



Debates

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Tuesday, 5 August 2014

MADAM SPEAKER (Mrs Dunne) took the chair at 10 am, made a formal recognition that the Assembly was meeting on the lands of the traditional custodians, and asked members to stand in silence and pray or reflect on their responsibilities to the people of the Australian Capital Territory.

Victims of Malaysia Airlines flight MH17
Motion of condolence

MS GALLAGHER (Molonglo—Chief Minister, Minister for Health, Minister for Higher Education and Minister for Regional Development): I move:

That this Assembly expresses its profound sorrow at the devastating loss of life from Malaysian Airlines Flight MH17 on 17 July 2014, and tenders its heartfelt sympathy to the families and friends of the victims, and to all those touched by this senseless tragedy.

Since this Assembly last met the world has been rocked by tragedy of a kind not seen before. In many ways, it is a tragedy still unfolding. The downing of Malaysia Airlines flight MH17 on 17 July 2014 has wreaked havoc in the lives of families across the world and our community has not been untouched. Therefore, it is appropriate that this Assembly expresses its deep and sincere condolences to the families, friends and colleagues of the 298 passengers and crew who tragically lost their lives in this incident.

Australia lost 38 innocent people; grandparents, mothers, fathers, sons, daughters and grandchildren from cities and towns in most states and territories. Throughout the days that followed the crash of MH17 we got to know a little about those who lost their lives. Who can ever forget the innocent faces of this tragedy, of Mo, Evie and Otis returning home to start the school term with their guardian, their granddad, on that flight ensuring their safe return. Those three happy little faces in one photo sum up the loss that the MH17 crash has inflicted on those that flew that day and those they left behind.

Beyond our borders this act of violence did not discriminate. It took lives of people from the Netherlands, Malaysia, Indonesia, United Kingdom, Germany, Belgium, Philippines, United States, South Africa, New Zealand and Canada. I would particularly like to offer my profound sympathy to the family and friends of Lil Derden from Hall, to her partner Craig, her two daughters Cassandra and Chelsea, her new granddaughter Ella Jane, and her family both in Australia and in Belgium. Our sympathies are with her, her friends, her work colleagues at the National Health and Medical Research Council and all that knew her when she worked at Calvary hospital.

Our thoughts are also with her many friends in the tight-knit community of Hall. I was privileged to join with them recently for a moving memorial service. It is perhaps only by looking at the impact of Lil's loss in our community that we gain some understanding of the scale of grief and loss which is being felt around Australia and the world.

I am sure members share the disbelief I feel towards this callous act and profound sadness that so many innocent people could lose their lives in such a cruel and senseless way. The grief is compounded when we hear the stories of the victims and the happy circumstances which took them overseas: visiting family, setting out on a retirement adventure, showing young children the wonders of the world.

We share feelings of anger and bewilderment at the evil of it—the shooting down, whether deliberate or accidental, of a civilian passenger aircraft. Most of all, our hearts go out to the loved ones of those who were killed. We cannot understand as they do the full impact of the tragedy, but we do feel the loss. We try to understand the grief, anger and despair that these people must be feeling and we hope wherever we can to ease the burden through thoughts, prayers and messages of condolence.

On Saturday, 26 July I attended a service at the Ukrainian church with members of the Ukrainian community, together with ambassadors and representatives of the Ukraine, Netherlands, United States, Romania and New Zealand embassies, along with my Assembly colleague Mr Steve Dospot. It was a touching service reminding us that no matter how difficult things can be, how violent some acts are, how tragic the deaths of so many, that strength can be drawn from the international community standing together, recommitting to the values that unite us all as international citizens, searching for peace and for peaceful resolutions of conflicts across the world.

The words spoken at the service of pain and loss affect us all. We were confronted with thoughts of the images of the tragedy in real time: bodies, people's personal belongings, teddy bears, passports, wallets and souvenirs of holidays, such treasured memories which were blown apart in one horrific and violent act in the sky. Whilst these images confronted us and horrified us at the same time in the Ukraine, the Netherlands, Malaysia and Australia we saw people coming together to pray, mourn and pay respect to those who had lost their lives that day.

Despite the dangers of conflict, we saw local Ukrainian people fill churches and bring flowers and toys to the crash site, simple but important signs to those bereaved by this tragedy that people cared about their loss and the ongoing grief inflicted on hundreds of innocent families through this senseless act.

As members know, a condolence book sits at the entrance to the Assembly for the messages of Canberrans in response to the tragedy of MH17, and on Thursday, on behalf of the people of the ACT, I will join the Prime Minister and other Australian first ministers for a national memorial service in Melbourne.

The grief and loss being felt around the world is certainly not eased by the knowledge that this tragedy was the result of wilful and violent actions, that there have been grave injustices since the incident, and that proper investigations of the crash site have taken so long to get underway. After all they have endured, the very least the families deserve is to have their loved ones and their belongings brought home and to know that an independent investigation of the events that resulted in this catastrophic loss will be allowed to proceed.

I know that all Canberrans support the international effort being led by the Australian and Dutch governments under the auspices of the United Nations Security Council Resolution to provide this closure and to demand accountability. As this process continues, we hope there is some comfort for the loved ones of the victims in knowing that the world is united in its grief and its determination to make sure that such a terrible act does not happen again. MH17 will not be forgotten, nor will the 298 people whose lives have been cut tragically short.

MR HANSON (Molonglo—Leader of the Opposition): I rise today to join with my colleagues in the Assembly, with our friends and families in the community, and with those of compassion around the country and around the world to mourn the loss of life and the ensuing grief and pain following the tragic events of flight MH17.

There were 298 people on the flight; 37 of those were Australians or permanent residents of Australia, and one of our very own from here in Canberra. Each one is a life taken; each one a family shattered; each one an irreplaceable loss. On behalf of the Canberra Liberals, I extend our deepest sympathies to all of the families, the friends, the loved ones and colleagues who had to come to terms with this heartbreaking loss. Our hearts go out to all of those who have been affected all around the globe.

This incident has impacted on the innocent from countries including the Netherlands, Malaysia, Indonesia, the UK, Germany, Belgium, the Philippines, the United States, South Africa, New Zealand and of course at home in Australia. We grieve for all of them, but we feel a special sympathy for those from our own country and especially our own town.

I was moved and honoured to join the Chief Minister and attend the memorial service for the celebration of the life of Liliane Derden, the Canberran lost in this tragedy. Liliane, mother to Cassandra and Chelsea and partner to Craig, was lost at the age of 50. She worked for the last seven years at the National Health and Medical Research Council here in Canberra trying to make the world a better place. She was Belgian born and was visiting family in that country. She was returning home to see her daughter in Perth when she took flight MH17. Seeing the sense of loss for Liliane at the service is a genuine tribute to her life and her contribution to Canberra. It is almost impossible to comprehend the loss that must also extend to so many families around the globe.

It touches us all in so many ways when tragedy such as this strikes. It is the time when we express our sympathies, whether as a direct family friend or as a family as part of our wider community. We all wish to express in whatever way we can our shared sense of grief and loss. I have been moved to have attended many meetings and events here in Canberra where there has been a minute's silence for all of the victims of MH17. Those who were silent for a minute did not know those onboard personally, but we have all been touched enough to set aside normal business to reflect and recognise this tragedy. I have been proud of my national leaders at this time.

Prime Minister Tony Abbot and Foreign Minister Julie Bishop have shown genuine international leadership and strength but to balance that with real human caring and concern. I support the national message of condolence issued by the Prime Minister, which states:

Our hearts go out to all their families. We will support them through the difficult times ahead. In coming weeks, Australians will stand with the families, friends, neighbours and colleagues who have lost people they cherish. Twenty-three million Australians share the sadness of those who mourn. We are united in grief and in our determination to ensure that justice is done.

I commend the Chief Minister for bringing this motion to the Assembly today and I join with other members of the Assembly in offering family and friends my most sincere condolences to all of the victims and all of those affected.

MR RATTENBURY (Molonglo—Minister for Territory and Municipal Services, Minister for Corrections, Minister for Housing, Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs and Minister for Ageing): There is no doubt that each of us in our own way have been affected by the recent tragic events surrounding the downing of flight MH17. To all the families of those on the flight, we send our sincere condolences. To all of the friends and loved ones of those on the flight, we also send our condolences.

It is often difficult when we are confronted with events that have such a direct and tragic impact on our lives to make sense of what has happened, to understand how it could have happened and to wonder who to blame. It could have been any of us who checked in for that flight. It could have been any of our family or friends that were on that flight, or perhaps we do know someone who knows someone who was on that flight.

We all step on and off aircraft. We all have family and friends who do the same. I have asked myself why it is that we feel so keenly the loss of some people, in some circumstances, perhaps more than we do others. I know that for me, when I heard about this particular flight, one that left from Schiphol Airport in Amsterdam, it was brought home most keenly that there could have been someone I knew on that flight. Having spent five years living in Amsterdam, of arriving and departing from that airport, it was particularly easy to personally imagine the experiences of those that were lost onboard MH17.

Some would have been excited as they headed off on holidays. Some would have been exhausted and looking forward to coming home to Australia. Some would have been on work trips, perhaps journeying to South East Asia or Australia for business. Some may have been on emergency family trips to visit sick relatives or to pay their respects. Every passenger on that plane had their own story and each and every story reminds us of the value of their lives and the randomness with which their lives were lost. Every passenger on that plane has someone who is grieving their loss and wondering why this happened to them, to their family, their friends, their community.

