of the Australian Capital Territory. I will be the Chief Minister. The parliamentary Labor Party has elected Mr Whalan, Mr Berry and Mrs Grassby to be the other ministers. Details about allocations of portfolios will be announced soon. I will be making a full statement to the Assembly on the matter at our next sitting.

LEADERSHIP OF OTHER PARTIES

MR KAINE: Mr Speaker, as members can see, the parliamentary wing of the ACT Liberal Party has elected me as its leader.

MR COLLAERY: I would like to inform you, Mr Speaker, that the Residents Rally has elected me as its leader.

MR DUBY: I would like to inform you, Mr Speaker, that the No Self Government Party has elected me as its leader.

MR STEVENSON: I should like to inform the Assembly that I am the leader of the Abolish Self Government Coalition.

AUTHORITY TO RECORD AND BROADCAST PROCEEDINGS

MS FOLLETT (Chief Minister) (by leave): I move:

That the Assembly authorises:

- (1) the recording on video tape by Australian Capital Television Pty Ltd and the recording on audio tape by the Australian Broadcasting Corporation of the following proceedings on 11 May 1989:
 - (a) members making the oath or affirmation of allegiance; and
 - (b) the statement by the Chief Minister concerning the Executive's objectives and program; and
- (2) the use by any television or radio station of any part of the recorded proceedings in subsequent news, current affairs and documentary programs.

Question resolved in the affirmative

OBJECTIVES OF THE EXECUTIVE

Ministerial Statement

MS FOLLETT (Chief Minister) (by leave): The opening of the Legislative Assembly marks an important point in history. The Australian Capital Territory today takes its place as an equal beside the other States and the Northern Territory in Australia's Federation.

It is a great honour for me to be the Australian Capital Territory's first Chief Minister and I would like to thank the Assembly for the confidence it has shown in electing me.

I would like now to outline the nature of our Labor government and some key objectives.

The principles of my government are to develop a community based on social justice and economic security; a community which provides for the broadest possible individual liberty in terms of freedom of speech, education, assembly, organisation and religion; a compassionate, tolerant community which recognises and rejoices in our diversity.

I have committed the Labor Party to operating an open and accountable government which is responsive to community priorities and accessible to the people. We will establish new consultative mechanisms and reinforce existing mechanisms. Planning decisions will be open to public scrutiny through the establishment of a planning committee in the Assembly. The committee will be responsible for holding regular public meetings on planning. Broad community views will also be sought on all major issues such as economic development, housing, health and education policy.

We will endeavour to establish structures within the Assembly to allow for both the Assembly and the community to participate fully in policy deliberations. Most importantly, I will establish a public accounts committee of the Assembly which will oversee Executive expenditures. We will also legislate to establish an audit office which will operate independently of the executive government.

As a matter of urgency I will introduce a requirement for all Assembly members to declare their personal financial and business interests. The highest standards of honesty and accountability will be demanded from all elected representatives.

As I have made clear during and since the election campaign, my government will extend the concept of openness as far as possible. The budget processes themselves will be open to public scrutiny and participation. This will be achieved through broad community involvement on the economic planning body to be established and by releasing for public comment the draft budget framework well before any final decisions are made.

I am committed to running an efficient administration in the Australian Capital Territory. While there are areas where there is a need for increased outlay, most of this can be financed by changing priorities.

We will be undertaking a comprehensive review of the ACT revenue base with the aim of increasing the efficiency of revenue collection. The need for reform in the areas of betterment charges and payroll taxation have already been flagged.

The economic policies my government will be pursuing will have one objective - the creation of a choice of meaningful jobs for all Canberrans. To achieve this the ACT's industry base must be broadened. This means ensuring strong and controlled growth of private and community sector employment.

My government will support industry development through both the provision of increased direct government assistance and by creating an environment supportive of economic development.

As a matter of priority, we will undertake a review of regulation of the private sector to ensure that government is not stifling enterprise.

The Canberra Development Board will be reorganised to provide a consultative and economic advisory structure to assist in planning industry development.

Of particular importance to Canberra is the tourist industry. An ACT tourist development corporation will be established and increased funding provided to ensure the planned development of this sector.

My government is not simply interested in jobs at any cost. The quality of work is as important as the quantity. In particular, as a matter of urgency we will bring forward legislation on occupational health and safety to ensure that Canberra workers, like those throughout the rest of Australia, have the protection of a safe workplace.

My government will be compassionate and responsive to the needs and aspirations of all Canberrans, but particular attention must be given to those in our community who are disadvantaged.

I will be establishing within the Chief Minister's portfolio a social justice unit. This unit will play a major role in overseeing the development of all government policy. It will ensure that our objective of creating a fairer, more equal society is being met. The unit will have responsibility for matters relating to women's affairs, multicultural affairs, people with disabilities and discrimination or disadvantage of all kinds.

Following broad community consultation, I will introduce into the Assembly effective anti-discrimination legislation.

