



DEBATES

OF THE

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

FOR THE

AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

HANSARD

7 April 1992

Tuesday, 7 April 1992

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MADAM SPEAKER (Ms McRae) took the chair at 2.30 pm and read the prayer.

PETITIONS

The Clerk: The following petitions have been lodged for presentation:

By **Mr Berry**, from 48 residents, requesting that the Assembly ensure that the present legislation relating to the possession and use of marijuana be more vigorously enforced.

By **Ms Szuty**, from 86 residents, requesting that the Assembly reject any attempt to permit the establishment of a free-standing abortion clinic.

The terms of these petitions will be recorded in *Hansard* and copies referred to the appropriate Ministers.

Marijuana

The petition read as follows:

To the Speaker and Members of the Legislative Assembly for the Australian Capital Territory.

We the undersigned understand that the Legislative Assembly for the Australian Capital Territory is considering the introduction of legislation to decriminalise possession and use of marijuana. How such a move could even be considered is beyond comprehension having in mind the ravages of alcohol and tobacco in the community and the current efforts to 'depopularise' them.

History has shown that marijuana has proved to be a terrible scourge wherever used. Many eminent researchers world wide, such as Gabriel G Nahas (author of "Keep off the Grass") have produced a great deal of well documented evidence condemning the drug. It produces loss of will power and a gradual disintegration of personality, ultimately leaving an empty shell. Cell damage is another of its vicious side effects.

We respectfully implore you to reject any move to make marijuana available to the public under any circumstances.

Your petitioners therefore request the Assembly to ensure the present legislation be more vigorously enforced and your petitioners will in duty bound ever pray.

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Abortion Clinic

The petition read as follows:

To the Speaker and Members of the Legislative Assembly for the Australian Capital Territory:

The petition of certain residents of the Australian Capital Territory draws to the attention of the Assembly that:

ACT law prohibits free-standing abortion clinics;

Your petitioners therefore request the Assembly to:

Reject any attempt to permit the establishment of a free-standing abortion clinic in the ACT.

Petitions received.

ADMINISTRATIVE ARRANGEMENTS Ministerial Statement and Papers

MS FOLLETT (Chief Minister and Treasurer): Madam Speaker, I seek leave to make a short statement to the Assembly outlining the administrative arrangements for the Government.

Leave granted.

MS FOLLETT: I thank the Assembly. Madam Speaker, the new administrative arrangements have been designed to encourage stable government in the Australian Capital Territory, particularly by building on the experience and expertise already acquired by Ministers and by senior officials. Any unnecessary change has been avoided in order to minimise disruption to the provision of services to the ACT community.

Madam Speaker, I have decided not to make changes in the allocation of ministerial portfolios or responsibilities. I will continue as Chief Minister and Treasurer; Mr Berry will continue as Deputy Chief Minister, Minister for Health, Minister for Sport and Minister for Industrial Relations; Mr Connolly will continue as Attorney-General, Minister for Housing and Community Services and Minister for Urban Services; Mr Wood will continue as Minister for the Environment, Land and Planning and Minister for the Arts. However, in accordance with the priority that this Government places on providing sustainable employment opportunities, Mr Wood will now become the Minister for Education and Training. The Department of Education will be known as the Department of Education and Training.

Madam Speaker, these administrative arrangements will be effective from today and I now table the *Special Gazette* containing the new arrangements.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Commonwealth Funding

MR KAINE: I would like to address a question to the Chief Minister and Treasurer. The funding transition for the ACT has now been under way for some years and the ground rules were set down quite clearly in the Commonwealth Grants Commission's most recent report of 8 April 1991. Despite that, the media has it that the Chief Minister has asked the Commonwealth for another handout of \$63m. On the basis of that, I ask the Chief Minister and Treasurer: First of all, what is the expected reduction in Commonwealth funds for 1992-93? Secondly, what budget gap is there arising from issues other than this reduction in Commonwealth funds which was totally expected? Thirdly, what does the Chief Minister propose to do to cover this shortfall when the Commonwealth rejects her handout request completely, as I would expect them to do?

MS FOLLETT: I thank Mr Kaine for the question. I think, first of all, Madam Speaker, that I should make it very clear that the \$63m which Mr Kaine has referred to and which is referred to in the *Canberra Times* article is not a figure which I have used. It is well known, of course, that \$53m was given to the Territory by the Commonwealth last year and that that figure represented the real terms guarantee that the Commonwealth gave to the ACT upon self-government. So, it is money which was in fact ours but which the Commonwealth, in its wisdom, had set aside in a trust until the three-year guarantee period had expired. So, that \$53m I do not expect to see again; Mr Kaine does not expect to see it again; and, more to the point, the forward estimates which I published last year assume that we will not see it again. So, that is dealt with.

There is, of course, a case to be made for the ACT to the Grants Commission for some continued recognition about transition to self-government. That case has been made and I expect that the Grants Commission will be reporting at the end of this week on that updated situation. We have put forward the case for the ACT to continue to receive some recognition of the fact that we are in a transition period. Also, of course, it must be acknowledged that in the recent period we have acquired, and will acquire, additional responsibilities - the court, for instance, as I am sure Mr Kaine is aware. So, to answer that first part of Mr Kaine's question, it is \$53m which we will not see again, I acknowledge that, and the figures that have been put forward reflect that.

There is, however, a further expected reduction of some \$10m in transitional allowances assessed by the Grants Commission in its last report. Again, Madam Speaker, I would say that that is not unexpected; that we had always known that over a period the ACT would be required to move to full State-type funding. So, there is to be a gradual phasing out, as the Grants Commission has envisaged, of the transitional allowances.

Nevertheless, Madam Speaker, I think it is very fair to say that all of those matters have been taken account of in the forward estimates which have been published. If Mr Kaine has had an opportunity to study those forward estimates, he would see that they are based on the known position, that they have taken into account the Grants Commission's work to date, and that they foresee a gap, if you like, in the next financial year of something over \$5m. In further years the gap is somewhat larger. It is about \$5m in this first year.

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All I can say, Madam Speaker, is that in addressing that gap this Government will continue to operate as we have always done on budgetary matters - that is, in consultation with the community. We will base our budget on social justice principles and we will again be at pains to deliver a sound and balanced budget that does not rely on borrowings. In fact, if you remember, in our last budget there were no new borrowings. It is a budget designed to protect the community, to protect their needs, to implement our own social justice agenda, and, of course, to ensure the continuing sound basis of the ACT's budgetary situation.

MR KAINE: I have a supplementary question, Madam Speaker. Given that the Chief Minister has acknowledged that there is a gap and, secondly, that she has said that she will not borrow, will she then consult with the community on what new taxes she intends to impose, and has she identified the targets for those new taxes?

MS FOLLETT: Mr Kaine has asked a purely hypothetical supplementary question, Madam Speaker. I will be consulting with the community on all matters to do with the budget, as I have in my past two budgets. If Mr Kaine wants to look at the relative taxing position of my two governments and his one government, he will see that it was his own period in government which saw the large increase in taxes and, incidentally, a relatively large increase in borrowings as well.

Borrowings

MR LAMONT: I address a question to the Treasurer. I refer to the Commonwealth's statement that as part of the self-government transition process it would no longer guarantee borrowings undertaken by the ACT. What action has the Government taken to assure the community that they can have confidence in the Government's ability to raise future funds?

MS FOLLETT: I congratulate the member on his inaugural question; it is a very fine one indeed. Mr Lamont is quite right in saying that the Commonwealth has stated that it will no longer guarantee the ACT's debts as part of our transition to full statehood and our transition to self-government, and that that was to apply from 1 July 1991.

Madam Speaker, in January of this year the Government sought from an international rating agency, Standard and Poors/Australian Ratings, an assessment of our short and long term ratings for the ACT. I am very pleased indeed to advise the Assembly that Standard and Poors/Australian Ratings have today announced that they have assigned to the ACT a "AA+ with a positive outlook" rating for the long term, and for the short term we have been assigned a rating of A1+, which is the highest rating available.

I believe that these ratings show the agency's confidence in the ACT's ability to meet its debt repayment obligations, and it means that our local community, the national community and, indeed, the international community can have confidence in the financial policies of this Government. That rating will enhance the Territory's strong reputation in the financial marketplace. It will ensure that the ACT remains attractive to prospective investors.

To put it in context, I would like to say that the long term "AA+ with a positive outlook" rating places us ahead of all States except Queensland and New South Wales, which both have AAA, which is the highest rating available. Western Australia also has AA+, but without the positive rating. South Australia and Victoria are AA and Tasmania is AA-. The Northern Territory has not been assigned a rating. I think it is a very good outcome, Madam Speaker, and I think it is one that the whole Territory can be proud of.

Borrowings

MR DE DOMENICO: Madam Speaker, I would like to refer my question without notice to the Chief Minister. I refer the Chief Minister to the ACT Labor Party manifesto, page 22, paragraph 5.4.2, which says:

... Labor believes borrowings are an appropriate method of funding.

Given that the Chief Minister today has already admitted a forward estimate shortfall as a result of on-budgeting for - - -

Mr Berry: I take a point of order. Madam Speaker, this seems to be a question in relation to Labor Party policy.

MADAM SPEAKER: If it is a question of policy, Ms Follett may then choose not to answer it, Mr De Domenico. I will let you finish the question.

MR DE DOMENICO: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I will start again because I do not think many people would have heard it, seeing that I was interrupted. Given that the Chief Minister today has already admitted a forward estimate shortfall as a result of on-budgeting for unpromised Commonwealth funding, is the Chief Minister planning to borrow, in accordance with the ALP platform, to finance the shortfall, and at what cost will this borrowing be to the ACT taxpayer?

MS FOLLETT: Madam Speaker, I thought I had made clear in my answer to Mr Kaine's earlier question our attitude on borrowing. In our last budget, which is the last evidence you have of what we actually do about borrowing, we had no new borrowings. I would ask you to compare that with what Mr Kaine did in his one and only budget.

Mr Kaine: The Labor Party policy is meaningless, except when you want to invoke it. Is that the situation?

MS FOLLETT: Madam Speaker, I do not believe that Mr Kaine, in his interjections, has very strong grounds for criticising me. It was, in fact, his own period in government which saw the greatest level of borrowings.

Mr Kaine: Are you going to reject an abortion clinic as well? That is in your policy too.

MADAM SPEAKER: Order! Let the speaker be heard in silence, please.

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MS FOLLETT: Mr De Domenico has again asked me - as did Mr Kaine - to pre-empt what might be in the budget. Well, I am not going to. You can each get up in turn and ask me to do the same thing; I am not going to do it. I have made it clear that the budget process will be conducted in consultation, along social justice principles. We will put the ACT's finances into the best possible position, a sound position, and a position that I believe is reflected in the independent assessment that I have just advised you of.

Ambulance Service

MR MOORE: My question is for the Minister for Health. Mr Berry, as spokesman on health in opposition you, on many occasions, raised the issue of the Ambulance Service and assured the community that when you became Minister all problems would be resolved. Are you aware that only a couple of weeks ago a situation arose outside the Ainslie Primary School, to where an ambulance was called to a pregnant woman who had broken her leg? When the ambulance arrived it had a single officer. Eventually, after the leg was appropriately taken care of, the driver had to call on the fire service to provide a driver to take the ambulance to hospital. The delays because of this, of course, were significant, and in a more serious emergency they would have caused even more difficulties. When are you going to deliver an ambulance service to the ACT that provides an adequate service?

MR BERRY: Mr Moore, we already deliver an ambulance service to the ACT which provides an adequate service. If you understood anything about the delivery of emergency services, you may have taken a little bit more trouble to inquire into the circumstances that prevailed on that occasion. My understanding of it, if we are talking about the same incident - - -

Mr Moore: We may well be, or we may well not be.

MR BERRY: I am quite prepared to check more closely on the information that you have. My recollection of a very similar event was that an ambulance was on its way to the workshop for repairs and a call went out for help. Other ambulances were otherwise engaged and the ambulance officer in the unit that was on its way for some sort of repair responded, quite appropriately, and arrived on the scene in pretty quick time.

It is commonplace for the Ambulance Service to rely on other services when they are able to provide that sort of assistance. As the Ainslie Fire Station is not that far away, it is quite commonplace for the Ambulance Service to rely on the fire service or the police force for a driver on occasions when they are strapped doing other work. Mr Moore and other members would understand that you could provide a large number of ambulances in the ACT but there is a point where accidents and incidents would involve all of the units in emergency work. At times there will be delays, but incidents are prioritised by the controllers.

My understanding is that that incident was dealt with. Whilst it would have been better if there had been a unit available with two officers, there was a unit available with one, and it responded immediately and appropriate treatment was provided.

University of Canberra Council

MR CORNWELL: My question is directed to the Minister for Education and Training, Mr Wood. I refer to the 15 months' struggle that the Alliance Government waged with, I guess I could say, an intransigent Federal Labor Minister, Mr Dawkins, over the appointment of Assembly politicians to the University of Canberra Council, and the victory that was achieved in June last year for Assembly representation. I ask you: Where are our two Assembly nominees to this council, considering that nine months have now elapsed since we won that victory, and why, with a clear six months before the recent election, did the ALP Government not appoint the two representatives?

MR WOOD: There has been a delay. I will check the timetable that you indicate. While you may have had an assurance from the Minister, I am not sure that the amendment to the Act went through the Senate or all the forms of the Federal Parliament in that time. But I will check that out. It may be that you are right. The other point is this: There is no requirement for the Government to nominate representatives from this Assembly. What was permitted was that we could do so if we wished. I am ready now with a list of names to take to my colleagues for various appointments to tertiary institutions. You will have to wait to see whether they contain members of this Assembly, or members from the ACT community more broadly.