Conflict is a terrible thing. It rarely fixes things and it nearly always impacts on people who are not directly engaged in it. Conflict has many victims who are not

expecting, not wanting to be involved, people who are just wanting to get on with their lives. We often feel sympathy for those who live in war zones, but it can be more difficult for us to relate to them. I note that the conflict in Palestine is also one that is creating victims who likely want none of it: women, children, families. There are conflicts ongoing right now in Syria, Sudan South Sudan, Central African Republic, and Somalia and there are other conflict hotspots: Iraq, Libya, Yemen, and Afghanistan.

But the reality is that most of the people on MH17 probably had little idea about the conflict that was occurring below them in eastern Ukraine. Like most who travel on international flights, they likely assumed that those worlds of conflict were far from their world. Some perhaps, as they reviewed the path of the plane on the TV monitor or peered out of the window at the twinkling lights may have wondered about how life was for the people 30,000 feet below, but they never expected to be integrally involved. This is perhaps what makes this tragedy so unfathomable for us.

When Rin Norris and Anthony Maslin put their three children onboard flight MH17 to fly home with their grandfather to Perth, they did not have a thought for their whole family becoming victim to someone else's conflict. Nor did Shaliza Dewa and her husband Johannes van den Hende who had been on holiday in Amsterdam with their three children, nor Howard and Susan Horder, or Jack O'Brien or Emma Bell, nor any of the other passengers onboard MH17. And why would they?

Today we pay our respects to them all. To the 38 Australian citizens and permanent residents who were lost, we give our sympathy. Liliane Derden was the only member of our community onboard MH17. To Liliane's family and friends here in Canberra, we send our special thoughts and our sincere condolences. To all of the 194 Dutch citizens who were lost, the 43 Malaysians, the 12 Indonesians, the 12 British, the four Belgians, the four Germans, the three Filipino, one Canadian and one New Zealander, we pay our respects.

These are difficult times. Today we send a message to those that are left and grieving that we here in the ACT are thinking of them and sending our thoughts. While you are grieving, we know that you are remembering the joy that your loved ones brought to your lives and while that may only serve to sharpen your grief now, we hope that in time it brings some solace.

Question resolved in the affirmative, members standing in their places.

Petitions

The following petitions were lodged for presentation:

Disability services—early intervention—petitions Nos 9-14 and 13-14

By Mr Wall, from 1,562 and 431 residents:

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

This petition of certain residents of the Australian Capital Territory draws to the attention of the Assembly that all the early intervention groups/units are being closed at the end of 2014.

Your petitioners therefore request the Assembly to overturn this decision.

Environment—Lake Tuggeranong—petitions Nos 11-14 and 14-14

By Ms Lawder, from 2,562 and 445 residents:

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

This petition of certain residents of the Australian Capital Territory draws to the attention of the Assembly that for many years, Lake Tuggeranong has faced annual closures because of outbreaks of blue-green algae, caused by poor quality water. These outbreaks lead to bad smells, health risks for people and animals, and cancelled sporting and community events.

Your petitioners therefore request that the Assembly call on the government to take immediate action to clean up Lake Tuggeranong, and fulfil their election promise to build wetlands in the Tuggeranong Valley, which will help to improve the quality of water flowing into the lake.

The Clerk having announced that the terms of the petitions would be recorded in Hansard and referred to the appropriate ministers for response pursuant to standing order 100, the petitions were received.

Ministerial response

The Clerk: The following response to a petition has been lodged by a minister:

By **Mr Corbell**, Minister for Police and Emergency Services, dated 21 July 2014, in response to a petition lodged by Mrs Jones on 3 June 2014, concerning tyre slashing in Narrabundah and Griffith.

The terms of the response will be recorded in *Hansard*.

Crime—car tyre slashing—petition No 10-14

The response read as follows:

ACT Policing has dedicated significant resources and undertaken specific operations in response to reports of vehicle tyre damage in the Narrabundah and Griffith areas.

Recently a 68 year old male was apprehended by ACT Policing, following a lengthy police operation and investigation into vehicle tyre damage in the suburbs of Narrabundah and Griffith. It is anticipated the male will be summonsed to appear before the ACT Magistrate's Court in relation to a specific

incident of vehicle tyre damage, however ACT Policing is still investigating all historical instances of vehicle tyre damage, specifically in Narrabundah and Griffith.

ACT Policing is committed to creating a safer, more secure community in Canberra. With any form of criminal behaviour and activity in Canberra, ACT Policing relies on information from the public to assist in investigating instances of crime. I would urge any ACT resident with any further information in relation to vehicle tyre damage, to contact Crime Stoppers on 1800 333 000 or online at www.crimestoppers.com.au. Information can be provided anonymously.

Environment—Lake Tuggeranong—petitions Nos 11-14 and 14-14

MS LAWDER (Brindabella), by leave: For as long as I can remember, we have had problems with the water quality in Lake Tuggeranong, problems with the lake's closure and the blue-green algae; it is all too familiar for Tuggeranong residents. For years the residents of Tuggeranong, who would like to be able to enjoy the amenity of their lake, have not been able to do so.

Today I would like to speak to this petition which has over 3,000 signatures—signatures that show how much these issues matter to the residents of Tuggeranong and to the wider Canberra community. It is not just people who live nearby. It is people who work in the town centre, go to school near the lake or just enjoy using the lake. Over 3,000 people are calling on the government to address this issue now. This was a promise at the last election and it makes up part of the Labor agreement with the Greens. But every man and his dog who would also like to walk around the lake can see and smell that action has not yet been taken. Over 3,000 people want this government to go ahead with what they have already promised. The Labor-Greens agreement states, at item 3.11(a):

Construction of four new wetlands to improve water quality at Tuggeranong (2), Yarralumla and Ginninderra by June 2016 ...

The agreement does not say “work on a proposal by 2016”, “start in 2016”, or “continue with monitoring”, as that has already been going on for years. The agreement refers to the construction of two wetlands in Tuggeranong by 2016. It is now August 2014 and nothing has been started in Tuggeranong except more monitoring.

The petition, which has been driven by the Tuggeranong lake carers group, calls on the government to take immediate action to clean up Lake Tuggeranong and fulfil their election promise to build wetlands in the Tuggeranong valley, which will help to improve the quality of water flowing into the lake. There are two parts to this: the immediate action of cleaning up the lake; and the long-term solution of creating wetlands. And they need to start now.

As a member for Brindabella and a resident of Tuggeranong for the last 26 years, I understand the need for action in this area, and I am happy to stand with and for the residents of Tuggeranong who are petitioning our Assembly today.

If you look back at this issue 10 or 20 years ago, you can see that not a lot has changed. For example, on 5 March 1994 a *Canberra Times* article said, “Warning

over algae.” A few weeks later there was a letter to the editor written by a 13-year-old student in which the student described the lake by saying, “I think it stinks.” That was in 1994. Twenty years later, where are we?

If these articles were posted in today’s paper, no-one would think twice, because we have seen this headline so often that we are almost immune to it, and that is very sad. We have the same issue now as we had then. We have headlines like, “Tuggeranong groups cry foul over stench coming from their lake.” We have community council newsletters entitled, “Our blooming sick Lake Tuggeranong.” It is an issue close to Tuggeranong residents, community groups and businesses in the town centre, and it is an issue we need to address now. One water scientist made it clear when he stated:

Canberra’s network of concrete channels carrying stormwater to the city’s lakes are a planning tragedy, largely responsible for growing summer stench along the foreshores.

Wetlands could help to address this issue and alleviate this problem. They would filter the water which runs into our lake and ensure that the water quality is drastically improved, and our residents know that. For the Tuggeranong town centre, the lake should be the centrepiece of the area where people can enjoy the parks and the grass, spaces for exercise and picnics, a place where students from Lake Tuggeranong College can take part in their studies without getting headaches from the stink. It should be a beautiful and peaceful place.

The residents of Tuggeranong that I speak to every day do not understand why we are happy to throw away millions of dollars on a train set, but when it comes to our lakes and waterways we pass the buck and blame the federal government for not giving us the funding. I support this petition today, and I encourage the government to do the same.

MR CORBELL (Molonglo—Attorney-General, Minister for Police and Emergency Services, Minister for the Environment and Minister for Capital Metro), by leave: I welcome this petition from Ms Lawder this morning. It confirms the government’s strong commitment to deliver effective funding to address water quality issues in subcatchments across the ACT. This Labor government has made a priority of the delivery of funding and a comprehensive program of works to improve water quality in subcatchments across the ACT.

The government has been successful in receiving funding of \$85 million—the largest ever funding commitment made to a city to deliver improvements in water quality across Australia. That is the level of success this government has achieved to date across both sides of the political divide—from the previous federal Labor government and from the current federal coalition government—by way of a commitment to deliver that funding. This has been recognised by water quality experts locally and nationally as one of the most significant steps forward to improve water quality in an urban catchment like the ACT.

Canberra is the largest urban area in the Murray-Darling Basin, and we are now working as a government with our commonwealth counterparts to enact the programs

that will flow from this significant funding commitment. The commonwealth has set out clearly the terms of its support for that funding. In particular, the commonwealth has set out the importance of having a rigorous and robust evidence base to inform infrastructure works on the ground in terms of their location and the appropriate treatments that should be put in place to ensure that water quality in subcatchments right across the ACT—whether it is Tuggeranong, whether it is Yarralumla Creek catchment in Woden, whether it is the west Belconnen area around the proposed Riverview development, or whether it is the upper Molonglo above Lake Burley Griffin and into New South Wales.

They have said to the territory very clearly, “Gather and deliver the evidence base to inform and justify infrastructure expenditure.” And that is exactly what the ACT is now doing. We are working closely with community-based organisations, with waterwatch groups, with local community groups, to build and deliver that evidence base that the commonwealth seek.