Targeted programs are required to assist the particularly disadvantaged. The young and disaffected unemployed are one such group. As I promised in the election campaign, we will be proposing in this year's budget that funds be provided for a program of youth outreach workers to seek out young unemployed people and encourage them into the work force.

Access to adequate and affordable housing is of paramount importance to improving people's quality of life. We will be undertaking a comprehensive review of ACT housing policy and I will announce the terms of reference of this review within the next fortnight. My government will be establishing a housing and tenant council to assist in the

resolution of problems and disputes in the areas of public housing and rental accommodation. Legislation for the establishment of a tenancy bond trust will be introduced into the Assembly within the next 12 months.

Women make up a disproportionate number of the disadvantaged in our community. It is the objective of my government that women are equal partners in social and economic terms in the workplace, the house and the community. I stand by my election commitment to programs for ACT women, and in particular to establishing a new refuge for victims of domestic violence.

Environmental issues are quickly becoming the most important area of government activity. My government will ensure that the environmental consequences of all its decisions are fully taken into account. Within the first year we will be introducing comprehensive environmental impact legislation.

We will also actively encourage the recycling of waste products. In particular, we will investigate the use by the ACT Administration of recycled and unbleached paper products. The implementation and effectiveness of pollution control legislation will be reviewed.

The ACT's excellent system of national parks and nature reserves will be maintained and enhanced. The Canberra Nature Park, the Murrumbidgee and Molonglo River corridors and the Jerrabomberra Wetlands will be gazetted under the Nature Conservation Ordinance.

My party is committed to maintaining and improving the Australian Capital Territory education system. No more Canberra neighbourhood schools will be closed during the life of this government, and the pre-school fee will be abolished.

The first ACT government will be an open and accountable government responsive to the demands of the community. It will be a Government that will treat all in the community as equal.

The success of this first ACT government, and indeed of this Assembly, will depend greatly on our ability to work together - with each other and with the community whom we have been elected to serve; with the trade union movement and the business sector; and with the staff and management of the Australian Capital Territory Administration and the Assembly's Secretariat. I know that every member of the Labor team is looking forward to the momentous task of working together to provide stable and responsive government in the best interests of the people of the ACT. I wish every member of the Assembly well in fulfilling their role in the task ahead.

MR WOOD (by leave): Our Chief Minister - our historic Chief Minister - has indicated just the bare bones of the

new administration's program. I congratulate her on that and I congratulate my colleagues on their election. I believe that the actions in this Assembly today will bring about a stable government, an excellent government, a far-sighted government.

I want to separate for a moment the priorities of the administration and speak of the priorities for this historic Assembly. We have not been born in the most auspicious circumstances. It has been a long battle, I do not know when it started, whether it was twenty years ago, but certainly it generated considerable impetus about four years ago. Defining a system - which itself is long and tortuous - was a long and tortuous process.

This is the only parliament that I know of that has people sitting in it, who now share our aims, who do not want to be here and did not want this parliament to be here. So we have problems. I believe that the first task for us as members - and that includes the government, the opposition and all of us - is to show our colleagues out there in the community by the way we do things that this Assembly will work, that it is a good idea, that the enormous amount of work we are going to take in is a necessary factor in our progress.

I want to commit myself, and I am sure that other members will share the commitment, to making this Assembly work for the benefit of all people in Canberra. The Executive has its task. We have the task both to support and to criticise constructively what that Executive is doing. We have the primary task of letting the people of Canberra see that we ought to be here and that the job that we are doing is a worthwhile one.

Motion (by Mr Whalan) proposed:

That the Assembly takes note of the statement.

Debate (on motion by Mr Kaine) adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT

MS FOLLETT (Chief Minister): I move:

That the Assembly, at its rising, adjourn until Tuesday, 23 May 1989, at 2.30 pm.

The government proposes this motion for several reasons. Because our financial relations with the Commonwealth

comprise one of the greatest challenges facing us, the government wishes to devote a great deal of attention to our preparations for next week's Premiers Conference.

Naturally, we also wish to take immediate action to implement a range of policy commitments which were announced during the election campaign. This will involve early discussions and decisions on various administrative and financial issues. The government is very conscious of the unique position which it occupies in being elected as the first Government of the Australian Capital Territory.

Any government in this position obviously requires a breathing space to establish its methods of doing business and to initiate new procedures and practices. Naturally, the government will ensure that the party leaders are kept fully informed of our approach to the Premiers Conference and our decisions on other issues.

Finally, I suggest that all members of the Assembly need an opportunity to come to grips with their responsibilities as members and to reflect on how they wish to arrange the business of the Assembly.

I look forward to discussing with all parties proposals for the committee system. The government considers that it would be useful for all members to be able to devote next week to considering these issues and organising their offices and staff.

The government's view is that the business of the government and this Assembly will proceed with greater efficiency if we are able to adopt a calm and orderly approach to our first days in office. I commend the motion to the Assembly.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Motion (by Ms Follett) agreed to:

That the Assembly do now adjourn.

Assembly adjourned at 3.18 pm until Tuesday, 23 May 1989, at 2.30 pm.