MR CORNWELL: I have a supplementary question, Madam Speaker. Could you please explain, Mr Wood, why there has still been this delay? Even accepting that the Senate may not have passed it, as you claim, why have you waited nine months before reaching this point?

MR WOOD: I have not waited nine months. The agenda has not been with me for that period. It is also the case that we ceased to make appointments ahead of the election, and we are now in a position where we can do so. We are giving careful consideration to this. We have been in debate with the tertiary institutions about it. The appointments will be most carefully made.

Diplomatic Premises

MS ELLIS: I address my question to the Attorney-General. Can the Minister assure Canberra's citizens in suburbs with diplomatic premises that their suburbs are secure, following the attack on the Iranian Embassy?

MR CONNOLLY: I thank Ms Ellis for her first question in the Assembly. I am sure that all members of the Assembly would share the concern and, indeed, outrage of the Government at yesterday's attack on the Iranian Embassy by a group of persons, some of whom have been apprehended by the Australian Federal Police and were before the courts of the ACT this morning and, as has been publicly revealed, are currently remanded in custody in this Territory.

The ACT Government, of course, supports the right of people to peacefully protest outside embassies, and we have been in conflict with our Federal colleagues on that issue. We also support the right of Australians of an overseas background to express a political point of view within Australia in relation to overseas events. Recently we have seen very large assemblies of people in

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Canberra protesting or making their points in relation to events in such places as Croatia and Macedonia. Indeed, members of this Assembly have, on occasion, been part of those protests, which have been peaceful and dignified and appropriately conducted.

Yesterday's attack on the embassy causes us real concern. It is the first occasion when there has been an orchestrated set of attacks on embassies around the world, including Canberra. Canberra does not have a diplomatic enclave as such. While there are a number of embassies concentrated in Yarralumla, there are also diplomatic premises in the suburbs of Forrest, Red Hill and O'Malley and other parts of Canberra. They are ordinary residential streets, Madam Speaker, with ordinary Canberra citizens residing in those streets. We are fortunate that firearms were not involved in this incident. If there were any future incident, residents would have real cause for concern.

I had a briefing this morning from the Chief Police Officer in relation to the incident. The Commonwealth Government has indicated that it is seeking a full report from its agencies in relation to the chronology of events leading up to the attack yesterday and proposed responses to ensure that diplomatic premises are better protected, and so that the citizens of Canberra are better protected. I am assured that the ACT Government will be consulted in relation to that matter and that the AFP will advise us fully on the Commonwealth's appropriate responses.

I would intend, when that briefing has been provided to me, in the first instance to provide the briefing to the Opposition and to other Assembly members as requested. I can assure Ms Ellis that the Government viewed yesterday's incident most seriously and will be cooperating most fully with the Commonwealth Government to ensure that appropriate procedures are in place to protect both embassies and Canberra citizens.

Road Safety - Calwell Primary School

MS SZUTY: I wish to address my question without notice to the Minister for Urban Services, Mr Connolly. Is the Minister aware of the report on the front page of today's *Valley View* concerning the intention of parents to blockade Downard Street in Calwell because of the Government's inability to address the problem of dangerous access by children attending Calwell Primary School? Could the Minister please advise whether due consideration has been given to the installation of a pedestrian crossing or school zone, or of any other measures taken to protect the safety of children attending Calwell Primary School?

MR CONNOLLY: I thank Ms Szuty for her question. It is the first question she has asked in the Assembly. I am sure that during Ms Szuty's service in the Assembly she will see many media stories and she will get to recognise a beat-up when she sees one. I think I have been around long enough to recognise a beat-up when I see one. The beat-up in today's *Valley View* is the most outrageous beat-up that I have ever seen in the Canberra media. The *Valley View* did not contact my office for comment on that article. They have a most artfully contrived photograph, with a small kiddie clutching desperately to the "Keep Left" sign in the centre of the road, described as another near miss.

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I know that this is an issue that is of concern to members. Ms Ellis has raised this with me privately. I know that Mr Cornwell is aware of that. I have been giving this matter close attention, as have my officers. We have had a series of meetings with the parents and citizens and the school principal. The school principal met, on both 18 March and 26 March, with the officers of my department.

The simple and cheap response of putting in a school crossing, which would have been cheaper than the safety devices we installed, is, on all the expert advice given to me, not an appropriate response. The point at which children cross the road is on a crest. A school crossing, although it may look good and it would certainly be cheap and would satisfy a couple of very vocal parents, is not, on the best advice given to me, the safest solution.

The best solution and safest solution, on the advice given to me by the experts, who have been castigated by the *Valley View*, is the situation currently in place - that is, islands. We are taking action on parking. I have directed parking inspectors to patrol that area. Parking inspectors generally concentrate on the inner city areas and the town centres. I have directed parking inspectors to operate in that area. Mr Wood's department is cooperating with Public Works in relation to the provision of a bus lay-by facility there, to make the matter safer.

Throughout this issue we have been cooperating fully with the school principal and the parents and citizens association. I have in my possession, Madam Speaker, and will table, a letter from the president of the Calwell Primary School Parents and Citizens Association, dated 27 March, which is directed to an officer of my department, one of those officers castigated in the front page editorial of today's *Valley View* - a most ill-informed editorial. This letter to my officer says:

Dear

Bob,

On behalf of the Calwell Primary School P&C Association Inc. I would like to thank your section, particularly Rita Cantwell -

another named officer -

for the time and effort given to ensure our children are both confident and most importantly safe, when crossing the streets around the school.

From comments made by both parents and children the program was very successful. We feel that through continuing cooperation between parents, children and road safety officers we will make our school roads safer for our children.

Would you please pass our thanks on to Rita.

So, here is the president of the P and C publicly thanking officers of my department for the program that has been undertaken. We have repeatedly said to the school council that we will cooperate with any additional measures they want.

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There seem to be a couple of parents who are dissatisfied with the view of the parents and citizens council and the school principal. They are styled in today's *Valley View* beat-up as the children's safety action group, or some such nonsense, and they are threatening publicly to blockade the Chief Minister's office. This is, as I say, the most irresponsible beat-up I have seen. The facts are clear; the president of the P and C has thanked us for our efforts.

In relation to representations by Ms Ellis and Mr Cornwell, I have directed my officers to look at the issue of what are known as lollipop persons - the thing that many of us are familiar with from when we were children - the lollipop "stop for children" sign. I am able to advise the Assembly that we are getting together a group, comprising my experts, the people castigated by the *Valley View*, Mr Wood's department, the Catholic Education Office, the Teachers Union, the Australian Federal Police and the Council of Parents and Citizens Association, to advise the Government on whether the lollipop person is a sensible idea.

I can assure Ms Szuty, in response to her question, which is a very proper question to ask, given what was stated on the front page of the paper, that we take the issue of school safety and safety for children most seriously; but we are in a position where the relevant school P and C have thanked us for our efforts and have expressed repeatedly their satisfaction.

Armed Robberies

MRS GRASSBY: My question is to the Attorney-General. Could the Attorney-General tell me what the situation is with armed robberies in the ACT? Are the media reports we seem to get from time to time correct? It seems that the situation of armed robberies, if we are to take notice of the media, is rather serious in the ACT.

Mr Kaine: It is another media beat-up.

MR CONNOLLY: No, Mr Kaine, this is not a media beat-up; the media has actually reported this quite responsibly. It is, however, a Liberal Party beat-up. In relation to armed robberies in the ACT, which, of course, are no laughing matter, there were a series of five incidents over five days in early March. The Government expressed its concern about that. I asked the Chief Police Officer to prepare for me a report on the incidence of armed robbery within this Territory, as well as to take action against the individual problem. The police responded, as they do in these matters, with a task force which has made a number of arrests, and people are before the courts.

The Liberal Party was saying that there was a massive increase in armed robberies, that all of this was on the increase and that no doubt it was somehow the responsibility of the Labor Government and laxity in penalties, or what have you - the usual sort of rhetoric. The advice that I got from the AFP was that during the period of 1 July 1991 to 17 March 1992 - that is, from the beginning of the financial year, which also neatly coincides with the coming to office of the Follett Labor Government - there have been 17 incidents of armed robbery reported to the AFP.

Mr Kaine: Is there some relativity there?

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MR CONNOLLY: Mr Kaine asks: Is there a relativity? During the corresponding period of 1 July 1990 to 17 March 1991 - the period of Mr Kaine's stewardship - there were 31 such incidents. Mr Kaine asks: Is there a connection between the Labor Government and armed robberies? If there is, Mr Kaine, the connection is that they have somewhat declined.

Of course, one incident is one too many. The police take these matters seriously, as does the Government. I can assure the Assembly, and through it the community, that we take this matter seriously. There is no increased overall rate of armed robberies in the ACT. The historic rate is rather cyclical. It has ranged from 50 to 60 incidents a year down to 30 incidents a year, with no particular pattern, and in the current period there have been somewhat fewer than there were in the equivalent period last year.

Hospital Services

MRS CARNELL: My question without notice is to the Minister for Health, Mr Berry. Can the Minister indicate whether the projected 4 per cent decline in activity levels for this budget year is likely to occur, and, if not, what implications this has for the projected need for hospital beds in our system?

MR BERRY: I thank the member for the question. Members who were here may recall that the Chief Minister stated in her 1991-92 budget speech that overall admissions will be at or above 1989-90 levels. The Government also signalled, Madam Speaker, that there would be substantial productivity improvements made throughout the year. These productivity improvements in fact eventuated and the public hospital system has been able, so far this year, to operate at an in-patient activity level that is 2 per cent above the 1990-91 levels and 6.2 per cent above the 1989-90 levels. What is most important in achieving this is that the Labor Government, as opposed to the Government headed by the now Leader of the Opposition, has been able to do this with the health budget being on track.

Mr Humphries: Except for the blow-out.

Mr Kaine: You call it supplementation.

MR BERRY: It makes them very twitchy, and I understand why they are twitchy. They have to be twitchy because they are extremely embarrassed about the abysmal performance that occurred in health under their ministry. Unquestionably, there has been a clear distinction between the way that the Labor Government has managed the hospital system, and in particular the budget, and that under the Liberals. We have consistently - - -

Mr Humphries: Are you going to answer the question?

MR BERRY: I have already answered the question.

Mr Humphries: A 4 per cent decline in activity levels. Are they going up or going down?

MR BERRY: The activity levels that have increased have been achieved within budget. There have been increases in activity levels and - - -

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Mr Humphries: You said in your budget that there would be a decline of 4 per cent.

Mr Kaine: That is the answer you have ready, but it is not the answer to the question that was asked.

MADAM SPEAKER: Order! Let Mr Berry answer the question.

MR BERRY: These people do not like the answer that they are getting. They are seeing more productivity in health than had occurred in the past, and it is within budget - something they could never ever do - so, no wonder they are twitchy.

MRS CARNELL: I ask a supplementary question. It is really not a supplementary question; it is the same question again, but the end part of it.

MADAM SPEAKER: That is out of order.

MRS CARNELL: I am going to ask it again, but in a different question. Could the Minister please state whether the projected 4 per cent decline in activity levels will be reached and what impact that is going to have on the projected need for hospital beds in our system?

MR BERRY: People do not seem to understand what is going on in health. I just told you that the activity levels have gone up, and that trend is likely to continue. We are able to achieve that increased productivity not only within budget - I know that they are sensitive about that, and they ought to be - but also within the hospital bed management plan which has been announced by the Board of Health. All of these achievements, Madam Speaker, were never gained under the conservative government of people opposite. So, we are doing well. I am sorry that you are unhappy about that, but you will get used to it.

Mrs Carnell: So, more patients and no more beds?

MR BERRY: That is a more efficient hospital system.

Abortion

MR HUMPHRIES: My question is to the Minister for Health. I refer the Minister to letters written to him on 18 December last year and on 11 March this year from the ACT Right to Life Association inquiring as to his Government's position with respect to abortion. Is it the case that neither of those letters has been responded to as yet? Does he treat this particular organisation or these particular people in a different way from his other constituents, or is this the policy the Government is going to pursue with respect to all people inquiring about this important issue in the future?

MR BERRY: I do not recall with any accuracy the letters to which you refer, because I receive many letters in my office - complimentary ones as well, it might surprise you to know. The letters will be answered. Is that the question?

Mr Humphries: When? It is four months.

MR BERRY: The letters will be answered. I do not recall the letters; but, if there are letters that are unanswered, I will inquire into it and they will be answered.

MR HUMPHRIES: I ask a supplementary question, Madam Speaker. When?

MR BERRY: As soon as one can conduct the inquiries. You have raised the issue today. If you would really like me to drop the bundle now and go straight up there, check out the records and do it, well, I can do that. The issue that seems to concern Mr Humphries so much is that some people have not received an answer to a letter among thousands of letters that come to the Government from time to time. We will make sure that your question is raised and it is inquired into, and the letters will be answered.

ACTION Ticket Offices

MR STEVENSON: My question is to the Minister for Urban Services, Mr Connolly. A constituent has informed me that the ACTION bus ticket office at Belconnen has been closed on a couple of occasions when she has tried to buy tickets during business hours. As supplying books of tickets at a discounted price encourages people to use public transport and is an excellent idea, could the Minister indicate the hours of business of ticket offices throughout Canberra, and is it necessary to occasionally close those offices during normal business hours?