The ACT is also putting its own money on the table. We have funding matching obligations as part of this agreement, and we propose to make sure that those are met through our own budgets. So we are determined to put this infrastructure on the ground as soon as possible. I have said that repeatedly when asked about this, whether it is in the Tuggeranong community or in other communities across the city.

There is no quick fix to the water quality issues that our city faces, but we have taken a significant step forward with this funding commitment, and we are determined to make sure it is delivered as soon as possible. If it is possible to bring forward that funding and works on the ground ahead of the time frame set out in the commonwealth agreement, we will seek to do that and we will work vigorously and proactively with the commonwealth on that matter. But these are the conditions set out by the commonwealth, set out by Senator Birmingham, as the parliamentary secretary to Minister Hunt. He is very clear about the commonwealth’s expectations in this area. We are determined to work with the commonwealth for the delivery of this very significant funding agreement.

So that is our commitment. I think all members understand that. We are going to work very proactively and very closely with communities across all the subcatchments to address and respond to these water quality issues in a very timely and effective way and in a way that delivers real, meaningful, long-term results for better water quality in our subcatchments across the city.

Asbestos—loose-fill insulation

Ministerial statement

MS GALLAGHER (Molonglo—Chief Minister, Minister for Health, Minister for Higher Education and Minister for Regional Development) (10.28), by leave: Madam Speaker, I thank you and other members for their indulgence this morning. I rise to update the Assembly on the government’s response to the needs of more than 1,000 families across our community whose homes are known to be affected by Mr Fluffy loose-fill asbestos insulation and those of the many more who have lived in affected homes since the 1960s.

Members would be aware that asbestos-containing materials were routinely used in the construction of Canberra homes before 1990 and are commonly found in areas including eaves, roofs, wet areas, fences and pipe lagging. However, there is a subset of Canberra homes that are additionally affected by a particularly dangerous form of asbestos—pure, raw asbestos pumped into roof spaces between 1968 and 1979 as insulation by a firm known as Mr Fluffy.

The enduring legacy of this activity, which took place while the commonwealth government was responsible for Canberra, and the ultimately unsuccessful attempt at remediation under the removal program in the late 1980s and early 1990s presents a continuing threat to affected families and a complex challenge for the ACT and commonwealth governments to solve. The ACT government has acted to tackle these legacy issues and is committed to providing an enduring solution. We need to fix this once and for all.

There is nowhere else in Australia that is experiencing the effects of loose-fill asbestos insulation in such a large number of homes as is the case in the ACT. We know of a handful of homes in neighbouring New South Wales, and there is also, we understand, a limited number of similar cases in the United Kingdom.

The pressing need to deal with the legacy of Mr Fluffy's asbestos led the government to establish the asbestos response task force on 25 June this year. The task force reports to me in my capacity as Chief Minister and is led by Mr Andrew Kefford who was, until this appointment as coordinator-general, the Commissioner for Public Administration.

The task force was established to provide a coordinated and compassionate response to the needs of affected families and is focused on three key streams of work: responding to the needs of families, some of whom have only found out recently that they are living in a home affected by loose-fill asbestos insulation, by administering the government's financial assistance package; building an information base to share with affected families and the broader Canberra community; and preparing advice on a sustainable and practical long-term solution to the continuing threat posed by the presence of loose-fill asbestos insulation in homes.

In creating the task force, expertise has been drawn together from across the ACT public service, including staff with experience in managing the impacts of asbestos in the community, staff who understand our planning system and can guide assessments and building and remediation works, and staff with hands-on experience supporting the community through times of crisis.

Since the task force was set up, a register of more than 2,000 current and former home owners, tenants, tradespeople, real estate and other professionals and the broader community has been established. This register is enabling the task force to develop a better understanding of the individual circumstances of the affected families and allowing it to provide tailored advice and assistance. Current home owners and tenants who have registered with the task force are being assisted with arranging asbestos assessments for affected homes, understanding the ramifications of asbestos assessments, organising remediation work, accessing the government's assistance package and liaising with other government agencies and industry.

I take this opportunity to acknowledge the outstanding work of all members of the task force. There have been many late nights and weekends worked in order to get the information and financial support flowing to those affected. The task force is the front line in our response, and they have responded with absolute commitment and professionalism to the needs and hardship of those affected by Mr Fluffy asbestos.

These statistics give members an idea of the assistance being provided by the task force and are current as of last Friday, 1 August 2014: 1,800 people have registered with the task force, more than 400 homes have been assessed, 27 families have been displaced, approximately 80 assistance payments have been made to a total value of \$140,000 dollars but many, many more are in train, and 850 registered post receipts have been returned and the task force is now working to reach the remaining owners who have not yet registered.

In addition to the practical support and advice the task force is providing affected families, the ACT government has agreed to the emergency support package for those who were forced to leave their homes following advice from the asbestos assessor. The emergency support package is a grant of up to \$10,000 per household for those people advised by an asbestos assessor to leave their home. The package cap is increased by \$2,000 for each dependent child residing in the home.

The purpose of these funds is to cover the cost of emergency accommodation and other necessities such as food and clothing, as well as immediate remediation work. Assistance payments are already flowing—I just updated the Assembly with the value of \$140,000 dollars so far—but with much more expected. I really hope this assistance is providing these families with financial support during this period of financial hardship.

For those people who have left their homes on the advice of an assessor, the ACT government is also deferring rates for the period of time the owners have to vacate. For householders still residing in the houses but who, following the advice of an asbestos assessment, have been required to destroy contaminated items such as clothes and soft furnishings, \$1,000 dollars is available.

In addition to the practical impacts on affected families, the government is very conscious of the health impacts, both physical and emotional. While many people may adapt to this initial emotional distress and manage it with the support of family and friends, there are times when extra help and support is needed. That is why the task force has been working closely with the Chief Health Officer, the ACT Medicare Local, and ACT Health to ensure that people are provided with up-to-date information about health risks and how to access appropriate support services.

Members will be aware that as part of our initial response I announced a partnership between the ACT government and the Medicare Local to ensure that there are no out-of-pocket expenses for affected families accessing psychological and emotional support. This support includes access to the new access program to offer support from trained coaches for those experiencing mild anxiety or depression and access to the healthy mind program through family doctors, with any gap fee for the GP visit reimbursed to those registered with the task force.

It is worth noting that there is no specific research available that addresses the health impacts of loose-fill asbestos insulation in homes on the health of residents. This is why ACT Health is looking into ACT-specific data to try and understand more about the links between affected homes and asbestos-related disease with the intention that this will flow into a formal academic study.

In addition, the task force, in conjunction with ACT Health, has also responded to requests from the community for an opportunity to discuss health issues relating to asbestos and have recently completed two health information forums, one on the south side and last Sunday on the north side of the city. These forums, each attended by hundreds of Canberrans, have included presentations from the ACT Chief Health Officer, respiratory, paediatric and mental health experts and the head of the task force.

My discussions with a number of affected families and individuals have demonstrated just how unique each person's story is. There is no single answer or simple response that will suit everyone's particular circumstance. One issue that has been raised with me as a significant concern for families, though, is ways to support children during uncertain and changing circumstances such as this. We know that children, like adults, will experience a range of emotions and behaviours and that they can tune very quickly into parental distress and worry.

To support the children in affected households, the task force and ACT Health have been working closely with the Education and Training Directorate to ensure that all schools are aware of what is going on and make sure that access to school counsellors is made available if appropriate.

The government is committed to providing long-term support to families whose homes are affected by loose-fill asbestos insulation. As an extension of this commitment, the community and expert reference group is being formed. This follows the valuable contribution an equivalent group made to the work of the bushfire task force in 2003. We will be announcing the appointments of the chair person and the membership of the community and expert reference group very shortly. This group will provide advocacy on behalf of the community to the task force. It will include representatives of home owners and tenants, technical experts, and relevant industry and union groups.

Members will also be aware that Senator Eric Abetz has been delegated by the Prime Minister to lead the commonwealth government's response to the enduring threat posed by the presence of loose-fill asbestos insulation in Canberra homes. The discussions with Senator Abetz to date have been very constructive, and I have been given a commitment that the federal government will work with the ACT government to respond to the issue of Mr Fluffy within the ACT community.

I am pleased to inform the Assembly today that since the initial meeting there have been a number of official level meetings which have also been positive. The asbestos response task force has received significant assistance from commonwealth agencies in preparing technical advice on the long-term management of affected homes, and I am particularly pleased that Safe Work Australia has agreed to second a senior official to the task force to support this work.

Another tangible outcome that has come out of the cooperation is that Canberrans can now easily and specifically register any potential exposure they may have had to loose-fill asbestos through the National Asbestos Exposure Register. The register, managed by the commonwealth's Asbestos Safety Response and Eradication Agency, records details of people who think they may have been exposed to materials containing asbestos. Previously this register only listed fields to report general exposure to asbestos in the home or the workplace.

I also welcome the engagement of the New South Wales government. I have written to both former Premier O'Farrell and Premier Baird and discussed the issue with Minister Dom Perrottet by phone. We have seen a growing engagement between respective officials and the ACT government, and my commitment to Minister Perrottet was the willingness to share our knowledge with New South Wales counterparts.

Similarly, we are working with Queanbeyan and other affected councils to assist them in their responses. I have written to all SEROC mayors explaining the situation in the ACT and again providing information and access to the task force for our regional neighbours. Through the task force the government is sharing information with these other jurisdictions in the hope that we can lead a solution for all people affected by Mr Fluffy, regardless of where they live.

I have said publicly on a number of occasions that I want this issue to be resolved once and for all. I do not want a future government to be in the position we are in today—wishing the problem had been fixed in the way we wish the original remediation program designed by the commonwealth had fixed it in 1989. Since the task force was established in June, the priority has been making contact with current residents of affected homes, delivering the ACT government's emergency support package and arranging asbestos assessments on affected homes.