MR CONNOLLY: I thank Mr Stevenson for his question. I also thank Mr Stevenson for the courtesy his office showed to my office in advising me that he wanted some detailed information on this matter. I was able to instruct my officers to prepare the detailed information and thus answer his question. The offices, generally speaking, are open from 7.00 am till around about 5.30 pm. In most cases there is a break for lunch of about an hour. There are four offices run by ACTION, at each of the interchanges - Belconnen, Civic, Woden and Tuggeranong.

The peak time and the peak demand seems to be in the morning hours from 7 o'clock onwards. They shut for lunch because it would involve double shift arrangements to have somebody there to relieve, and the view has been taken that that is not a necessary expenditure. While that does mean, on one view, that the offices are closed for an hour, and that may have been when Mr Stevenson's constituent sought to purchase a ticket, it should be pointed out there are some 70 other locations in the ACT where people can buy pre-purchase bus tickets - usually newsagents or other shops usually conveniently located to interchanges and often open for rather extended hours themselves, because the traders wish to take advantage of the passing parade.

So, the answer is that they are open generally from 7 till 5.30 at the interchanges, but often with a 12 o'clock till one o'clock shutdown for lunch; and that is probably when Mr Stevenson's constituent was unable to purchase a ticket. But tickets are available elsewhere.

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ACTION Rationalisation

MR WESTENDE: My question is addressed to the Minister for Urban Services. Will the Minister, in accordance with the stated aims of the ACT Labor Party policy, ensure that the proper consultation process is established between the parties involved in the running of Canberra's public transport system so that inevitably rationalisation of ACTION buses can be achieved without further unwarranted and costly industrial disputation? What process has the Minister set in motion in this regard to date? Will the Minister ensure that I, as shadow Minister for transport, will be included in this consultation process and regularly informed of developments?

MR CONNOLLY: I thank Mr Westende for his question. The Labor Party certainly is committed to a consultative approach to change within the public sector, which stands in marked contrast to the somewhat confrontational approach that was taken by our Alliance predecessors and which saw such remarkable successes in public policy as the schools debacle and some of the chaos around the health system. At the moment we have within ACTION a facilitator who is engaged in consultation between the various unions with a view to a longer-term strategy for savings.

We have imposed upon ACTION in the last year's budget process a \$2m savings target which must be achieved. The process of consultation and negotiation has had a recent glitch, which members would be well aware of; but we are, in accordance with the Labor Party approach to industrial relations, continually seeking talks with the union on that matter and when there has been a dispute we have moved to get it into the commission as quickly as possible so that the matter can be resolved in the appropriate forum.

It is the Government's intention to publicise a three-year target of savings for ACTION so that the community, as well as people within ACTION, can understand what it is that we expect to achieve over the period of this Government. That will be a public document available for consultation throughout the community. I have already made offers to provide appropriate briefing to Mr Westende in terms of our targets; but, of course, in terms of achieving individual budgetary targets or not, it is a matter for question time or questions on notice.

Ms Follett: Madam Speaker, I ask that further questions be placed on the notice paper.

PAPERS

MS FOLLETT (Chief Minister and Treasurer): Madam Speaker, for the information of members I present, pursuant to section 21 of the Casino Control Act 1988, approval for an interim casino dated 30 January 1992; the development agreement between the Australian Capital Territory and the Chief Minister for the Australian Capital Territory and Casino Canberra Ltd and Casinos Austria International Aktiengesellschaft for the development of an interim casino on block 13, section 65, division of City, dated 31 January 1992; and notice of arrangements for community facilities associated with the development of the casino, dated 30 January 1992.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

MR HUMPHRIES: Madam Speaker, I seek leave under standing order 46 to make a personal explanation.

Leave granted.

MR HUMPHRIES: During an answer to a question today with respect to the rates of increase in crime in the ACT Mr Connolly implied that the ACT Liberal Party had indicated that recent robberies in the ACT indicated some increase in the rate of robberies in the ACT. I should point out, Madam Speaker, that I, as spokesman for police and justice for my party in the ACT, have at no stage made such a claim. Nobody else on this side of the chamber has made such a claim. The only references made to increases in crime were with respect to former increases in crime from last year over previous years, and I have certainly not made any statement about the last five incidents. In fact, I have been quite diligent, Madam Speaker, in making no comment at all on those recent incidents.

SUBORDINATE LEGISLATION

Papers

MR BERRY (Deputy Chief Minister): Madam Speaker, pursuant to section 6 of the Subordinate Laws Act 1989, I present subordinate legislation in accordance with the schedule of gazettal notices for determinations and notices of commencements.

The schedule read as follows:

Agents Act - Determination of fees - No. 43 of 1992 (S44, dated 31 March 1992).

Interim Planning Act - Interim Planning (Remuneration and Allowances) Regulations - No. 4 of 1992 (S45, dated 31 March 1992).

Land (Planning and Environment) (Consequential Provisions) Act - Notice of commencement (G13, dated 1 April 1992).

Motor Traffic Act - Determination No. 42 of 1992 (S43, dated 30 March 1992).

Ozone Protection Act - Notice of commencement (G13, dated 1 April 1992).

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LABOR GOVERNMENT PROGRAM Ministerial Statement and Paper

MS FOLLETT (Chief Minister and Treasurer): Madam Speaker, I seek leave of the Assembly to make a ministerial statement on the program of the third Labor Government.

Leave granted.

MS FOLLETT: I thank members. Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to outline the program for the ACT's third Labor Government. This Government will build on the achievements of the first two ACT Labor governments.

I believe that we should begin our new period of government by clearly outlining our intentions. Our commitment to open and accountable government is demonstrated by this statement today because it will provide a basis for judging our performance over the next three years. The Government also believes that the community needs a clear agenda from the Government - an agenda which will allow business, unions, families and individuals to be confident about the future of our community.

Above all, Madam Speaker, I wish to emphasise that this is a Labor Government with a commitment to social justice principles, a commitment to implementing the election undertakings we have given to the people of Canberra, and a commitment to the objectives and traditions of the Labor Party.

Let there be no doubt about our agenda. Despite the great difficulties and instability of the last Assembly, the first two Labor governments of this Territory managed to implement almost all the specific election commitments we gave at the 1989 election. The Assembly and the community can therefore expect that the policies we announced in the course of the recent election campaign will form the basis for the next three years of government.

Labor's proposals for the ACT are, above all, responsible, affordable and designed to protect and enhance the future life of our community. They stand in stark contrast to the grab-bag of promises thrown together by the Liberal Party. Their extravagant promises could not be afforded by the ACT community. Many of them were so badly conceived that they could not be implemented, for legal or practical reasons. They promised chaos and confrontation for our community.

Madam Speaker, I said just over a week ago that our goal must be to secure our Territory's future and the well-being of our community. A most important part of this task is the economic security provided by a stable Territory budget. Clearly, the impending decisions of the Grants Commission and the Commonwealth's financial offer to the Premiers Conference will greatly affect our future options. I give the Assembly and the Canberra community an undertaking that this Government will continue to press the Territory's case with the Commonwealth at every opportunity. We will not shrink from that responsibility, regardless of the political complexion of the Federal government.

I should remind the Assembly that it was a Labor Government which secured access to the Transitional Funding Trust Account in 1989. It was the Labor Government, not Mr Kaine, which gained agreement to ACT membership of the

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new National Grid Management Council. Whereas I have not hesitated to criticise the Federal Government when it is justified, the Liberal Party refuses even to concede the havoc which would be wrought by the Federal coalition's consumption tax proposals.

It must be appreciated, Madam Speaker, that we are not isolated from national economic forces, and nor can we set our policy agenda in isolation. We must focus on ensuring that the ACT shares in the national recovery. Above all, we must focus on job creation so that jobs are available to those seeking them. The task ahead is not easy. This Government has the strength to manage our way through our current situation and emerge with a stronger ACT economy. There is no single solution, Madam Speaker. There is no single waving of a tax wand, which the Liberals said would solve everything, and there is certainly no cutting Canberra off at the knees.

The Labor Government recognises that there must be many strands to our recovery, and many areas where the Government must work with business, unions and the community to achieve a sustainable recovery. A most important part of this task is the economic security provided by a stable Territory budget. This has been the hallmark of our financial management to date and will continue to be a central focus for our decision making. We have recently been measured against all other States and Territories and have been found to be sound. Earlier today I announced that the international rating agency Standard and Poors/Australian Ratings has given us the second highest possible rating, AA+. It also concluded that, in terms of overall financial position, we do even better than the current leading States of Queensland and New South Wales.

Madam Speaker, I turn in particular to the question of jobs. The Government affirms its election commitment to extend the jobskills program into the private sector with a further 100 places. We will continue to improve the marketing of the Canberra region as a business and investment centre and a tourist destination. The interim casino is expected to open at the end of September and recruitment for the many jobs involved has commenced. There will be an estimated 350 to 400 jobs when the casino is operational. A further 280 new jobs will be created when the construction of the permanent casino commences early next year. On completion, the permanent casino will employ approximately 500 people.

A feasibility study is being undertaken on a development proposal for a \$200m resort at Gold Creek, including tourist accommodation, conference facilities, quality housing, and an international standard golf course. It would provide a significant boost to employment, both during construction and for the longer-term operational activities.

In November last year I presented cheques for \$150,000 each to the two ACT based cooperative research centres.

Mr Humphries: Was that your money? It was the Commonwealth's money, wasn't it?

MS FOLLETT: No, ACT money. In the second round of the program three more centres have been chosen with significant ACT involvement. Of these, the centre for optical fibre and photonic technology will receive \$4.3m per annum in program funds, which is the highest level of funding provided in the second round.

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The Government is currently negotiating with the University of Sydney for the establishment of a clinical medical school. Not only will this provide an opportunity to enhance the quality of health care; it will also attract students and researchers to the ACT.

A proposal is being developed for an international air freight operator at Canberra Airport. If such a proposal were to proceed, Canberra would become a major regional transport and warehousing centre.

The Government is negotiating Optus's first purchase of land in the ACT for the establishment of a \$13m switching facility. We are also actively promoting Canberra to attract a range of telecommunications opportunities, including new infrastructure, research and training activities.

Madam Speaker, our election policy outlined a range of other initiatives to promote balanced economic growth, to provide Canberra with a better urban and natural environment, and to improve access to employment for all Canberra residents. The Government believes that marketing the strengths of Canberra as an investment and tourist destination, combined with sound management policies, will help us achieve the recovery that we need.

It is also imperative that we make the most efficient use of our assets. We must make the best possible use of our schools, public transport, housing, health and community facilities. We must be far more economical in our use of land, water and other natural resources, proceeding with sensible urban consolidation projects. We must also harness the skills and the dedication of our ACT Government Service staff.

Madam Speaker, a major focus for the Government over the next three years will be continuing to improve the efficiency and responsiveness of the ACT Government Service. We believe that we must make government more responsive to the needs of the community. We will require all government agencies which provide direct services to the public to enter into community contracts. Each agency will publicly undertake to provide services at a measurable standard which the community can judge.

We will continue to improve financial and personnel management with new systems and training for management and staff. The Government will adopt a strategic training plan in consultation with unions. We will increase spending on training to help staff meet the demands of the community, to allow them to realise their full work potential and help improve career prospects. Part of the task in making the ACT Government Service more responsive is to make it more representative of our community. The Government will be reintroducing a package of equal employment opportunity measures this week.

Madam Speaker, the Labor Government is committed to providing the highest possible standard of accessible and affordable health care to the people of the ACT. The last three years have been a period of upheaval in our health system as a result of problems inherited from the Commonwealth and compounded by the Liberal Party. Under Labor, the next three years will be a period of consolidation. By the end of this Assembly we will have a better, more efficient ACT health system. We will continue to concentrate on better financial management and

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accountability in our hospitals. The Woden Valley Hospital redevelopment program will be completed. New public health facilities will be provided on Acton Peninsula and the Government will establish an independent health complaints unit to protect ACT health consumers.

The education of our young people remains a high priority for Labor. We believe that the next three years should be a period of stability and consolidation in the school system. It is time that the debate focused on the quality of education, not simply on the cost of schools and school buildings themselves. No further schools will be closed in the next three years. We will develop a long-term plan for the funding and development of high schools and provide them with extra resources to tackle the increasing need for improved pastoral care, counselling and careers advice.

The Government rejects proposals which suggest that the size of a school should determine its quality. Accordingly, there will be no per capita funding of government schools. We will continue to provide recurrent funding to non-government schools at a rate not less than the present 50 per cent of the Commonwealth's contribution.

Madam Speaker, the Government is committed to protecting the special features of Canberra which make it such an attractive place in which to live and to work. Canberra provides an enviable lifestyle and a very attractive natural setting. Planning under this Government will preserve these features, upon which our community places such a high priority. Planning and land management will continue to be based upon the leasehold system. Planning in residential areas will not be based on a broad zoning system. Changes to land use within or adjacent to existing residential areas will allow full consultation and rights of appeal.

Residential land will be released at a sufficient rate to ensure that it is available at affordable prices. The Government will act carefully over time to restore the servicing and sale of land to the public sector so that the community receives the best return for the sale of public land.

We will continue to give a high priority to environmental protection. A statutory position of Commissioner for the Environment will be set up to investigate and report on complaints about government or private activities which affect the environment. New legislation will protect endangered native plants and animals. We will introduce legislation to control hazardous chemicals and provide a new liquid waste treatment facility so that liquid wastes are no longer buried in landfill sites. A kerbside recycling collection trial will be undertaken to evaluate the household collection of recyclable materials.

Mr De Domenico: Another one of our policies, Gary.

MS FOLLETT: One of the great advantages of self-government has been the opportunity for law reform in areas neglected for many years by Commonwealth Ministers. This Government will give urgent priority to updating consumer protection laws. Tenants' rights will be further protected with the introduction of a comprehensive Residential Tenancies Act. They are not claiming this one.

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Madam Speaker, we will introduce de facto relationship legislation modelled on the experience of other States to provide greater protection to partners and children of de facto relationships. The Government will encourage simpler court rules and plain English drafting in an effort to improve the access of all people to the law.

This Government believes that all people in the community have a fundamental right to secure and affordable accommodation. Public housing plays a crucial role in our community, and affordable, high-quality public accommodation will remain a major priority for this Government. We will maintain a high level of public housing construction in an effort to reduce waiting lists and to stimulate employment in the construction industry.

Madam Speaker, the Government is committed to encouraging full participation in the life of our community, regardless of gender, cultural background or age. We will examine the operation of the human rights law and extend its provisions. We will act to increase the number of child-care places available in our community. Funding will be provided for a halfway house to provide a secure environment for the rehabilitation of women recovering from drug and alcohol dependency. We will provide a community house in South Tuggeranong and help establish extra neighbourhood groups to bring together women at home.

The Government will also pay special attention to the needs of youth, most importantly by seeking to create jobs. The preparation of a youth budget paper will focus attention on the way in which government programs affect young people, and we will examine youth programs to close gaps and improve outcomes.

I repeat the commitment that I have given to implement the referendum decision on a new ACT electoral system. The development of the detailed proposals for a completely new system will obviously require substantial work, and, Madam Speaker, the Government will give this a high priority.

In concluding this outline of our program, I will table the Government's legislation program for the 1992 autumn sittings. The legislation program provides members with an idea of the Bills intended for introduction into the Assembly or for preparation during the autumn sittings of the Assembly. The program is an indication of our legislative agenda. By its nature, the program must be dynamic to accommodate emerging issues and changing priorities. This means that proposals may be added or removed at any time. Similarly, the priority they are given may also be subject to change.

The Government intends to introduce as many Bills in the first priority category as possible within these autumn sittings. It is possible that some proposals falling into the second and third priority categories may be introduced during the current sittings, but this will depend on progress with the issues involved and the degree of drafting complexity. Madam Speaker, making the Government's legislative program available is basic to our commitment to open and accountable government. It begins the task of implementing Labor's election commitments. It provides evidence that we are seeking to implement a clear and predictable agenda. It is Labor's first step along the path to making Canberra a better place in which to live.

I present the following papers:

Third Labor Government - Program
Ministerial statement, 7 April 1992.
Legislation Program - Autumn Sittings 1992.

and I move:

That the Assembly takes note of the papers.

Debate (on motion by **Mr Kaine**) adjourned.

WORLD HEALTH DAY Ministerial Statement

MR BERRY (Minister for Health, Minister for Industrial Relations and Minister for Sport): I seek leave to make a ministerial statement on World Health Day, an ACT perspective.

Leave granted.

Mr De Domenico: Now you might get the answer to your question, Kate.

MR BERRY: She got the answer to her question, a loud and clear one. It might not be the one that you wanted, but it is loud and clear and it is good news - productivity is up and we are doing it within budget.

Madam Speaker, today is World Health Day and I am sure members will agree that it is appropriate to mark the occasion with a statement on the ACT health system, particularly as it is the first day of formal sittings for this new Assembly. The theme of World Health Day 1992 is heart health, and this Government has put in place a number of significant programs to address the problem of cardiovascular disease. These include work assessment programs and risk management clinics, as well as extensive educational resources that are available to the public, community groups and schools. The ACT Health Promotion Fund also provides funding for a range of health education projects. This Government is committed to the concept of health for the whole environment. The provision of non-acute and non-hospital services is as important as the provision of top quality public hospital services.

Over the next three years Labor will consolidate its performance since taking office in June last year, as the Chief Minister said. Since then, Labor has implemented crucial reforms that have improved the management and delivery of health services in the ACT, to which my earlier answer drew particular note. Major reforms have been achieved in the financial management sector. Senior management has been streamlined with the appointment of a new chief executive of ACT Health and a new general manager at Woden Valley Hospital, and a new position of general manager, resources, has been created and an appointment recently made.

A computerised accounting system, Fiscal, is now being progressively used to manage and account for funds received and expended. Business rules now set out agreements reached with Treasury on items of revenue and expenditure that can be the subject of subsequent negotiation after the budget allocation, rules not

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even dreamed about by the Liberals. In the case of health, these involve negotiated increases in salaries and wages and changes to the mix of public and private patients. Monthly financial reports enable the managers of cost centres, the corporate management, the board and its committees, and the Minister to receive regular financial information on actual expenditure and revenue against the budgeted projections - also something very new for health in the ACT and something that I suspect would embarrass the Liberals. Nevertheless, we will take credit for that because it is good news, and there is more to come.

Planning is under way to use accrual accounting whereby obligations are recognised in the financial accounts at the time the obligation is incurred, as compared with cash accounting where the financial obligation is recognised at the time the account is paid or the revenue received. I am sure you will find that very interesting. Under Labor, unprecedented progress has been made in the development and upgrading of the Territory's public health system. The most significant activity is the ambitious hospitals redevelopment project.

Mr Humphries: Yes, our idea.

MR BERRY: Mr Humphries interjects, "Our idea". Who announced it? The Labor Party in 1989. The project has established a principal hospital at Woden supported by a public hospital at Calvary. It will provide a modern, efficient, public hospital service to the ACT community and surrounding New South Wales region beyond the year 2000. Several major facilities have already been completed within the \$171.2m program. All construction costs are as at June 1991.

Mr Kaine: All Liberal Party initiatives too.

MR BERRY: We will get to some of the ones that were not in a little while. First of all, the hospital redevelopment was commenced by the Labor Party. A maternity facility, built at a cost of \$13.2m, is designed to cater for all levels of obstetrics services from antenatal to postnatal procedures and includes an intensive care nursery. It includes a birthing centre which represents a new concept in childbirth in the public health system in Canberra. Mr Humphries can take some of the credit for that because Mr Humphries was the Minister when the decision was taken to include the birthing centre. I was happy to open it the other day.

Mr Kaine: You did not invite him, as usual.

MR BERRY: You have to get used to being in opposition - and he is not the health spokesperson, anyway. The maternity facility - - -

Mr Humphries: You came when we were in government.

MR BERRY: You might be impatient with opposition, but you will get used to it after a while. I am sure that you are going to have plenty of time. The maternity facility is one of the most outstanding of its type in Australia and provides a major upgrade in maternity services for residents of the ACT and the surrounding region.

Mrs Carnell: That is not what the obstetricians say.

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MR BERRY: The obstetricians do not like the birthing centre, or not all of them, either. The completion of the \$3.5m purpose-built psychiatry unit at Woden Valley Hospital is also another landmark. This part of the project was completed in record time, within budget and with a minimum of industrial delays.

Mr De Domenico: I hope the bus drivers read this.

MR BERRY: I did invite them to the opening of that, and they misbehaved. I remember that clearly. As part of the hospitals redevelopment project, Calvary Public Hospital has been refurbished at a cost of \$3.3m. The emergency department has been extended, providing a 24-hour emergency service, and the critical care area has been renovated to support the hospital's expanded role. There have been major renovations in the radiology department, including the installation of a new CT scanner. Obstetrics facilities have also been upgraded and maternity services have also been extended at Calvary. A day surgery unit will be completed this year, to improve the quality of facilities and care in this important and growing area of service.

New purpose-designed child-care facilities have been built adjacent to the Woden Valley and Calvary hospitals, and places are now available for staff and local residents. The hospitals redevelopment program will take several years to complete.

Construction of the 14,350-square-metre diagnostic and treatment building began in October 1991 and will be completed on target in November 1993. The building will cost \$35.7m to construct and will house medical imaging, including radiology and nuclear medicine, a new high-tech emergency department, medical records, day surgery and a transfusion laboratory. There will be state-of-the-art operating rooms, an intensive care unit and a high dependency unit. These new facilities will be equal to the best in Australia.

The tower block at Woden Valley Hospital, which contains the main ward areas of the hospital, is being refurbished in two stages to match facilities to be provided in the new diagnostic and treatment building. Refurbishment of the tower block is being carried out over several years to match other works in the program. Stage one will cost \$15.2m and stage two will cost \$19.4m. Construction costs for the entire ACT public hospital redevelopment project are, as I have said, \$171.2m in June 1991 prices and the project is scheduled for completion in 1997.

Canberra needs a strong public health system. That is not something that could have been guaranteed under the Liberals and they have made it very clear that they intend to privatise where possible. It would have fallen apart if we had been left with that Government, because of their inability merely to manage the finances of the hospital, let alone provide services. Labor will achieve this with careful management and detailed forward planning. A 10-year plan for community health in the ACT is a high priority. This Government is committed to the people of the ACT enjoying the best possible health facilities, and no community health centre will be closed during this term of government.

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This Government has agreed in principle to the establishment of a clinical school - clearly a major initiative of the Labor Party and something that the then Liberal Minister sat on for ages because he was not capable of doing or game to do anything about it. We took the initiative and moved forward. The Government is awaiting the report of a negotiating team which has been asked to provide - - -

Mr Humphries: What have you done so far? You have done absolutely nothing. You have talked about it.

MR BERRY: Listen, listen, listen. The Government is awaiting the report of a negotiating team which has been asked to provide advice on costs, funding sources, the form of agreement with the University of Sydney, and the clinical school's relationships with key education and research institutions in the ACT - as I said, proper forward planning; something foreign to the Liberals. Negotiations with the University of Sydney will be finalised soon and a report to the Government is expected within a few weeks.

This Government, this Labor Government, is looking closely at the viability of establishing a cardio-thoracic unit in the ACT. We have given a commitment to the people of Canberra and our health professionals that we will consult with them on this.

Labor has continually stated that Acton Peninsula will remain publicly owned and be used for public purposes. This Government will locate public health facilities on the Acton site in accordance with previous commitments. Improvements are continually being made in other areas of health. The Woden Valley Hospital day centre for frail aged people has been relocated to a beautiful new site, much criticised by the Liberals, within the Tuggeranong Health Centre - - -

Mr Kaine: It takes the frail aged a whole day to get there.

MR BERRY: The Liberals could not even find it when they did get there. I remember that. You could not find it. You were going out there to criticise and you could not find it.

Mr Kaine: We found it.

MR BERRY: You could not even read the map. No wonder you could not be trusted to be in charge of the till. It has been moved into that health centre because it was - - -

Mrs Carnell: Empty.

MR BERRY: It was more appropriate. It would have been empty if we had left it to Gary Humphries. He did not want to open it. It was more appropriate to locate these services within a community environment. I do not think there is anybody who would disagree with that, not even the Liberals.

The Government will also establish an independent complaints unit which will look at resolving the cause of complaints and problems in Health - something else that the Liberals ran away from. Labor recognises the role of strong preventative health programs in ensuring better health for all. Risk management clinics are located in the City and Phillip health centres for people who have been assessed as having existing risk conditions for heart disease.

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The ACT Health Promotion Fund, set up by the Labor Party and, to give credit where credit is due, supported by the Liberals when they were in office - but it was set up by the Labor Party - has also provided \$220,000 over the last two financial years for projects, including a grant of \$95,000 to the National Heart Foundation for a two-year education project which will target schools, restaurants, the workplace and the community. This Government is committed to health and to the concept that good health relates not just to the provision of hospital services but to the whole of our environment.

I am pleased to see that the focus of many programs is on young people and educating the community before unhealthy lifestyles develop. The Labor Government is committed to providing the highest possible standard of accessible and affordable health care to the people of the ACT, in contrast to the Liberals.

Madam Speaker, by the end of these three years Labor guarantees a better, more efficient ACT health system. Over the next three years, Madam Speaker, Labor will consolidate its performance since taking office in June. This is all bad news for the Liberals, Madam Speaker; but I am very pleased to make those important announcements about the health system in the ACT, and it is most appropriate that they be recorded in this Assembly on World Health Day.

Mr Kaine: Madam Speaker, on the basis that the Minister is going to move that his paper be noted, I will move that the debate be adjourned and we will take up his frivolous claims to achievement at some other time.

MADAM SPEAKER: Mr Kaine, he has not moved that it be noted.

Mr Kaine: I assumed that he was going to, Madam Speaker.

MR BERRY: Do you want to debate it?

Mr Kaine: Yes.

MR BERRY: Okay; I present the following paper:

World Health Day - An ACT Perspective - Ministerial statement, 7 April 1992.

I move:

That the Assembly takes note of the paper.

Debate (on motion by **Mr Kaine**) adjourned.

**PLANNING, DEVELOPMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE - STANDING COMMITTEE
Report on Casino Project**

MR LAMONT: Madam Speaker - - -

Mr Kaine: This is his maiden speech, is it, Madam Speaker?

MADAM SPEAKER: No.