The task force has also been engaging with experts nationally and internationally to provide advice to the ACT government on long-term strategies to render affected homes safe. I expect to receive this advice soon and will use it as the basis of further discussions with the commonwealth. The ACT government will be guided by this expert advice as well as the evidence we are currently gathering about levels of contamination by loose-fill asbestos of the living areas of affected homes.

Madam Speaker, I take this opportunity to acknowledge the bipartisan support we have received in pursuing a lasting solution to Mr Fluffy's legacy. I welcome the opportunity to work with the Leader of the Opposition, Mr Hanson, in a very genuine way to make sure we are addressing the needs of the home owners affected by Mr Fluffy and I appreciate very much his support. Also, I refer to the leadership of Minister Corbell for raising the issue within cabinet and for making sure that, as our state of knowledge has grown, the government's response has grown commensurately with that information.

I welcome and acknowledge the intervention of all ACT federal parliamentarians on behalf of the people of the ACT. I look forward to continuing to work with

Mr Hanson, Senators Lundy and Seselja, Ms Brodtmann and Dr Leigh to present a united front in calling on the commonwealth to continue to assist us to fix this problem once and for all.

I also acknowledge the dedication and advocacy on behalf of the affected families by Ms Brianna Heseltine—who joins with us today along with many other home owners—the convener of the Fluffy Owners and Residents Action Group and to the many, many brave families who have publicly shared their own stories.

To all the families whose homes are affected by loose-fill asbestos insulation, I am acutely aware of the distress and the upheaval this issue has created. I want each person to know that the ACT government is listening; we are working to provide short-term assistance and we are committed to providing an enduring solution.

In 2014 it is very clear that the commonwealth designed program which attempted the original removal of Mr Fluffy asbestos did not work as it was intended. Twenty years on, some families have pure, raw asbestos fibres inside their homes, in their linen presses, in their wardrobes, on their fridges, in their heating ducts, on their pillows and carpets and even on their children's teddy bears. We cannot get this wrong again, and it is time for the ACT government and the commonwealth government to join forces to provide an enduring solution to this problem.

I thank members for the opportunity to provide this update this morning. I look forward to providing more information for the Assembly as it comes to hand, and I present the following paper:

Loose-fill asbestos insulation—Ministerial statement, 5 August 2014.

I move:

That the Assembly takes note of the paper.

MR HANSON (Molonglo—Leader of the Opposition) (10.43): Thank you, Chief Minister, for the update on the progress so far. I would like to welcome to the Assembly the members of the community who are experiencing this human tragedy and are here today to hear the update from the Chief Minister.

This issue has been compared to a natural disaster, and in many ways it is comparable. I welcome the fact that all members here in this Assembly are working together to make sure that there is a long-term solution, a permanent solution, to this issue, which has been plaguing this community for so long. I welcome the fact that we are working together and also that we are working with our federal colleagues, both the Canberra representatives in federal parliament and Senator Abetz. The Chief Minister has had meetings with Senator Abetz; I have also spoken to him and have written to him to express my view that the federal government needs to take a substantive role and responsibility in providing a permanent solution for the affected families dealing with Mr Fluffy issues.

I think all of us can put ourselves in the shoes of those who have been affected. Many of us own homes from a similar era; many of us know personally members of our

community who have been affected. I think that is why this is an issue that has garnered the support of just about everybody in the community: essentially, we can put ourselves in your shoes and understand the effect on your lives emotionally, the concerns you have financially and your concerns for not only your health but the health of your family.

We look forward to working cooperatively with the ACT government, as we have so far. That does not mean it is a blank cheque. We do have a responsibility as the opposition to make sure that the government is doing all that it can. I would express that we have done that so far. I would like to welcome the role that Mr Smyth played in the early stages in dealing with this issue. The opposition came out and called on the government to provide an assistance package of \$5 million, and I recognise that the government shortly followed that by doing so. The opposition called for all of the affected families and home owners to be advised by registered mail, and I acknowledge that that happened shortly afterwards.

I also note that as this moves forward there are going to be issues. There are going to be lapses in communication. We want to make sure that the task force is doing everything it can. We will make sure that, where we can, we are identifying the gaps in what is being provided and bringing those to the attention of the government. I foreshadow that in the Assembly on Wednesday I will be moving a motion to that effect. It will be calling on the government to make sure that the task force is adequately resourced to provide the response that it needs to provide, to report to the Assembly quarterly on progress with regard to Mr Fluffy, and to continue to support the bipartisan solution to provide compassionate support for affected home owners.

This is a human tragedy, Madam Speaker. I am proud of the fact that this Assembly has responded. It could probably have been done sooner, and I know that those that are affected have been frustrated by some of the delays in the response. But now I look forward to working cooperatively with the government to make sure that we provide the response that home owners need and deserve.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Petitions

Environment—Lake Tuggeranong—petitions Nos 11-14 and 14-14

MR RATTENBURY (Molonglo), by leave: I welcome the fact that Ms Lawder has brought the petition forward today, and once again highlighted the issue of water quality in our lakes around Canberra, particularly Lake Tuggeranong.

Members who were here in the last term will recall my ongoing interest in this matter and the fact that in 2011 we agreed in this place to have the commissioner for the environment conduct a full inquiry into the state of our lakes. The commissioner's report was an excellent contribution to the discussion, because it drew together all of the science and various expert opinions around the place. Until that point there had been some conflict, but he drew together a very clear picture of what needed to be done.

What was unfortunate about Ms Lawder's contribution this morning was the casual rewriting of history around the way this issue has played out and the way that she sought to make it a partisan issue in a way that it has not been thus far. That did little service to either herself or the issue. I do not recall the Liberal Party actually taking a policy to the 2012 election on Lake Tuggeranong. I would be happy to stand corrected, but I certainly do not recall seeing it. There was a policy that I took to the election on behalf of the Greens—I announced it in July or August 2012—where we recommended that we seek \$85 million in available funding from the commonwealth. I was pilloried by both the Labor and Liberal party spokespeople on that issue, along the lines that it was not possible, it could not be done et cetera.

I think it is a bit rich to come in here today and seek to rewrite history in a way that does not reflect the true position. The bottom line, and this is what we should focus on, is that, fortunately, as history shows, opinion has changed on that. The commonwealth did come on board. They did in fact liberate the funds, and they have made them available to the ACT. I welcome the fact that that has taken place. That is a strong partnership between the ACT government and the federal government. I, too, am a little frustrated that the commonwealth has imposed some conditions around that available funding, requiring two years of water quality testing before further funds will be released for infrastructure work.

The Canberra Liberals did not take a policy to the 2012 election. If they had formed government at that time, they would not have even had a policy to address Lake Tuggeranong. So let us not get in here and start trying to say, "You guys are doing a terrible job of it." The reality is that this issue is on the agenda because the Greens took a substantive policy to the 2012 election. The Labor Party supported those initiatives, and I thank Minister Corbell for his support.

We are getting on with the job. This is going to take some time. The problems in our lakes have been building up for decades. The commissioner for the environment's report has identified the fact that there are high nutrient loadings in the lake that are now driving the regular algal blooms that we are seeing. They have accumulated over a substantial period of time, so it is going to take a while to reverse it. But certainly we can now start putting initiatives in place. There is not just one initiative; there is no silver bullet on this. It is going to take a range of measures, including the wetlands.

I ask for a little more integrity in the discussion around this issue. I assure the community and those that have signed the petition that I stand with them in wanting the water quality of our lakes improved and will continue to work to make sure that the projects that are needed to start to turn around the problem we have got are delivered.

Disability services—early intervention—petitions Nos 9-14 and 13-14

MR WALL (Brindabella), by leave: In the interests of brevity, Madam Speaker, let me say that the petition that was presented this morning here has the signatures of some 1,993 Canberrans who are again expressing their concern and their desire for early intervention services for children with a disability to be maintained in the ACT

beyond the end of 2014. The petition had many more signatures than the 1,993 mentioned by the Clerk this morning. However, many of them are those of residents outside the ACT who rely on the services provided in the territory for children with a disability.

Again, this is a public call by these families that currently access these services or are looking to access these services next year—to have them maintained to ensure that there is a continuum for their children to receive appropriate early intervention services to give their kids the best start in life.

I look forward to hearing the response from the minister in the coming weeks or months. I hope that once and for all she finally listens to the calls of Canberra families to maintain these services.

Amendments to the Electoral Act 1992—Select Committee Report

MADAM SPEAKER: Pursuant to order, and as the committee circulated its report on 30 June 2014, I present the following report:

Amendments to the *Electoral Act 1992*—Select Committee—Report—*Voting Matters*, dated 30 June 2014, incorporating a dissenting report (*Mr Rattenbury*), together with a copy of the relevant minutes of proceedings.

Just to clarify for members, I am presenting this report because the chair of the committee is now a member of the executive.

MR GENTLEMAN (Brindabella—Minister for Planning, Minister for Community Services, Minister for Workplace Safety and Industrial Relations, Minister for Children and Young People and Minister for Ageing) (10.54), by leave: I move:

That the report be noted.

The committee, established by the Assembly on 20 March this year to consider a wide range of electoral issues, comprised me, Mr Coe and Mr Rattenbury. In accordance with the terms of reference, the report was released on 30 June this year. On all but two of the report's 18 recommendations, the committee was in agreement. I thank Mr Coe and Mr Rattenbury for their input.

In 2012 the Assembly passed major reforms to the Electoral Act concerning campaign financing. Transparency in political donations and limits on campaign expenditure are essential to ensuring that our political system is free from undue influence, both actual and perceived, and that a level playing field between electoral contestants is promoted. At the same time, voters must not be prevented from getting the information they need to make an informed choice, or from advocating on issues that are concerning to them.

The ACT Electoral Commissioner's report on the 2012 ACT election and the committee's consideration of the issues indicate that the 2012 reforms are generally working well, even if some adjustments are needed two years down the track. Some

technical amendments are required to finetune the legislation, and these are set out in the committee's report. There are also some bigger issues for members' further consideration.

One matter the committee was asked to consider was how the High Court's decision in *Unions NSW versus New South Wales* affected the ACT. The High Court found in December 2013 that two New South Wales provisions regulating election finances impermissibly burdened the implied freedom of political communication. Following the court's reasoning, it seems clear that the ACT legislative provision that prevents anyone other than an ACT voter from making a donation to an ACT election campaign cannot stand. The committee has recommended the repeal of that provision.

As in New South Wales, the ACT legislation contains provisions that aggregate expenditure by different entities for the purpose of calculating a cap on campaign spending. The committee heard evidence from the ACT Electoral Commission and two experts in constitutional law suggesting that the ACT provisions, being more narrowly drafted than those found invalid in New South Wales, may well be considered to meet the High Court's test—that is, they would be found to be reasonably appropriate and adapted to the legitimate purposes of preventing corruption and facilitating a level playing field in electoral contests. Accordingly, the committee has not recommended any change to these aggregated expenditure provisions.

The committee did consider that if the number of members is increased to 25, as proposed in the bills that the Attorney-General presented to the Assembly on 5 June, some changes are necessary to ensure that campaign expenditure does not massively increase as a result. The majority of the committee recommended a reduction from the current limit of \$62,530 per candidate, to a maximum of 17 candidates, to \$40,000 per candidate, to a maximum of 25 candidates. Mr Rattenbury supported a reduction in overall campaign expenditure, but has a different view on how that should be achieved. The committee agreed that third parties who have an interest in how the ACT is governed should not be unnecessarily constrained from advocating on political issues. Accordingly, we did not recommend reducing the cap on their expenditure.

Equally important to regulation of electoral finances is the source of campaign funds. The committee considered, but did not support, full public funding for election campaigns at this stage, noting that this issue is being examined in New South Wales. However, to reduce the possibility of undue influence through large donations and to prevent the perception of corruption, the majority of the committee considered that the amount of public funding currently available to those who achieve at least four per cent of first preference votes in an electorate should increase to \$8 per eligible vote. The committee also recommended that the Assembly debate the merits of the current \$10,000 limit on donations from a single source in a financial year.

In other proposed changes to the rules on donations, the committee recommended resolving anomalies in the Electoral Act by removing references to small anonymous gifts worth up to \$250. If adopted, this will mean that any anonymous gift—that is, one where the donor is unknown to the recipient—worth \$1,000 or more must be

publicly declared. Individual anonymous gifts worth less than that amount will not need to be declared, but the \$25,000 limit on anonymous gifts from all sources in a year will continue to apply.

The committee has suggested that two trends in ACT elections should continue to be monitored: the growing trend to pre-poll voting chosen by one in four voters in the 2012 election, much of it occurring in the few days prior to election day, and the lower level of voter turnout in ACT elections compared with federal elections and elections elsewhere in Australia.

The committee was concerned about the growing proportion of enrolled voters who choose to pay a \$20 penalty rather than casting their vote. Voting is both a privilege and a responsibility, and the committee has recommended that the penalty be doubled. It has not increased in 20 years and is amongst the lowest penalties across Australia. It is time for adjustment to reflect the importance of this civic duty.

The committee has not made any recommendation about the size of the Assembly, noting that the expert reference group established by the Chief Minister in late 2012 examined that issue thoroughly and that there are bills currently before the Assembly reflecting its recommendations.

The committee did hear evidence of opinion on the preferred size and location of ACT electorates, including some views that electorate boundaries should reflect geographical districts. However, I note that the opinion of one vote, one value is fundamental to the Hare-Clark system. Electorates must be of equal size to ensure that the quota needed for election is the same in each electorate. Determining the specific electoral boundaries is in the hands of the augmented ACT Electoral Commission, who must have regard to various matters set out in the legislation and must undertake public consultation. That is the appropriate process.

Another matter on which the committee heard concerns was the 100-metre limit on canvassing around polling places, including complaints about disruption and even danger to voters during the 2012 election. The committee considered that disruption to voters as they approach a polling place should be minimised. Rather than banning canvassing on polling day, as some other jurisdictions have, the committee has recommended that the limit be increased to 250 metres.

The committee had only a few short months to conduct its inquiry into a wide range of electoral issues, and we received submissions right until the last few days before finalising the report. The Assembly will have the opportunity to consider some of the later recommendations made by the ACT Electoral Commission in its proposed report to the Assembly later this year, as well as the issues the committee has drawn to the Assembly's attention as meriting further examination.

The committee thanks all who participated in the inquiry for their contributions. I commend the motion to the Assembly.

MR COE (Ginninderra) (11.02): I too want to add my thanks to the committee secretariat for their work towards the compilation of this report. I particularly want to

extend my thanks to Ms Gell, who has done a superb job. She was very diligent and very thorough and she made very thoughtful contributions to the committee. I very much extend my thanks to her but also to Mr Snedden for his contribution until early April.

This inquiry was a rare opportunity to discuss some issues which are often very political and very partisan. I think the attitude that each member brought to the discussion was one of maturity and one of professionalism. I also want to thank Mr Gentleman and Mr Rattenbury for their contributions and for the manner in which they approached this committee inquiry.

Mr Gentleman has given a very thorough rundown of the report's recommendations. I do not propose to go through the recommendations and reiterate what Mr Gentleman has already said. However, I do want to say that this series of recommendations is simply advice for the Assembly to consider. There will be a detailed discussion that will need to take place both in this chamber and perhaps outside this chamber to get to a position that can, in fact, be turned into legislation. It is going to take courage and it is going to take confidence to enact some of these recommendations that have been put in place in this committee report. However, I do not think we should be shying away from the tough decisions that will need to be made to ensure the democratic processes that are in place here in the territory.

The issue of public funding is always tricky and always controversial. There is no easy way to implement such a scheme, but what this recommendation tries to do is to make the ACT democratic process as clean as possible. We are trying to avoid a situation which has happened in other jurisdictions. We are trying to avoid a situation where parties or votes are for purchase. We want to make sure that the ACT continues to be clean. We have been clean, but we should not be complacent about what could happen in the future.

It is for that reason that the recommendation that we increase public funding through the dollar-per-vote mechanism is probably the cleanest way to implement such a public funding scheme. However, there is no doubt that we need to have further discussions and use these recommendations as food for thought as we go to the final stage of drafting legislation to be in place for the 2016 election.

In conclusion, I would like to once again thank my colleagues for the approach that they took to this committee inquiry. I hope that all members of the Assembly will take this opportunity to review the recommendations and the issues and consider how we can put in place a better regime for the 2016 election.

MR RATTENBURY (Molonglo) (11.06): I too would like to take this opportunity to make a few remarks on the committee's report. I too would like to thank my colleagues on the committee—Mr Gentleman and Mr Coe. We had a very interesting time on this committee, actually. I think it is one for people who are into electoral matters. It was an interesting committee to be on. It probably was not everybody's cup of tea, but we did have some good discussions. I think we worked through the issues very well. Whilst I ended up drawing different conclusions on a couple of matters, nonetheless, the spirit of the discussion was very good and even when we had different views I think we had good discussions.

I would also like to thank the committee secretary, Louise Gell, in particular. It was a complex inquiry and there were some complex issues there. She did a very good job of keeping us on track and keeping track of the discussions, even seeking out additional information at times to assist the committee in what was a reasonably tight time frame for getting the report done. Overall, as my dissenting report notes at the end, I actually agreed with the bulk of the recommendations. Mr Gentleman has given a good summary of those. Mr Coe has added some comments. I do not propose to reflect any further on those other than to give them my endorsement.

The area where I did have some different views was around issues of campaign finance and funding. I feel that the committee could have gone further in ensuring that a stronger level of integrity was built into the electoral reform system. The issue of campaign finance reform, in my view, needs to be addressed in a holistic way to ensure the right levers are being used to achieve the desired outcome. I think there are three key levers available in that context: the campaign expenditure cap, donation caps and public funding of elections.

Mr Gentleman spoke of campaign expenditure caps. There was some adjustment, with the increased number of candidates we will see at the election, to bring the cap down to \$40,000 per candidate and, therefore, produce an overall cap of \$1 million. I certainly support the cumulative party cap for parties. I think that is the right approach, but I do think that there is scope to reduce the expenditure cap further here in the ACT.

I submitted that a cap on party campaigning should be in the order of \$500,000, perhaps higher. I know there was a higher view. Perhaps we could have found a middle ground there somewhere. I think that to place a cumulative cap on it takes away the need to seek out funding to run expensive election campaigns and puts a stronger emphasis on simply getting out and communicating with voters. That is one where I would have made a different recommendation.

Attached to that is the cap on donations. The ACT currently has a donations cap of \$10,000 and a restriction that these donations can only be made by people enrolled to vote on the ACT electoral roll. There are issues, of course, arising from the Unions New South Wales case in New South Wales. I think that matter was dealt with in the committee's report in a consensus way. The committee did, however, consider reviewing the cap on donations. I think there was a sense that that might be a cap that could increase. I have put a recommendation that the cap on donations should be reduced from \$10,000 to \$5,000. I think it is quite appropriate that we limit the amount of influence that one individual donation can have and that having a lower limit is an effective way to do that.