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MR LAMONT: You should hope that it is not. Madam Speaker, I present Report No. 1 of 1992 of the Standing Committee on Planning, Development and Infrastructure on the draft variation to the Territory Plan, City, section 65, blocks 6 and 13, referred to as the casino project, together with the minutes of proceedings. This report was provided to the Speaker for circulation on Friday, 3 April 1992, pursuant to the resolution of appointment. I move:

That the report be noted.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

**LAND (PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT) ACT - VARIATIONS
TO THE TERRITORY PLAN
Papers**

MR WOOD (Minister for Education and Training, Minister for the Arts and Minister for the Environment, Land and Planning): I present the variation to the Territory Plan for City, section 65, blocks 6 and 13, that is, the casino project, pursuant to section 29 of the Land (Planning and Environment) Act 1991. In accordance with the provisions of the Act, this variation is tabled with the background papers, a copy of the summaries and reports, and a copy of any direction or report required.

Madam Speaker, this draft variation is to enable the establishment of an interim casino in the National Convention Centre and a permanent casino on part of the existing lease of the Capital Parkroyal Hotel. By way of explanation to new members who may not be familiar with the Land (Planning and Environment) Act which came into effect on 2 April 1992, subsection 26(2) of the Act requires the Executive to have regard to any recommendations of a committee of the Assembly before approving any draft variation to the Territory Plan. Accordingly, this draft variation was referred to the Standing Committee on Planning, Development and Infrastructure, and the committee subsequently advised that it agrees with the draft variation.

In considering this draft variation, the Executive also took into account the social impact assessment prepared for the section 19 casino proposal but which adequately addresses all the significant issues relating to the current casino proposal; a financial assessment of the proposal by an assessment panel chaired by the senior manager of the Westpac Bank's Corporate Finance Division; an investigation of the casino operator and developer undertaken by the Casino Surveillance Authority; an urban design assessment undertaken by a design assessment panel, which included representatives of the NCPA and the ACT Planning Authority and was chaired by a reputed urban design architect, Mr Ken Woolley; and a traffic and parking assessment by consultants and supported by the ACT manager of traffic.

This project will create 280 jobs during the construction phase of the permanent casino, and in the operational phase 350 to 400 jobs will be created at the interim casino, and up to 500 jobs at the permanent casino. In addition, \$19m will be provided to the ACT community for the provision of cultural facilities. Therefore, Madam Speaker, after taking into account the extensive range of advice and the benefits accruing to the community, the Executive has approved the draft variation which I have tabled.

**STANDING COMMITTEES
Appointment**

Motion (by **Mr Berry**), by leave, agreed to:

That:

- (1) Paragraph (2) of the resolution of appointment of the General Purpose Standing Committees be omitted and the following paragraph be substituted:

"2) The Standing Committee on Legal Affairs shall consist of two members, the Standing Committee on Conservation, Heritage and Environment shall consist of three members, and the Standing Committee on Planning, Development and Infrastructure and the Standing Committee on Social Policy shall consist of five members."
- (2) Paragraph (2) of the resolution of appointment of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts be amended by omitting "three members" and substituting "four members".

**PUBLIC ACCOUNTS - STANDING COMMITTEE
Membership**

Motion (by **Mr Berry**), by leave, agreed to:

That Mrs Grassby and Mrs Carnell be appointed to the Standing Committee on Public Accounts.

TEMPORARY ORDERS

MS FOLLETT (Chief Minister and Treasurer) (3.53): I move:

That, unless otherwise ordered:

- (1) Standing orders 16, 17, 18 and 19 be suspended for the remainder of this Assembly and the following temporary order operate:

"Administration and Procedures Committee

16A(1) A Standing Committee on Administration and Procedures shall be appointed at the commencement of each Assembly to:

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- (a) inquire into and report on, as appropriate:
- (i) the Assembly's annual estimates of expenditure;
 - (ii) matters relating to the privileges of the Assembly which may be referred to it by the Assembly;
 - (iii) the practices and procedures of the Assembly; and
 - (iv) the standing orders of the Assembly;
- (b) advise the Speaker on:
- (i) Members' entitlements including facilities and services;
 - (ii) the operation of the transcription service (*Hansard*);
 - (iii) the availability to the public of Assembly documents;
 - (iv) the operation of the Assembly library; and
- (c) arrange the order of private Members' business.
- (2) The Committee shall consist of the Speaker and three other members.
- (3) The Speaker shall be the Presiding Member of the Committee.
- (4) The Committee shall have the power to consider and make use of the evidence and records of the Standing Committee on Administration and Procedures appointed during the previous Assembly.
- (5) The foregoing provisions, so far as they are inconsistent with the standing orders, have effect notwithstanding anything contained in the standing orders."
- (2) Standing order 27 be suspended for the remainder of this Assembly and the following temporary order operate:
- "Days and hour of meeting
- Days and hour of meeting**
27. Unless otherwise ordered, the Assembly shall meet for the despatch of business on each Tuesday at 2.30 pm and on each Wednesday and Thursday at 10.30 am."

- (3) Standing order 34 be suspended for the remainder of this Assembly and the following temporary order operate:

"Adjournment and next meeting

Adjournment of Assembly

34. At 9.30 pm on each Tuesday and at 4.30 pm on each other sitting day, the Speaker shall propose the question - That the Assembly do now adjourn - which question shall be open to debate. No amendment may be moved to this question:

Provided that:

- (a) if a vote is in progress at the time for interruption, that vote, and any vote consequent upon that vote, shall be completed and the result announced;
- (b) if, on the question - That the Assembly do now adjourn - being proposed, a Minister requires the question to be put forthwith without debate, the Speaker shall forthwith put the question;
- (c) a motion for the adjournment of the Assembly may be moved by a Minister at an earlier hour;
- (d) any business under discussion and not disposed of at the time of the adjournment shall be set down on the Notice Paper for the next sitting; and
- (e) if the question - That the Assembly do now adjourn - is negatived, the Assembly shall resume the proceedings at the point at which they had been interrupted:

Provided further that, if at 10 pm on each Tuesday, or at 5 pm on each other sitting day, the question before the Assembly is - That the Assembly do now adjourn - the Speaker shall interrupt the debate, at which time:

Minister may extend debate

- (f) a Minister may require that the debate be extended until 10.10 pm or 5.10 pm, as appropriate, to enable Ministers to speak in reply to matters raised in the preceding adjournment debate; at 10.10 pm or 5.10 pm, as appropriate, or upon the earlier cessation of the debate, the Speaker shall forthwith adjourn the Assembly until the time of its next meeting; or
- (g) if no action is taken by a Minister under paragraph (f), the Speaker shall forthwith adjourn the Assembly until the time of its next meeting."

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- (4) Standing order 69(b) be suspended for the remainder of this Assembly and the following temporary order operate:

"Time limits for debates and speeches

	Subject	Time	
69.	(b) terminate sitting	Motion for adjournment of the Assembly to	
	Whole debate	30 minutes	
	Each Member minutes".		5

- (5) Standing order 74 be amended by adding the following temporary order:

"74. Provided that at 2.30 pm on each Wednesday and Thursday the Speaker shall interrupt the business before the Assembly in order that questions without notice shall be called on; and

- (a) if a vote is in progress at the time fixed for interruption, that vote, and any vote consequent upon that vote, shall be completed and the result announced; and
- (b) the Speaker shall fix the time for the resumption of the debate on any business under discussion and not disposed of at the time of interruption:

Provided further that on each Wednesday and Thursday, Presentation of papers; Ministerial statements, by leave; and Matters of public importance follow Questions without notice in the ordinary routine of business."

- (6) Standing order 77 be suspended for the remainder of this Assembly and the following temporary order operate:

"Executive and private Members' business - precedence of

77. Executive business shall, on each day of sitting, have precedence of all private Members' business, except that on sitting Wednesdays private Members' business shall have precedence of Executive business until two hours after the time fixed for the meeting of the Assembly."

- (7) Standing order 78 be suspended for the remainder of this Assembly.
- (8) Standing order 79 (Matter of Public Importance) be amended for the remainder of the Assembly by omitting "4 hours" and substituting "2 hours".

- (9) Standing order 272 be suspended for the remainder of this Assembly and the following temporary order operate:

"Suspension

Motion to suspend without notice

272. In cases of necessity, any standing order or orders of the Assembly may be suspended on motion, duly moved, without notice: Provided that such motion is carried by an absolute majority of Members."

Madam Speaker, I might make a short explanation. During the course of the First Assembly a number of temporary orders were adopted so as to facilitate the smooth operation of the Assembly, including orders establishing the Administration and Procedures Committee and dealing with matters such as meeting times, adjournment and the precedence of business. With the conclusion of the First Assembly, these temporary orders lapsed. The purpose of this motion is to revive the temporary orders which applied in the First Assembly, pending a general review of the standing orders.

MR MOORE (3.54): I had expected the Chief Minister to speak for a little longer on the temporary orders. Madam Speaker, it seems to me that there are a number of the standing orders that are to be amended as temporary orders today. I have agreed that that is an appropriate way to proceed for the moment; but I give notice that it seems to me that some of the temporary orders that we will now put forward should become part of the standing orders, rather than temporary orders, so that they go on from Assembly to Assembly.

As I understand it, members have agreed that a general review of the standing orders should be carried out by the Administration and Procedures Committee once it is established. I have agreed that that is an appropriate way to go, rather than to deal with some of the issues that cause me some concern at the moment. I shall look forward to seeing a proper and full review of the standing orders that will ensure an even better working of the Assembly than we have seen today.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

**ADMINISTRATION AND PROCEDURES - STANDING COMMITTEE
Membership**

Motion (by **Mr Berry**), by leave, agreed to:

That Mr Lamont, Mr De Domenico and Mr Moore be appointed to the Standing Committee on Administration and Procedures.

Sitting suspended from 3.57 to 8.00 pm

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RESPONSIBLE AND STABLE GOVERNMENT
Inaugural Speeches

MR DE DOMENICO (8.00): Madam Speaker, I seek leave to move a motion regarding government in the ACT.

Leave granted.

MR DE DOMENICO: I move:

That this Assembly endorses the principles of responsible and stable government in the ACT.

Madam Speaker, let me first of all congratulate you on your election as Speaker of the ACT Legislative Assembly. It is a most important position, and I am sure that you will undertake your duties fairly. I also congratulate you, Ms Follett, on your election as Chief Minister; you, Mr Kaine, on your election as Leader of the Opposition; and you, Mr Cornwell, on your election as Deputy Speaker. In fact, all members need to be congratulated on their election to the Assembly, for, whatever our persuasion, we all are here to achieve our visions of a better Canberra.

I personally intend to respect the ceremony of this important occasion by trying to avoid overt politics - and perhaps the operative word is "trying". I agree with my Federal colleague, the Federal Member for Higgins, Peter Costello, when he said:

If we, the guardians of this great parliamentary institution do not properly discharge our duties we betray our past, we compromise our future and we let down those who have placed their trust in us.

It is on this, and my love for Canberra, that I now wish to speak. As I drove in this morning along the Tuggeranong Parkway I thought about what I would say here tonight in my maiden speech. Even with the drenching rain, I had to admire the country around me. From our home in Gowrie every day I see the slumbering hulk of the Brindabella Mountains; in the winter I see the delight of snow.

As I drive to work I pass cyclists on bike paths which weave through green suburbs camouflaged by parks, and avenues of trees and open spaces. The roads are well planned and maintained, and I get to work within 20 minutes, usually - even on a rainy day and with a bus strike. The city is clean; there is little pollution; beautiful buildings are surrounded by trees dressed in autumn colours. I am sure I am like every other Canberran, in fact, when I think for the zillionth time that this must be the best place in Australia in which to live.

I know that many people in Canberra felt that self-government would mean the withdrawal of many of these benefits of living in Canberra; but today I would like to take the opportunity to argue the reverse. Madam Speaker, self-government, in fact, is absolutely essential if we are to maintain the things we love and cherish about Canberra. It is not good enough to leave the management of our home to 12 remote and disinterested Commonwealth departments, or, dare I say it, one remote Minister who does not live in Canberra and could not give a hang about what happens to Canberra.

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I come from a background of business and community involvement. I am, I am told, the first southern European born or northern African born, depending on the definition - let us say southern European born - elected member of the ACT Legislative Assembly. I think this is important in itself. It reflects the great changes in the ethnic make-up of our society. Perhaps I should say, "Noi viviamo in un piccolo mondo" - we live in a very small world. I also speak French and a smattering of Spanish and Greek. My parents, in fact, are Egyptian Sicilian, and speak seven languages.

There are thousands of Canberrans with ethnic backgrounds like my own striving to contribute to this country. It is because I love Canberra and Australia that I wanted to return some of the wealth and opportunity I have experienced. I was also extremely concerned at the antics of the previous ACT Legislative Assembly, when it seemed that we had more groups than a dalmatian has spots. It made the ACT, already a beloved target for national abuse, the laughing-stock of the country. If you wanted a challenge, I guess that being an elected member of the ACT Government or the Assembly would have to be it. But it should not be this way. It is now up to us, every single one of us elected as members of this Second Assembly, to amend the situation.

The people of Canberra have given us 16 reasons to take self-government seriously. This time round the people of Canberra are to be congratulated. They have elected a Government and an Opposition from well recognised and significant parties. It is up to us now to be ambassadors for Canberra, to take this vehicle of self-government and give it credibility and authority. We have the opportunity to show the rest of Australia that we can do things a little bit better in Canberra.

As a member of the Assembly, as a member of the Liberal Party and therefore the Opposition, I applaud Liberal and Opposition Leader Trevor Kaine's position that this Opposition will not oppose for the sake of opposing. We will work together with all in this Assembly to provide effective government for Canberra. That is why I am here. It is important that we have a bipartisan approach to those issues which will benefit the community.