The third area of those three key levers that I spoke of is the public funding of elections. The majority of the committee put a view that that should be increased to \$8. Of course, the Greens have long had a view that there should be public funding for elections. I think that the Unions New South Wales case has put an interesting interpretation on that. The High Court—and the committee reflected on this to some extent—has made 100 per cent public funding perhaps not legally possible. That is certainly the way that I understood the Unions New South Wales case.

However, I think that the proposal to increase the current \$2 per vote to \$8 per vote is too much of an increase. In the Greens' view, these three key levers need to work together to ensure a suitable outcome. I think that if we were to reduce campaign expenditure caps further this would limit the need for the parties to seek large amounts of money and limit the necessity of a large increase in the amount of public funding of elections.

The proposal will see an increase of around \$400,000 currently in public funding spread across the parties to around \$1.6 million. If we had lower expenditure caps and a suitable limit on donation caps, I would have been in a position to perhaps support a more modest increase in the level of public funding for elections. My views are elaborated further in the dissenting report.

There are a couple of other minor areas that I draw attention to regarding administrative funding. Administrative funding is currently paid to parties and non-party MLAs to cover the costs of administering the reporting requirements for political expenditure. This was brought in in 2012 as part of the reforms that were done in the last Assembly to enable parties to essentially cover the accounting and bookkeeping administration costs associated with the significant reporting requirements contained in those reforms. It is specifically not to be used for funding of elections.

Currently, the payment made to each MLA is \$20,000 per annum and that is indexed. With the proposed 25-member Assembly, this will potentially see a significant increase in funding available to each party, particularly where a party has 10 members, which is plausible under the electoral system that is going to be discussed later today. I think we need to think about how much money a party needs to simply employ a bookkeeper and an accountant. Whether you have six, seven or eight MLAs or whether you have 10 or 12, there is not a lot of incremental increase in the work once the systems are set up and the arrangements are in place.

Therefore, I put forward a proposal that administrative funding for parties be capped at that for five MLAs once the party has five or more eligible MLAs in the Assembly. This would mean that parties would receive in the order of \$100,000—a bit more as the indexation increases—and I think this is an adequate sum. If we end up with a situation where a party has 10 or 12 members in the next Assembly, I do not think that \$200,000 to \$250,000 is necessary for bookkeeping and accounting costs; I think it is a windfall gain. The Assembly should reject that recommendation. I would encourage the Assembly to consider a cap on this expenditure so that we keep it at a reasonable sum to reflect the true costs that are required of the parties to meet these obligations.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Estimates 2014-2015—Select Committee Report

MR SMYTH (Brindabella) (11.15): Pursuant to order, I present the following report:

Estimates 2014-2015—Select Committee—Report—*Appropriation Bill 2014-2015 and Appropriation (Office of the Legislative Assembly) Bill 2014-2015* (3 volumes), dated 5 August 2014, together with a copy of the relevant minutes of proceedings.

I move:

That the report be noted.

I stand today before members as the now retiring chair of the estimates committee to say that the four members of the committee that they appointed have done their job and done it well. I think the members are to be congratulated on the way in which we brought about the report. It was without dissenting. Indeed you will see in the footnotes that there were only one or two areas where the various members disagreed with each other and felt the need to have it recorded. So, in that way, it is a success.

This is a very important report. Through the budget the government sets its priorities for the year, and it is important that we get a detailed understanding of them. During the 13 days of hearings, which included a recall day, and during which we heard from something like 180 witnesses, we were able to garner a lot of information about the intentions of the government.

I would like to thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker, Ms Porter, the deputy chair, and Ms Berry and Mrs Jones, the other members, for the way in which you carried out the task that the Assembly gave to you. Other members who turned up and who came to ask questions were Dr Bourke, Mr Coe, Mr Doszpot, Mrs Dunne, Mr Hanson, Ms Lawder and Mr Wall, as well as the ministers and the Speaker, particularly with their officials. I think everybody conducted themselves reasonably well. There were a few light moments and there were a few serious moments, but that is to be expected.

I thank particularly Dr Brian Lloyd, the secretary of the committee. As well as his other duties, he landed that one and did very well. I thank each of the specialist clerks of the various standing committees that took care of the areas that they would normally cover—Dr Andrea Cullen, Ms Louise Gell, Dr Brian Lloyd and Mr Andrew Snedden, and particularly Anna, who was there throughout most of it and did a fabulous job making sure that Brian Lloyd was kept on the straight and narrow.

On page (i) you will see that we now have, under the secretariat, the “writers”. It is a substantial report. I say to Andrea, Louise, Greg, Anna, Brian, Andrew and Michael, who did a bit of writing, this is your work and we are very grateful for the assistance. To Matt, Jo and Jenny, thanks for the assistance through the administration. With respect particularly to Rod and his attendants, there was discussion about the important issue of morning and afternoon teas, and we were catered for wonderfully.

It is an important report. The structure contains a running commentary on what was discussed and then we get to a section that has the committee comment. The committee comment has led to 138 recommendations across a variety of issues. But there were three themes that emerged, and, as a consequence of that, we have pulled

together the recommendations on bullying, on Mr Fluffy homes and on capital metro in one section. They appear in the report in the directorates where the recommendations came from, but for the ease of anyone reading the report they will find a section now on each of those.

Other areas that were looked at quite strenuously were everything from debt to the arts, the functions of the committee office and the library here in the Assembly, and particularly health and wellbeing—older Canberrans, suicide, youth mental health issues, the funding of youth centres, violence against women, English as a second language particularly for migrant women, how we close the gap for our Indigenous residents, and things like extra dollars for students with a disability. There was a particularly strong focus looking at the wellbeing of the community, and there were a number of recommendations matching that.

With particular regard to the Mr Fluffy homes, it is a very serious issue, as we saw this morning, and particularly given representations by the community. There are a number of recommendations from the various areas. It was discussed with the Chief Minister, with planning and with IR. So it does have reach over a large area, and the leadership shown by both leaders is welcomed by the committee. But the issue will be ongoing for some time, we suspect. So there are a number of recommendations on how the committee feels the issue should be advanced.

The issue of bullying came up in just about every directorate that appeared before the committee. There are a number of recommendations on page 110, some eight in all, that look at how we address bullying. There are some specialist references to the issue of bullying, sexism and misogyny in the ACT Emergency Services. But the committee has made a number of recommendations that focus on the government undertaking analysis of what the underlying causes of bullying are and how you address it.

We certainly feel that the government could build upon the ACT public service code of conduct and the RED framework that we heard about, and which the committee was impressed with. But let us put in place a comprehensive whole-of-government bullying strategy so that it is not tolerated anywhere and it is addressed at the earliest time. We certainly thought that perhaps the way to address this most effectively was by way of recommendation 69, which states:

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government give consideration to establishing an independent Public Service Commissioner, for whom functions should include (i) developing and providing expertise in dealing with bullying matters; and (ii) centrally tracking, monitoring and reporting on the incidence of bullying in the ACTPS.

It should not be tolerated; it cannot be tolerated and it should be stamped out wherever it is encountered. I believe—and the committee agreed—that there needs to be an independent public service commissioner. You cannot have an individual who is also potentially a dep sec in Chief Minister's. They need to be independent so that people can go to them with confidence. This is not an aspersion on anybody who has had the role or is in the role, but there needs to be somebody who is independent and whose career is not tied up in the ACT public service.

Another big issue that came up in many of the directorates was the issue of capital metro. On page 163 there are five recommendations about capital metro. Indeed it does centre largely on the recommendation that the Assembly should be given the benefit of seeing the cost-benefit analysis and should be given the estimated total cost to the ACT, as well as the delivery model, prior to the signing of the contracts for any construction projects.

It is important that we know what the full cost will be. The government has a provision account with \$1.3 billion, on which there is no detail. The Assembly should not be seen as a rubber stamp, and that is why the committee has made these decisions.

I would draw members' attention to the work done by the adviser to the Assembly. In volume 3 there is the specialist budget adviser's report and supplementary analysis. We have had this now for a number of budgets and it seems to be working well. In this case the committee went back and asked for further analysis. I think it is worth putting on the record the introduction from the economic analysis of capital metro, on page 13, which states:

There is little available evidence to support the economic merit of the Capital Metro, which appears to be more focused on environmental and social objectives. Based on information that is available, light rail in Canberra has a net cost to the ACT of approximately \$235 million relative to a Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) option.

The expected uplift in employment in the transit corridor identified in the business case is difficult to attribute directly to the construction of the light rail if land use policy implemented over the same period increases density in that area.

The expected uplift in land values in the area surrounding the transit corridor is potentially a measure of benefits to users of the land, however counting it as a benefit in addition to decreased journey time and other benefits may lead to double-counting.

Light rail does present a low emissions alternative to cars and would have lower emissions per passenger than a BRT option. However, the total discounted cost of light rail (\$524.1 million) is over double that of BRT (\$248.5 million) and only leads to a small additional benefit over BRT in terms of pollution.

If members have not read it, I would suggest they read the analysis given by the economic adviser. They have done a good job in supporting the committee, and I know that the committee was grateful for that.

Madam Deputy Speaker, as you know, this is a unanimous report of the committee. There are a number of themes that emerge through the recommendations—as I said, particularly looking at health and wellbeing issues of Canberra residents. It is not in any particular order as it comes up in the report. The presentation from Kippax UnitingCare about their emergency financial and material aid program was interesting. There is a recommendation from the committee that that funding be increased immediately from \$315,000 to \$410,000, given the need. The committee recommends a review of the emergency financial and material aid program to ascertain current

funding needs and areas of stress within the program. Gordon made a lovely point when he said that delivering aid is like building a plane while you are flying—it constantly changes. I think we all need to keep in our minds that Kippax UnitingCare do a great job in what they do.

There was, not intentionally, a large focus on the arts that emerged. We had a number of groups appear, particularly the Belconnen Arts Centre. The government talks about having shovel-ready projects. The Belconnen Arts Centre is ready to go. In recommendation 13 the committee recommends that the government fund it as a priority in the current budget and then also funds as a priority the redevelopment of the foreshore to allow the arts centre to reach its full potential.

The committee was unanimous on these issues. Indeed, there is a string of recommendations, from 13 to 20, that look at arts. I refer in particular to recommendation 18, which states:

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government fund and conduct an economic analysis of the value of the arts and cultural sector to the ACT economy ...

That is a very important recommendation.

We looked a lot at the structure of the budget itself. I think the unanimous view of committee members was to bring back budget paper 4, Treasurer. It is far more handy than the plethora of documents which delivered 100 less pages but certainly seemed to use up a whole lot more paper.

In particular, there was a strong focus on debt and on how we make sure we can pay our debt. Recommendations 45 and 46 look at the debt and ask the government to explain it more clearly. Quite clearly, the debt will have an impact on the cost of living, as do new taxation measures. I recommend recommendation 56 to members, which states:

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government either: (a) does not commence the Payroll Tax Amendment Bill until 1 July 2015; or (b) or moves an amendment to grandfather all existing contracts from the new payroll tax regime.

This will have an effect on the lives of people. When we quizzed the Treasurer over it he said it was not the intention that people had pay cuts as a consequence of this tax. Well, they will. Quite clearly, they will. It will affect their cost of living. The government need to reconsider the way they have implemented this. It is inherently unfair to change something when people have already made their arrangements for the coming years, without any warning at all.

The committee recommends that we also look at the debt held by ACTEW. We had discussions about changes that would be made there, and that the Treasurer or the shareholder should inform the Assembly of what happens there.

There are three recommendations, given the announcement last week of the sale of ACTTAB—recommendations 61, 62 and 63. Recommendation 61 is that the sale

process of ACTTAB should be referred to the Auditor-General so that we can review the sale and whether or not everything was taken into account. Recommendation 62 is that we look at the transitional arrangements for employees and the industry post the sale. Recommendation 63 is that we consider options for retraining of any employees who may lose their job. We know that there is a three-month guarantee, but we will see what happens there. The government should hopefully take that on board.

Recommendation 76 goes to having one nature conservation agency, which we still do not have. Apparently, it is the only thing all three parties agree on, but the government has not been able to deliver, so recommendation 76 is very important.

We then go through a phase of a few more arts recommendations—83, 84 and 87. Recommendation 83 talks about the capital area theatre awards, and assistance for them. Recommendation 87 is that, when we are scoping for the new theatre, we might look at the possibility of establishing it as a national performing arts centre.

As I said, there are 138 recommendations. It is, I think, a very balanced report. People worked very hard to make it so, and that is a good thing. I would like to finish, again, by thanking my colleagues, Ms Berry, Ms Porter and Mrs Jones, for their efforts. I think they have all done very well, particularly as for two of them it was their first estimates committee. For Ms Porter and I, it was just another estimates committee notch on the belt. With respect to the staff, through Dr Lloyd and through you, Acting Clerk, please pass on our regards to the staff and our thanks for their efforts. The efforts were great. People took it very seriously and did a very good job.

I would like to end by thanking my staff, Emma and Merlin, for all of their support. As well as doing the standard job that you do as a member, doing estimates is a big ask and it affects the staff, so I thank you. I commend the report to the Assembly.

MRS JONES (Molonglo) (11.30): I rise to add my voice to the comments of those of the committee chair. I was honoured this year to have been appointed to serve on the Select Committee on Estimates 2014-2015, and I thank Mr Smyth for ably chairing the committee, with occasional backup when required. I thank fellow committee members, Ms Porter and Ms Berry, for their contribution to discussions and their courage in asking serious questions of their own government ministers. I also thank the ministers' officials and community representatives who appeared throughout the public hearings and the committee secretariat for making this enormous task possible and smooth.

While estimates was ongoing, the budget was said by a local economist of good standing to be in worse shape than the ACT economy, and I believe that to be a fair assessment. The presentation of the budget is telling, with budget paper 3, the portfolio statement, cut down into a series of smaller books. We have more paper with fewer pages, a larger type font than last year and a few key missing figures. For example, the overall picture of our debt, or the UPS net operating balance, has been split between two numbers in the back of some of the BP3 booklets rather than in the easy-to-find location where it is usually in the first table in BP2.

The committee has reported with 138 recommendations reaching across from the large to the small with each being supported and asking the government to lift their

game in a number of key areas. The cost of living for families across Canberra is again attacked by this government. Some may say they have little sympathy for families who have worked hard to have higher incomes. However, those on the edge of coping under their own steam are most affected by the continued increase in rates and charges.

During the estimates hearings, I asked the Treasurer how a family in Belconnen was meant to cope with this budget. This family is neither wealthy and nor are they on a very low income. They are plugging away under their own steam, trying to keep their heads above the bills and taking responsibility for their long-term housing and other needs. The father of that family is a teacher. They have bought their house, have two children in public schools and have taken out medical and car insurance. They live in a three-bedroom house and mum is, for a time, at home. Today they live, per annum, on minus \$50 a year—and, no, they do not have Foxtel.

There are many families in Belconnen, Gungahlin, Tuggeranong and around Canberra who are earning much less than they are. When I asked Minister Barr how it was fair that those people who, as a part of their mortgage, borrowed to pay their stamp duty and would be paying an increase of 10 per cent per year for the foreseeable future in rates, all the minister could say was that they should get a good union, and I recognise the presence in the gallery of a union. Thank you very much for being here.

However, when Ben Chifley gave his light on the hill address or when the miners of Queensland formed the earliest of Australia's trade unions to improve the health and conditions of workers, I do not think they considered for a moment that the purpose of such unions was to protect union members from the hazards of a Labor government. We really have come full circle when the Treasurer continues to pretend that his actions are not impacting on those who can least afford to pay.

I should not really complain. If the Treasurer keeps this up, by the next election the constituency inversion of the past 30 years will truly be complete and there will be more people voting for us than ever before. They know that we at least respect their hard-earned cash and that we do not consider households to be a never ending ATM for the benefit of easier workloads for government ministers. It is not the role of government to make life easy for government; it is exactly the other way around. This government is showing its greed, and it is a disgrace to its own founding fathers. Families are leaving; families are not coping; and this Treasurer does not care enough to make sure he is aware of it.

I move to another government minister: Minister Rattenbury thought it was a joke or funny when I asked if he had made any calculations about expected increases to the public housing list as a result of the increased cost of rates. It was not a joke and it is not funny that under the weight of taxation some people may be forced to sell their homes and move into rental, putting further pressure on the rental market. The Treasurer has also increased land tax in this budget by 18 per cent. Given that the Treasurer has disappointed a lot of mum and dad investors looking after their own futures and giving us a rental supply by owning rental properties, he will be lucky if the current number of rental properties holds over the coming year.

When more pressure is applied to the rental market, more people have trouble finding rental property and so apply for government housing. Despite my questioning, it seems our level of public housing is an accident of history and there is no rigour that goes into studying and projecting what our supply should be and what the next year or more holds for demand. I recommend that the minister considers what he will do if demand increases.

This budget has been sold as getting jobs on the ground during a time in which there is jobs contraction. Given this rationale, I was shocked to find that stage 2 of the Belconnen Arts Centre, being a shovel-ready project, was not funded. Apparently we need a Northbourne Avenue tram, but the fact that Belconnen has no town hall or such facility for people to meet in and that this project is ready to roll but is unfunded shows up the untruth of the budget sales job.

I am glad to see a recommendation on fenced playgrounds—one for each zone across this city—and the pod playground getting closable small-children-size gates. This may not seem very important to the minister, who perhaps has never had the fortune of breastfeeding a child on a park bench while supervising a running toddler, but it is very important to many mums and carers in our community.

I am really pleased to see a recommendation that the government review the availability for ESL education for women and, in particular, childcare places to be made available, if possible, alongside such courses. There are not enough places with child care, and the result is that many women live in a community that they can barely benefit from because they cannot confidently communicate.

Issues of bullying and harassment are of great concern to many members of the community, and I thank the departments for supplying their figures through questions taken on notice. I hope that adding more light to the extent that this is experienced will assist the government to have a best-practice method rolled out across the whole ACT public service for dealing with such situations.

Key recommendations from this report are around the expenditure of funds from the capital provisions account. It is all very well and good to claim that in order to get best value for money for the major works being planned by this government we do not need to know the exact figures today of how much is expected to be spent on each particular project. However, it is vital in an accountable democracy such as ours that large sums are not committed to without informing the public and allowing for public debate. This government may be tired of public consultation; it may be tired of members of the community having a view, but we do not live in a benevolent oligarchy, and the public have a right to know.

My thanks go to special guests to the committee including Mr Wall, Ms Lawder, Dr Bourke, Mr Hanson, Mrs Dunne, Mr Coe and Mr Doszpot. Thank you for assisting me at the far end of the table and for assisting to investigate particular areas of expenditure and how they affect our community. For opposition members it is not easy to take the responsibility to scrutinise government's performance. We do not cut the ribbons at the town fair and sometimes we can only channel the frustrations of others into this place. So I thank the shadow ministers for faithfully doing their jobs in this process. I commend the report to the Assembly.

MS BERRY (Ginninderra) (11.38): I will make a few comments on the estimates process. This has been my first estimates process as being part of the committee, but I am not naive to the partisan way committee scrutiny can often be used. However, through this committee process the benefits an equally weighted committee can have in fulfilling their intended role were proved. Throughout this process the committee undertook what it was supposed to: a balanced and in-depth consideration of the important issues facing our community.