I believe that the future of Canberra lies with the prosperity of the private sector, and I am pleased to say that the media and the Government, as well as the Opposition, have all at some stage expressed similar views. With my shadow responsibilities of finance, employment, business, tourism and industrial relations, I would suggest that this portfolio encompasses some of the main issues which will be affecting the people of the ACT within the next three years as we go into the catch-up recession mode.

On the industrial relations front, already we see major problems with positions in the dispute with the Transport Workers Union over ACTION bus services. Strong government is needed. Today's strike - or yesterday's strike, or whenever - on a wet day will only heighten public support for privatisation, and I commend Minister Connolly for what he has had to say about that.

It will be the private sector that will provide the solutions. It will be the private sector that will create jobs, growth, opportunity and prosperity in the ACT. But it is time the talking stopped. What we need is immediate action to allow the private sector to fulfil its role in the ACT economy. If we all agree, and I believe that we do, then we need to act.

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The most important issue, I believe, is unemployment. As unemployment approaches 9 per cent and as youth unemployment skyrockets to over 30 per cent, the question is: Are our children going to be able to find jobs and stay in Canberra near their families? There is no reason why my children should have to go interstate to find a job.

Part of the Liberal Party package suggested that pay rates should be set to encourage employers to appoint young people. It is a tragedy and a crime that our young people, with their enthusiasm, talent and energy, are unemployed. Our future, the ACT's future and the prosperity of the people of this Territory are tied to the economy of the private sector. The public sector is of great importance, but to become a dynamic community it is the private sector we must look to. We will not do any deals with anyone which will shift Liberal Party policy, especially concerning the private sector.

I thought about all these things as I drove to work today, through the paddocks and by the shores of the lake where new buildings are being constructed. I thought about the past three years and about the future. How are we to achieve these ends? I felt that the answer was in this Assembly, the way it acts, the way it takes up its responsibilities and pulls together in the yoke of administering government. We have a stark choice - the farcical joke of the past, or a serious, deliberate, dynamic, considered government of the future.

Looking around this house, I see those whom the people of the ACT have elected. We are all well qualified. We are committed. I make no apologies for my traditional views, by the way, or for my conservative bias on these matters as well. Every move we make must be made with considered forethought. We must respect the formalities of this house, even as some of us adjust to the frustration of the public service and other things. We are now on show and the public expect us to act with decorum and dignity, with honour and grace, and intelligence, most of all. Anything less is to show contempt and disrespect to the position we have and the people we ultimately have been elected to serve.

Madam Speaker, the Chief Minister today has spoken about a vision of Canberra. I say that this vision is achievable only if we fulfil a vision of government through our behaviour here, and I appeal to you, all of us here, to prove to the disbelievers that self-government is a better choice, to fulfil the hopes of those who have placed their trust already in self-government that we can deliver better government for Canberra. We can do it.

MS SZUTY (8.09): Madam Speaker, it is with much pleasure that I deliver my inaugural speech as a newly elected, Independent member of the Second ACT Legislative Assembly. During the election campaign I gave an undertaking to the people of Canberra to support Rosemary Follett as Chief Minister. I did so because I have always believed that her principles and philosophy as a member of the Australian Labor Party broadly coincide with my own. Rosemary Follett has said that she looks forward, as I do, to rational, intelligent and informed decisions emanating from this, the Second ACT Legislative Assembly. This will enhance the reputation of the Assembly as being truly democratic, workable and of benefit to the citizens of Canberra.

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The Canberra community perceived the First ACT Legislative Assembly as unstable, which was not surprising, given that three governments were formed during its life. Decisions on issues such as fluoridation and X-rated videos seemed to be governed more by personalities and ambitions than by the issues themselves. On the positive side, the committees of the First ACT Legislative Assembly appeared to work well. Many worthwhile ideas were explored through a cooperative process which produced well received reports on a wide range of issues.

Madam Speaker, we can learn from the members and experiences of the First ACT Legislative Assembly, retaining those aspects which were seen as important and successful while discarding those which were seen to be disruptive, unsuccessful and unworkable. By projecting an image of responsibility and stability we will improve our image with the Commonwealth Government and be seen to be an equal partner with the other States and the Northern Territory when the Premiers and Chief Ministers confer with the Prime Minister and representatives of the Federal Government.

Madam Speaker, I wish to turn now to the question of a future electoral system for the ACT. In the same election which saw all of us recently elected, the Canberra community also voted to endorse a Hare-Clark proportional representation electoral system for ACT elections in the future. As Assembly members we need to honour that vote by turning our attention to the implementation of this decision. The Australian Electoral Commission, whose members did such admirable work in organising and finalising the election, should be asked as quickly as possible to prepare legislation, and consider appropriate electoral boundaries and the numbers of members to be elected within those boundaries for our next election in 1995.

Madam Speaker, I now wish to turn my attention to planning matters. Canberra has always been a planned city, originally envisaged by Walter Burley Griffin and progressively developed in a sensible and coherent manner. It is through a visionary approach and strategic plan that we have gained the Canberra we have now. By planning to the year 2020 we accept the same challenge the planners of the early 1960s accepted when they formulated the decentralised town centres. We currently have an urban environment second to none in the world. We must build on this for the future and resist those who advocate that Canberra should become more like other Australian cities.

Canberra is also richly endowed with a highly educated population. It is important that the knowledge and skills that people have brought with them to this city and acquired in this city are fully utilised for the benefit of the whole community. In ensuring the continuation of a highly educated population, we must continue to provide a high-quality public education system for our children and young people; a public education system which continues to be free, compulsory and secular, accessible to all irrespective of their socioeconomic circumstances, gender, ethnicity, ability or belief, and which fully prepares young people for adult life and employment.

Canberra has been described many times as a city without a soul. As a resident of Canberra for 15 years, I dispute this view. Our planners have ensured that we live in a city with defined town centres, within defined regional boundaries and within defined local neighbourhoods. The heart of the Canberra community lives within neighbourhoods. Many individuals and families donate volunteer hours

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to enhancing their neighbourhood, regional communities and the Canberra community as a whole. These volunteer hours support and enrich community groups, cultural groups, school parents and citizens associations, school boards, and sport and recreational organisations.

Indeed, the quality of life that Canberrans enjoy is due in no small way to the time and energy that we ourselves put into it. Professor David Suzuki believes that sustainable cities of the future will be built on neighbourhoods. It is my belief that we must continue to preserve the strategic plan of our city, and the health, education and community infrastructure that we have for our future well-being.

Madam Speaker, I would like to conclude by supporting Chief Minister Rosemary Follett's comments and hopes for the Second ACT Legislative Assembly. I share her aspirations that this Assembly will begin its term in a spirit of cooperation, that our proceedings will be conducted with dignity, that all legislation placed before us will be carefully considered, that there is well-informed debate, and that we ultimately deliver high-quality legislation to a Canberra community that deserves nothing less.

Madam Speaker, it is customary for new members at this time to thank those key people who greatly assisted them in attaining their seats as elected members. I wish to especially thank the following people: My son, Andrei, for his enthusiasm and ongoing support for my career; my campaign manager, Don Mayhew, for his persistent thoughtful remarks, considered advice and sound judgment; Michael Moore for his inspiration, leadership and vision regarding the contribution that individuals can and do make as Independents in parliament; Tina van Raay and Stephen Mugford for their vitality, ability and zest; Joan Kellett for her exceptional judgment and unswerving commitment to the achievement of our aims; Joe Downing for his energy, motivation and determination; and the many others, some known, some unknown, who supported Michael, me, Tina and Stephen. To all of you, many thanks, and I will look forward to endeavouring to fulfil the expectations you have placed in me to realise my objectives as an Independent in this Assembly and to improve the quality of life of all members of our Canberra community.

MS ELLIS (8.16): Madam Speaker, it is with a sense of privilege that I rise in this chamber today. It was one of the proudest moments of my life when, on 27 March, I was sworn in as a member of the Second Legislative Assembly. As members of this Assembly, we must all ensure that we learn from the mistakes of the First Assembly and work towards providing for the people of this Territory hardworking, honest and representative government. The people of the ACT deserve no less.

The history of self-government in the ACT is not only as old as the life of the First Assembly. In fact, the question of a need for self-government in the Territory goes back as far as Canberra's earliest days, and it is appropriate, I think, to reflect now on this history. Mr Jim Fraser, who represented the Australian Capital Territory in the House of Representatives from 1951 to 1970, made some interesting observations in his maiden speech, or inaugural speech, on 26 June 1951. He said:

Moves have been made during past years for the establishment of local government in the Territory ... I assert it to be the right of the people of Canberra to govern themselves in local affairs.

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He went on to say:

The people of Canberra must no longer be denied the right of governing their own affairs.

It is almost 41 years since Jim Fraser made that speech and for all but the last three years the people of the ACT were continually denied that right to govern their own affairs. But now we have demonstrated to the rest of Australia that we are grown up enough to make our own decisions and to plan our own future. Without this demonstration and acceptance of maturity we would not be able to grow as a Territory, as a distinctive and vital community. Our education and health systems, law and order, architecture and planning, everything, would continue to be decided not by people who live here but by everybody else, from Perth, to Darwin, to Rockhampton. I want to make my own decisions and I want to make them with the community in which I live.

I know that some sections of the community are still cynical about self-government, for many reasons. Some of these reasons are devious, some out of concern for the Canberra community; but I also know that, with three years of stable, accountable government led by Rosemary Follett, the long and often emotional debate on self-government will at last be put totally to rest. It is therefore with a great deal of pride and anticipation that I look forward to representing the people of the ACT and in particular the people of the Tuggeranong Valley.

I believe that it is important to have a vision when in politics. It is not enough to say, as a politician, "I want to represent the community", because by definition that is what we are elected and paid to do. It is our job. What must come hand-in-hand with wanting to represent the community is a vision and a firm belief in how and why.

I represent the community through the Australian Labor Party because I believe in the ALP philosophy - social justice, equality, basic human rights, compassion and assistance to those in need, the philosophy on which the ALP was founded 101 years ago. I believe in progress and change for the good of the whole community. I believe in the rights of all individuals, not only those who are powerful and have the loudest voices. I am here because the ordinary people must have a voice in government. That is why I represent the community as a member of the Australian Labor Party.

In the ACT we have the best education system in the country. We must work to maintain and develop this system into the future. Our health system, currently in a transitional phase because of our changing community, must also change and grow. I know that under the Follett Labor Government Canberrans will have a high standard of modern health care. It is also important that we preserve the unique environment that is Canberra. However, this modern city must develop as it grows. We should not fear our developing future, but learn to adapt to our changing needs.

I have a long association with Tuggeranong, both professionally and at a personal level. As a result, I have had the privilege of participating in the growth and development of one of the fastest growing urban areas in Australia. I believe that the Tuggeranong Valley embodies the very spirit of modern day Canberra. It was

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not so long ago that Canberra was limestone plains; but now, in a relatively short time, Canberra has developed into a modern and diverse community. Tuggeranong likewise has developed in this fashion. It is part of the whole, but a very unique part.

Because of the rapid development of "the Valley" and its unique nature, careful development of this part of the whole must take place. Not only do we have many young families making their first homes in Tuggeranong, but also a rapidly increasing teenage population along with, we need to remind ourselves, a small but growing proportion of older citizens. The Tuggeranong Town Centre now includes the beginning of a healthy work base for the valley, the biggest being the opening of the Federal headquarters of the Department of Social Security. While the valley now has a variety of retail, commercial and community facilities, with a target population of just under 100,000, we cannot take continued future development for granted.

I see it as my major responsibility in this Assembly to ensure representation for the people of Tuggeranong. I can assure them of dedication and hard work on their behalf. I will be accessible and always ready and willing to hear their views and be their voice in the Follett Labor Government. I also acknowledge that I have a responsibility to all Canberrans.

Even though Canberra started off as solely the national capital, as I have already said, we are now much more than this. We are a city essentially no different from any other in Australia. We are not spoilt, elitist or sterile. This is a city made up of ordinary Australians with expectations and needs that are found in all other communities in Australia. We are concerned about our future, and this nation's future. We are concerned about unemployment, the health and well-being of our families, the education of our children, the environment in which we live, and the immense problems that can, and do, face our youth.

As the national capital, there is no doubt that we enjoy the facilities that come with it. However, it is also a place in which people live. We may have the facilities that a modern city provides, but we also have the same social problems, such as family separation, youth homelessness, unemployment, drug abuse and poverty.

Too often it is convenient for Federal politicians to score cheap political points by attacking Canberrans. I object to Dr Hewson describing public servants as essentially un-Australian and to Mr Reith saying that he would happily cut public servants off at the knees. Politicians such as Dr Hewson and Mr Reith must remember that it is the public service that provides services to the whole Australian community, such as social security, defence, veterans' affairs, health and aged care, environmental protection - services that only the public sector can provide. Public servants are the undeniable link between government and community.

The comments of the coalition are based on the traditional pastime of Canberra bashing and ignorance. It is easy to point the finger and criticise an identifiable group. That is what all discrimination is based on, and is at no time an acceptable form of behaviour, particularly amongst our leaders. We must work together against the prevalence of these attitudes. As Canberrans and fellow Australians we deserve no less. Make no mistake; the Federal Opposition's plans for this town and this community will create a social and economic disaster. I will certainly play my role in ensuring Canberra's future.

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I must take this opportunity to thank all Canberrans for giving me this opportunity to represent them. I must also thank the people of Tuggeranong for their support. It was my professional and social involvement in Tuggeranong that prompted me to seek elected office. I would like to thank the members and supporters of the Australian Labor Party, in particular the Tuggeranong and Lanyon sub-branches, for their hard work and dedication which made my election possible. There are far too many to name individually.

I must also pay a special tribute to Ros Kelly, whom I worked for and with for 11 years. It has been her support of and belief in the ACT that has taught me the respect that this Territory deserves. She has set a standard of local representation which I hope I can meet, and I will always value her support and encouragement. In conclusion, I look forward to working with all my colleagues in this Assembly to ensure that Canberra continues to progress for the good of all Canberrans and, through that, for all Australians.

MR CORNWELL (8.27): Madam Speaker, I begin my maiden speech by extending my congratulations to you upon your election a little more fully than I did at the formal swearing-in. I trust that you will bring honour and dignity to the position of Speaker of this young legislature and I wish you well in what I am sure will sometimes be a very trying post.

Similarly, I extend my best wishes to the Chief Minister, both upon her election to that demanding role and for leading her party to the electoral success that assured her of the job. I thought the Labor Party image-makers created a superb vehicle for victory in portraying you, Chief Minister, as a benign nun or everybody's favourite aunt, with each of those creations featuring a more-in-sorrow-than-in-anger expression, with head slightly to one side.

I have no doubt that you convinced the electorate with that warm, comforting persona; but I promise you that such an impression of forbearance and forgiveness will be rigorously tested in this much smaller arena over the next three years, should we on this side of the house have cause to do so. Happily, for my own part, no such circumstance has yet arisen, because I find myself currently in agreement with your aspirations for this, the Second Legislative Assembly for the ACT.

We all have a responsibility which transcends party politics and petty egos, and that responsibility is to earn respect and integrity for this chamber from the citizens of the ACT and of Australia. As you yourself put it, Chief Minister, the choice really is "between the instability, the antics and the rancour of the First Assembly and the great potential for rational, intelligent and informed decisions that the new composition of this Second Assembly provides".

While you quite correctly have identified the First Assembly as a less than desirable example to emulate, its behaviour has regrettably overshadowed its reason for being, namely, self-government itself. Further, in so doing, the First Assembly has done an injustice to a group of very worthy people. The injustice was by accident, I would like to think, because the political adventurers and opportunists who made up a significant proportion of the First Assembly would not have known of these people's existence. Later, perhaps, if they had heard of them, no doubt it was to advantage to be silent, for truth is child of time.

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Whatever the reason, I found no acknowledgment of them in the maiden speeches of the First Assembly and, as I vowed to correct this omission in my own inaugural speech to this house, I propose, three years late, to pay tribute to those people - the people who publicly worked for and advocated ACT self-government in the years 1986 to 1989, that is, following the abolition of the advisory assembly. They were not easy years in which to be promoting self-government; yet many of these citizens did so, not for personal or political gain, but simply because they believed in the rightness of self-government for the ACT.

For this commitment alone they deserve this small recognition. Thus I express my warm appreciation to Harold Hird and W.E. (Bill) Lawrence, MBE, of the movement for home rule, and from the other active organisation, the self-government campaign committee, its chair, Rosemary Nairn, and sometime or full-time members Ian Buchanan, Sue Craven, Graeme Evans, John Kelly, Bill Mason, Barry Reid and Moira Rowland. To these people and a few others, apart from my colleague and friend Trevor Kaine and me, belongs the public struggle for self-government - along with those more anonymous activists behind the scenes, and I concede that there were a number, such as Mr Humphries and our Chief Minister herself. I thank all of them for their efforts.

Turning now to the next three years, I would like to place upon record my support for another of our Chief Minister's very quotable quotes, namely:

The task for all of us here is to serve the people of Canberra; to govern on their behalf, in their interests and according to their wishes.

These are commendable aims which can be open to easy and convenient interpretation if we so choose. On the other hand, these words can also be accepted responsibly and with commonsense, so that the interests and wishes of this Territory's people are general interests and wishes of the average person and not the desires of noisy minorities.

For my part, I will try to represent such people - the decent and often forgotten silent majority; people who are not interested in heroin trials, covering up girlie magazines, and whether or not cigarette companies advertise upon sportsground perimeter fencing. They might not be particularly god-fearing either; but they are essentially honest, they are trying to bring up their children to be equally worthy citizens, and they are heartily sick and tired of more and more government regulations and attempted controls over their lives.

These are the people the Liberal Party has in mind when, in "We Believe", it speaks of the innate worth of the individual and the need to encourage initiative and personal responsibility, the basic freedoms of thought, of worship, of speech, of association, of choice and the right to be independent and to achieve. If such people and their modest aspirations have my support, then matters that are likely to threaten or disrupt their lives for no compelling or sensible reason will not.

Here I give clear warning to those among us, if any still exist in this Second Assembly, that I will not support the drift to authoritarianism I detected in the last Assembly in respect of some private members' Bills and amendments to government legislation. We are, let me remind members once more, in the words

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of the Chief Minister, here "to serve the people of Canberra ... according to their wishes" - their wishes, not our own. So, be warned that any member, even supported by a vocal group of people, who might think they have a good piece of legislation to impose upon the Territory, will need to convince me that it is also according to the wishes of the people of Canberra, before it receives my vote.

As one who supported self-government, my disappointment with the behaviour of much of the First Assembly was considerable. I wrote it off very early in its existence as an aberration and grieved for what I saw as a lost opportunity to create something different, even unique, among parliaments. After all, it is not every day that a new parliament is formed in an ostensibly First World democratic country and it was frustrating to see our ACT Assembly in most respects following the same procedures and, yes, the same behaviour as its tired, often discredited, older State and Federal counterparts.

The advantage of an aberration is simply that it is just that - a deviation, a straying from the path - and thus can be corrected. I believe that we members of the Second Assembly, therefore, have that rare opportunity, a second chance, to make this Assembly a respected institution where sensible and carefully considered decisions are made for the good and responsible governance of this Territory.

We also have the opportunity to establish some sensible reforms through our parliamentary processes, without, I add, discarding the basic Westminster traditions, some of which have been established by the shedding of blood over centuries and should not be lightly cast aside. For example, in the area of reforms, I think we could, indeed should, look at the need for night sittings of this Assembly. They do not seem to have attracted much electoral support - barring, of course, this evening.

Further, perhaps an arrangement that exists, I understand, in the House of Commons could be considered. This allows all divisions to be held at a particular time of day. Thus, busy Ministers and members are not called repeatedly from their other duties - and anyone in this Assembly who wishes to constantly abstain from voting can do so simultaneously. I certainly pledge my support for these worthy and necessary challenges. Further, I welcome the Chief Minister's bipartisan approach to relocating the Assembly back to the South Building, I trust in the not too distant future; thus making a locational as well as attitudinal new beginning.

Madam Speaker, this is my agenda, and I trust that it meets with the approval of those both within the Liberal Party and out in the community who, by their efforts and their votes, placed me here. I owe them a debt of gratitude that can be repaid only by being a good representative, loyal to the Liberal principles that they and I cherish; and I welcome their guidance and advice should they choose or think it necessary to offer it to me over the next three years.

While it is simply not possible to personally thank by name everyone who helped me reach here, there is one person without whom I would not have made it. I refer to my wife, Margaret, to whom I am already grateful and to whom I shall continue to be grateful, politics being either directly or indirectly very much a family affair.

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Madam Speaker, I conclude by offering my congratulations to all members of this Second Assembly upon their election or re-election, as the case may be. I look forward to working with you all in the best interests of the people of this unique Territory.

MR LAMONT (8.37): Madam Speaker, may I also extend to you my warmest congratulations and best wishes in a task which I know you will perform not only with great skill but also with great dignity.

I am very honoured, of course, to find myself in the position of giving my opening address to the ACT Legislative Assembly. I am particularly proud to be able to say that I find myself in this position as someone who was born and bred in the region and who has been closely associated with the public life of Canberra and its surrounds for the whole of my adult life.

When I left my former home town of Braidwood to come to Canberra in 1970, there were two main reasons. First, I was coming here for employment. Secondly, I was coming to a place which suited a country boy in terms of its amenity and its environment. Canberra was not Sydney or Melbourne, and that is the way I liked it. In the 22 years since then, and notwithstanding the wishes of some ill-informed outsiders, Canberra has retained its unique character. Despite its growth, it remains the great bush capital.

But it has grown, and, in so growing, Canberra has come to realise much of that potential which was in evidence to me growing up in the region. Canberra is no longer only the administrative and symbolic capital of the nation nestled in the ACT. It has grown to become the vibrant centre of a much broader region of south-eastern Australia. In a very practical way, Madam Speaker, the decisions we make here will be of importance to people well beyond the ACT border.

The important thing for me, however, has been that, despite Canberra's growth, the two issues which brought me to Canberra in the first place - employment and lifestyle - are still pivotal to the life of Canberra and, I believe, of the utmost importance to the people of Canberra themselves.

Madam Speaker, I am particularly proud to be a part of a government which has placed the issues of employment and Canberra's environment at the centre of its program for Canberra's future. This is a government, a Labor government, which is about creating jobs and a government which places the highest value on the protection of Canberra's natural and cultural heritage. It is a government which, above all else, believes that job growth and the protection of our environment are not goals which are in conflict.

In terms of employment, my Chief Minister has already announced a number of major developments which will generate jobs in the Territory in the short term and the medium term. These have included a casino development, a \$200m resort proposal at Gold Creek and proposals for research centres, a medical school, international freight facilities and a \$13m switching facility to be developed by Optus Communications. Clearly, Madam Speaker, no-one could accuse this Government of being Luddite. The Government is embracing realistic development proposals and getting on with the task of creating jobs.

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Madam Speaker, for someone with my background in the trade union movement, the creation of jobs is an article of faith. There can be no higher task for a Labor government. But those jobs should, and can, be created without despoiling the environment and the way of life which as Canberrans we often take for granted. For this reason I am especially pleased to hear my Chief Minister emphasising that the Government is to give high priority to preserving the special features of Canberra which make it such an attractive place in which to live and work - those very things which brought me to Canberra as a boy all those years ago.

Madam Speaker, my Chief Minister has also outlined a number of important measures which will do much to preserve our natural environment. The creation of a Commissioner for the Environment will be particularly important in this regard, as will the provision of a new waste treatment facility.

Madam Speaker, these two issues, of Canberra's lifestyle and jobs for its citizens, are issues which I will be working hard to promote in my capacity as chairperson of the Standing Committee on Planning, Development and Infrastructure. They will also be of significance for me in my role as deputy chair of the Tourism and ACT Promotion Committee. I must also say, however, Madam Speaker, that they are, above all, issues which go to the very heart of my lifelong involvement with Canberra and the region. I suppose that it is an old-fashioned thing, but I see these issues as ones which, by virtue of my experience and interest in them, I have a duty to pursue for the betterment of the citizens who elected me to this position which I now find myself in and which I am indeed honoured to hold.

Madam Speaker, I also wish to take this opportunity to place on public record my everlasting gratitude not only to you as a colleague in the last 18 months to two years, preparing for our recent election, but also to the rest of my colleagues here in the Assembly and in particular to the rank and file members of the Australian Labor Party - the oldest continuing political party in Australia. To them I do indeed owe a debt of gratitude. I certainly hope that not only my actions, but indeed those of this Assembly, deliver to them in the next three years those things which, as a party, we quite clearly have announced in our recent election manifesto.

MRS CARNELL (8.43): Let me begin by thanking the people of Canberra for the faith they have placed in me by electing me to this Assembly. I hope that my contribution will prove that their faith is well placed. I would also like to thank the people who contributed so much to our recent campaign. There were the candidates, both those sitting here today and those who were unsuccessful; there were the party members who worked tirelessly; and, most importantly, there were our office staff - those who are often forgotten - and particularly Gwen Wilcox. I would like to thank them for their enormous contribution, and of course for their personal support and support to the team as a whole.

I really look forward to a good working relationship with members of this Assembly. I hope that, underneath the posturing, relationships will be less acrimonious than perhaps they were during the last Assembly. I am optimistic that the reputation acquired by the First Assembly will be greatly improved during the life of this Second Assembly. This can only be good for Canberra. I would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate you, Madam Speaker, on your election and wish you well in the execution of your very important duties.

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I was glad to hear the Chief Minister today articulate that one of her priorities will be employment. It certainly represents an improvement on what she has previously stated about her objectives. Let me remind you. In last year's budget speech, she said:

... I do not believe that progress can be made unless social justice objectives are given the highest priority ...

This is the jargon constantly used by this Government. Their buzz words have been "social justice", "social reform", "fairness" and "equity". These are indeed very important things to achieve. But the way that these words are bandied about by the Government, and by the Chief Minister in particular, to the exclusion of other important concepts, provides a strong indication that the current Government has no appreciation of what the imperatives for Canberra really are.

What are these imperatives? The goal that we must focus on, first and foremost, is economic diversification and jobs. Why? One reason can be drawn from a rewording of the previous quotation. Maybe it should have read, "I do not believe that we can make progress in our social justice objectives unless economic diversification and development are accorded the highest priority"; or, to paraphrase a former New South Wales Premier, "There are three social welfare issues in Australia today, and they are jobs, jobs and jobs".

In one of my shadow portfolio areas, the status of women, the Government's own women's budget statement for 1991-92 hints at a lack of opportunity for women due to our narrow employment base - narrower, incidentally, than for men. This is hardly surprising. Canberra has been a one-industry town. There are other excellent reasons for wanting to promote economic development in a more active way. The ACT must have more immunity from the financial decisions of the Commonwealth. An unacceptable 60 per cent of our funding still comes from Commonwealth grants.

We all know that Commonwealth funding to the ACT is declining and that Canberra bashing seems to have become a national pastime. If we wish to improve the self-sufficiency of the ACT Government in revenues, we could either increase taxes and charges or else have new receipts coming in on the back of a growing and diversifying economic base. I am firmly of the conviction that the latter option is the best. We must foster the growth of the private sector. We certainly can no longer rely on an expanding Commonwealth Public Service to buoy our own prosperity; and, dare I say it, a stronger private sector and a broader economic base would also make Canberra a more diverse, interesting and colourful place in which to live.

The Gungahlin urban village project is a wonderful example of what the private sector can contribute. Here we see a private company willing to invest large sums of money in a project that will undoubtedly save the ACT many millions of dollars in land servicing costs and in the provision of a public transportation system, while at the same time offering Canberrans wider lifestyle choices, not to mention more jobs. The Government's lukewarm response to this project is symptomatic of its poor attitude towards the private sector.

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The Government is sending out confusing signals. On one hand, the Chief Minister has outlined her jobs priority, but this statement is undermined by the Government's response to the Gungahlin project and by its intention to return land servicing and development to the position of a government monopoly. Significant investment in this town will not be forthcoming unless the Government adopts a less equivocal approach. We must support the private sector.

Now let me turn to the subject of health provision. I believe that both major parties are strongly committed to public provision of health care in the ACT. The difference between the political parties lies in the Labor Party's preparedness to let resources remain underutilised. It is an attitude we cannot afford. The ACT is suffering from fiscal stress and will continue to do so as Commonwealth grants decline. This will restrict the Government's ability to provide services. Indeed, we are already seeing a situation where hospital bed numbers are being manipulated and where wards are being temporarily closed in school holidays in an attempt to meet the Government's budget imperatives.

We must begin to harness the skills and the energies of the private sector in the drive to improve health outcomes in Canberra. Not only is it wasteful not to use and involve the private sector; it is also philosophically wrong. It is not up to the Minister to make a high-handed "public interest" judgment on whether a new private hospital can or cannot be built in Canberra. The fact is that there are a number of companies interested in providing a new private hospital for Canberra. They evidently believe that, despite all the adversity and despite the hostile business environment engendered by the Federal Government's health policies, a private hospital for Canberra is a viable business proposition.

Again, we cannot afford to adopt an equivocal attitude towards private sector development in Canberra. If we wish to have private sector development we must be prepared to embrace it in all areas, including health. I believe that the approach towards the provision of health services must be outcomes orientated. We should concentrate on actually improving the health of people in Canberra - not shoving them out of hospital more quickly, as the Minister indicated this afternoon. We will best be able to do so if we maintain a flexible approach. There should be no prior commitments to particular institutions or particular means of delivery. Such attitudes will only conflict with the optimal provision of health services.

We should be prepared to question the efficiency of existing arrangements; for instance, the efficiency of having salaried practitioners within our suburban health centres. This is a relic of the pre-Medicare days of health delivery. In those days salaried medical practitioners were a very important way of providing for the medical needs of the less well-off members of the community. Since the advent of Medicare, those people can obtain free medical treatment from private doctors who bulk bill or, for a nominal cost, from those who do not; yet this Government continues to spend more than a million dollars of scarce resources when this cost could easily be transferred to the Commonwealth.

When I say "private sector", I would like to emphasise that this includes the for-profit, the not-for-profit and the voluntary sectors. I do not believe that health should be a government monopoly, alienated from the people. I think we should seek to involve all organisations in the provision of health services, firstly, because I think it makes the government's task much easier and, secondly,

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because I think it makes for a richer, more interesting and more cooperative society if we involve the people. Let us not construct government monopolies which inhibit the involvement of the community. Let us be outcome driven in this new Assembly.

MR WESTENDE (8.53): Madam Speaker, may I firstly congratulate you on your election to this Assembly and your subsequent election as Speaker of this Assembly. May I also congratulate all other members on their election and wish them all well in the various positions they now hold. For myself, this election was the culmination of being on the fringes of politics nearly all my adult life, and I wish to thank my wife for being understanding enough to let me get involved.

Madam Speaker, I feel very honoured and privileged to be standing here today as a member of the ACT Legislative Assembly; but, more importantly, I am very conscious of the responsibilities that this honour and privilege entails. It is a responsibility that is indeed entrusted to all members of this Assembly by those who have placed us here - the people of the ACT - and we must never lose sight of this.

It is on this important matter of the responsibility of the Assembly in determining the future direction of the ACT that I wish to focus my maiden speech. The *Oxford Dictionary* defines the word "responsible" as liable to be called to account, answerable, capable of rational conduct, and so on. They are strong words. But, clearly, to be responsible is to be strong, and what the ACT needs right now is strength in every direction. It needs strong leadership from government and it needs a firm and strong commitment by every member of the community. We must all build the future together.

The ACT is clearly at an important crossroad and the action adopted by the ACT Government, in particular, in the next one to two years, will quite significantly determine whether, in fact, we have a future or not. I believe that the positive aspect about this crossroad is that there is a very exciting direction out of it. It is clearly one that goes forward and one that can lead the ACT, and indeed the region, into great prosperity. It is one that can provide a lasting and strong economic base, one that can provide a good future for the generations to come, one that can not only retain our excellent quality of life but also provide increased options in style of living and a greater range of employment opportunities. This direction that leads from our present crossroad is clear to me; there is no other way. Madam Speaker, we in the ACT are extremely fortunate to be poised to take advantage of some very great opportunities.

This direction, as exciting as it may sound, will not just happen. It will not be served up to us on a plate. We will have to go after it with, I trust, determination, enthusiasm and, of course, responsibility. There can be no place for dillydallying, hesitation and doubts. We must set the vision in place and go after it. I believe that we have a tremendous duty and responsibility in this Assembly to foster this approach for our future.

The ACT Government, particularly, has an important and significant role in determining the future course of the ACT. It cannot afford to blow it. But, if it does not bring about some changes quickly, it will blow it, and the situation will not be easy to retrieve, if it can be retrieved at all. We have to set in place now the policies that will encourage growth so that when we come out of the recession we will be firing on all six.

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Madam Speaker, in this regard, it concerns me greatly that here we are poised to take advantage of some very real and substantial opportunities in the ACT, but this is continually hampered by overregulation, bureaucratic red tape and only lip-service to the notion of promoting Canberra and the region. Instead of creating an economic environment that will attract growth, the Government has set up a barrage of terms and conditions that achieves quite the opposite. Prospective developers and industries that wish to take advantage of the other great benefits of Canberra, such as its clean environment and an excellent pool of well-educated employees, run a mile when they confront the prospect of setting up here, and those that persist pay a heavy price.

I implore the Government to help and not hinder Canberra's growth opportunities. This is what I call a responsible approach to the future. The Government must streamline the process of approving new development proposals. The delays in this area alone are far too excessive. It is an absolutely ridiculous scenario that public servants disagree amongst themselves while the developer pays heavily for their, more often than not, petty deliberations about who is responsible for what. Payroll tax, Madam Speaker, is another burden for companies to bear. It stifles growth. While this, of course, is not unique to Canberra, it nevertheless is an insidious tax and clearly works against employment and progress. The Government must phase out this tax.

The ACT and the region can become one of the top tourist destinations in Australia. It can be the home of a great many exciting and innovative industries that can take advantage of the wealth of resources in the region and provide a much needed source of employment and vitality in the city. We can be the home of high volume, low mass, high technology production that can utilise our highly educated population. We can lead the country in urban planning by adopting the exciting and innovative urban village proposal for Gungahlin. We can be the cultural centre of Australia.

Madam Speaker, with all this for the taking, it disturbs me greatly that Canberra can be so divided on such important issues. Over the last week Canberra has been strangled by the ACTION bus dispute that did not have to happen. It was, and is, a short-sighted and selfish action by the TWU and it highlights a serious weakness in the consultation process.

Our future will have to be brought about by a strong partnership that will bring together all sectors of the community. It will require boldness, cooperation and a more than considerable dosage of commonsense. Above all, it will require a sense of responsibility that combines courage and vision, not caution and short-sightedness; not hindrance, but help and encouragement. For my part, I am at the ready to assist in a positive way.

Madam Speaker, I consider myself fortunate in having grown up during the Second World War in Holland, living through German occupation, my father being taken POW and my mother being left with eight children without social security. I know what it is like to be poor and to be hungry. I know the meaning of occupation and oppression. All of this was in my teens or formative years, where the pattern for the rest of my life was set. Since coming to this country in 1951, I have been both an employee and an employer and can see both sides of most arguments.

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I first came to Canberra in 1956 and I have lived here permanently since 1968. It is the finest city in Australia and one of the finest in the world. I call myself unashamedly Australian by choice and unashamedly Canberran by choice, not by accident. It is a pity, in many ways, that so many people lack a broad experience of life and tend to develop very narrow attitudes, almost tunnel vision. They become so ideologically committed that they cannot see the wood for the trees. I trust, Madam Speaker, that I will not have to accuse anyone in this Assembly of tunnel vision but can commend them for a responsible commitment to an exciting future for Canberra.

MADAM SPEAKER: I thank all the members who have congratulated me and commend all our new members on their inaugural speeches. It is a very fine start to this Assembly.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

SITTING PATTERN - 1992

Motion (by **Ms Follett**) agreed to:

That, unless the Speaker fixes an alternative date or hour of meeting on receipt of a request in writing from an absolute majority of Members, or the Assembly otherwise orders, the Assembly shall meet as follows for 1992:

April 7, 8, 9
May 12, 13, 14, 19, 20, 21
June 16, 17, 18, 23, 24, 25
August 11, 12, 13, 18, 19, 20
September 8, 9, 10, 15, 16, 17
October 13, 14, 15, 20, 21, 22
November 17, 18, 19, 24, 25, 26
December 8, 9, 10, 15, 16, 17

PRIVATE INTERESTS OF MEMBERS AND IMMEDIATE FAMILIES

MS FOLLETT (Chief Minister and Treasurer) (9.03): Madam Speaker, I present a form for the register of members' interests and move:

That:

- (1) within 28 days of the making and subscribing of an oath or affirmation as a Member of the Legislative Assembly for the Australian Capital Territory each Member of the Legislative Assembly shall provide to the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly a declaration of the private interests of themselves and their immediate family in the form as presented to the Assembly this day and shall notify any alteration of those interests to the Speaker within 28 days of that alteration occurring; and

- (2) such declaration be made available to any person on request, subject to the Member concerned being advised by the Speaker of the name of the person to whom the information is made available and the reasons why it has been requested, in each case.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion (by **Mr Berry**) proposed:

That the Assembly do now adjourn.

Assembly Committees

MR MOORE (9.04): I thought I would take the opportunity during the adjournment debate to make a couple of comments, having listened to the inaugural speeches of our new members. I appreciate the very positive approach with which we have started this new Assembly, which contrasts starkly with the start of the First Assembly. I hope that that will continue, and I share the hopes and aspirations of so many members who have spoken tonight.

Mr Wood: Those who interject - - -

MR MOORE: By all means, Mr Wood, interject away. It has been a little difficult tonight. There were times, I noticed, when some of the previous members were buttoning their lips, as we used to say in my old profession of school teaching. Mr Wood no doubt remembers the term.

I would like to draw attention to one motion that did go through the Assembly today but which may reflect a weakness in some of the very positive approaches that we have heard about this evening. I refer to the appointment of members to the Public Accounts and Legal Affairs committees. It would appear that we now have two people constituting the Legal Affairs Committee. I think we have the potential there for a committee that simply will not work. I think it is a great shame that that is the case. Similarly with the Public Accounts Committee, where we have two Labor members and two Liberal members.

Mr Berry: Put yourself forward.

MR MOORE: I hear the Deputy Chief Minister, Mr Berry, interject, "Put yourself forward". In fact, I did do that on the very first day of sitting, and I did it again for Mr Berry. I did also point out to Mr Berry that if I were to put myself forward for that position, which would then put me on five committees, it would entail extra workload. I think many people would recognise, certainly members of the public would recognise, the amount of work that has been put into those committees, and the extra work that an individual and Independent member has to do to keep up with legislation.

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I indicated that I would be prepared to do that provided I had adequate staff to support me. I made a simple request, which I am not in the slightest bit ashamed about, for a research officer class 5 and an assistant level 2 for my support. With that, I would be prepared to do that extra work; without it, I am not, because of the extra time that would be required. It is as simple as that. There it is out in the open. It seems to me that we would do far better to have each of the committees consist of a Labor member and a Liberal member, or two Labor members and two Liberal members, and one other.

It is a great disappointment to me that the initial suggestion that came out of a motion by Mr Berry last week was that Mr Stevenson be the member on those two committees. I feel that the real problem lies there; that Mr Stevenson is not prepared to put his weight in this Assembly on the committees. I find it a great disappointment, as I suspect most members do.

Mr Berry: Especially the ones who are already on four committees.

MR MOORE: Particularly those who are already on a large number of committees. I urge him to reconsider his position in respect of those two committees so that those committees can be sorted out and the work of the Assembly, in a cooperative fashion, can go ahead.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Assembly adjourned at 9.08 pm