The estimates committee draws on the strength and skills of our entire Assembly in the formulation of the budget, and it asks local members like me, Ms Porter, Mrs Jones and Mr Smyth to bring our experiences to the process of considering priorities in a tight fiscal environment. It allows us to formally consider the budget through the eyes of the communities that we represent, whether they are our geographical electorates or community groups where we all have unique relationships.

I believe this is evident in the recommendations that appear in the report, many of which are not directly related to the allocation of funds but more to the full understanding of government policy that is reflected in those numbers. I was particularly pleased by the depth of question this year's productive and collegiate committee process allowed for. Through the committee process, members followed up on issues important to their constituencies, whether this was workplace bullying, collection of health data or outcomes for the ageing.

This collegiate process also offered a chance to make the best use of contributions from community groups, like 350.org, UnitingCare, YWCA, Youth Coalition, and SCOA, whose important perspectives, which were taken on board by committee members, were offered across a range of portfolios.

This is, of course, a document that represents the compromise that was necessary to ensure that the views of all members could be represented, but what I think is most important is that it is also evidence of what can be achieved in a truly bipartisan committee when all parties come to the table. I believe the process that got us here today was productive and that the report, read as a whole, reflects the strength of a bipartisan committee model.

I, too, want to thank all of the committee members, all of the committee staff and support, particularly Brian for his patience at the end in interpreting all our conversations at once, and also my own staff and those of Mrs Jones, Ms Porter, and Mr Smyth.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Justice and Community Safety—Standing Committee Scrutiny report 20

MR DOSZPOT (Molonglo) (11.42): I present the following report:

Justice and Community Safety (Legislative Scrutiny Role)—Standing Committee—Scrutiny Report 20, dated 31 July 2014, together with the relevant minutes of proceedings.

I seek leave to make a brief statement.

Leave granted.

MR DOSZPOT: Scrutiny report 20 contains the committee's comments on 12 bills, four pieces of subordinate legislation, four government responses and one national regulation. The report was circulated to members when the Assembly was not sitting. I commend the report to the Assembly.

Committees—standing Membership

MR CORBELL (Molonglo—Attorney-General, Minister for Police and Emergency Services, Minister for the Environment and Minister for Capital Metro) (11.42): Pursuant to standing order 223, I move:

That the following changes to committee memberships be made:

Mr Gentlemen be discharged from the Standing Committee on Administration and Procedure and Dr Bourke be appointed in his place.

Ms Berry and Mr Gentlemen be discharged from the Standing Committee on Justice and Community Safety and Dr Bourke and Ms Porter be appointed in their places.

Mr Gentleman be discharged from the Standing Committee on Planning, Environment and Territory and Municipal Services and Ms Berry be appointed in his place.

Dr Bourke be discharged from the Standing Committee on Public Accounts and Ms Berry be appointed in his place.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Register of lobbyists

MS GALLAGHER (Molonglo—Chief Minister, Minister for Health, Minister for Higher Education and Minister for Regional Development) (11.43), by leave: I move:

That this Assembly:

(1) notes that:

(a) it is vitally important to ensure a strong integrity framework is in place to support the work of Members of the Legislative Assembly for the Australian Capital Territory and to maintain community trust in our parliamentary processes;

(b) lobbying is a legitimate activity and an important part of the democratic process; and

- (c) there is a public expectation that lobbying activities will be carried out ethically and transparently;
- (2) calls on the Clerk to develop an ACT Register of Lobbyists and supporting guidelines with reference to the model guidelines recommended by the Standing Committee on Administration and Procedure in its June 2014 Report on Lobbyist Regulation, and the Clerk will table these for the consideration of the Assembly by 18 September;
- (3) requests that, in establishing the Register of Lobbyists and supporting guidelines, the Clerk considers whether it would be viable for the ACT to recognise lobbyists registered under the Commonwealth Government Register of Lobbyists;
- (4) requests that, by 18 September 2014, the Speaker in consultation with the Clerk shall determine a commencement date for the new arrangements;
- (5) resolves that, from the commencement date, Members of the Legislative Assembly should not knowingly allow themselves to be the subject of lobbying activities by persons or entities who:
 - (a) under those guidelines, should be but are not registered on the ACT Register of Lobbyists; or
 - (b) even though registered, conduct lobbying activities in a manner inconsistent with the ACT Lobbying Code of Conduct at paragraph 8 of this resolution (details of which conduct should be provided to the Clerk);
- (6) resolves that Members of the Legislative Assembly should instruct their staff, consultants and contractors employed under the *Legislative Assembly (Members' Staff) Act 1989* that, from that date, they should not knowingly allow themselves to be the subject of lobbying activities by persons or entities who:
 - (a) under those guidelines, should be but are not registered on the ACT Register of Lobbyists; or
 - (b) even though registered, conduct lobbying activities in a manner inconsistent with the ACT Lobbying Code of Conduct at paragraph 8 of this resolution (details of which conduct should be provided to the Clerk);
- (7) requests the Chief Minister to direct the Head of Service under the *Public Sector Management Act 1994* that, from the commencement date, ACT public sector employees should not knowingly allow themselves to be the subject of lobbying activities by persons or entities who:
 - (a) under those guidelines, should be but are not registered on the ACT Register of Lobbyists; or
 - (b) even though registered, conduct lobbying activities in a manner inconsistent with the ACT Lobbying Code of Conduct at paragraph 8 of this resolution (details of which conduct should be provided to the Clerk);

- (8) resolves that, upon commencement of the ACT Register of Lobbyists, the following ACT Lobbying Code of Conduct be adopted as a continuing resolution of the Assembly; and
- (9) this resolution has effect from the date of its agreement by the Legislative Assembly and continues in force unless amended or repealed by this or a subsequent Assembly. The Register and supporting guidelines commence on a date fixed by the Speaker.

ACT Lobbying Code of Conduct

(1) Preamble:

- (a) Free and open access to the institutions of government is a vital element of our democracy.
- (b) Ethical lobbying is a legitimate activity and an important part of the democratic process.
- (c) Lobbyists can enhance the strength of our democracy by assisting individuals and organisations with advice on public policy processes and facilitating contact with public officials.
- (d) In performing this role, there is a public expectation that lobbyists will be individuals of strong moral calibre who operate according to the highest standards of professional conduct.
- (e) This Code of Conduct is designed to ensure that contact between lobbyists and public officials is conducted in accordance with public expectations of transparency, integrity and honesty.

(2) When making initial contact with public officials with the intention of conducting lobbying activities, a lobbyist who is proposing to conduct lobbying activities must inform the public official:

- (a) that they are a lobbyist or a person engaged by a lobbyist to conduct lobbying activities;
- (b) whether or not they are currently listed on the ACT Register of Lobbyists;
- (c) the name of the person(s) on whose behalf they seek to conduct those lobbying activities; and
- (d) the nature of the matters that they wish to raise in those lobbying activities.

(3) When engaging with a public official, a lobbyist must observe the following principles:

- (a) a lobbyist shall conduct their business to the highest professional and ethical standards, and in accordance with all relevant requirements with respect to lobbying activities;

- (b) a lobbyist shall act with honesty, integrity and good faith and avoid conduct or practices likely to bring discredit upon themselves, public officials or those whose interests they represent;
- (c) a lobbyist shall not engage in any conduct that is corrupt, dishonest or illegal, or unlawfully cause or threaten any detriment;
- (d) a lobbyist shall use all reasonable endeavours to satisfy themselves of the truth and accuracy of all statements and information provided by them to clients whom they represent, to the wider public, or to public officials;
- (e) a lobbyist who becomes aware that information they have previously provided to a public official was or is now inaccurate shall provide accurate and updated information to that public official if they believe that the official may be relying on the accuracy of the information previously provided;
- (f) a lobbyist shall not make misleading, exaggerated or extravagant claims about, or otherwise misrepresent, the nature and extent of their access to public officials, members of political parties or any other person;
- (g) a lobbyist shall keep strictly separate from their duties and activities as lobbyists any personal activity or involvement as a member of or on behalf of a political party;
- (h) a lobbyist shall not disclose confidential information of another party unless they have obtained the informed consent of that party, or they are required to do so by law;
- (i) a lobbyist shall not represent conflicting or competing interests without having obtained the informed consent of the parties whose interests are involved;
- (j) a lobbyist shall take all reasonable steps to ensure that their details as recorded on the ACT Register of Lobbyists are and remain correct from time to time;
- (k) a lobbyist who was previously a Member of the ACT Legislative Assembly shall not, within 18 months of ceasing to hold that office, engage in lobbying activities relating to any matter that they had official dealings with in their last 18 months in office;
- (l) a lobbyist who was previously employed under the *Legislative Assembly (Members' Staff) Act 1989* shall not, within 12 months of ceasing to be so employed, engage in lobbying activities relating to any matter that they had official dealings with in their last 12 months in such employment;
- (m) a lobbyist who was previously employed under the *Public Sector Management Act 1994* as a Head of Service, Director-General or Executive shall not, within 12 months of ceasing to be so employed, engage in lobbying activities relating to any matter that they had official dealings with in their last 12 months in such employment;

- (n) a lobbyist who is appointed to a Government board, committee or other entity must not represent the interests of a third party to a public official in relation to any matter that relates to the functions of entity and must, where they have made such representations prior to that appointment, ensure that they comply with all honesty, integrity and conflict of interest provisions and procedures applicable to appointees to that entity;
- (o) a lobbyist who:
 - (i) is sentenced to a term of imprisonment of 30 months or more;
 - (ii) is convicted of an offence, one element of which involves dishonesty, such as theft or fraud; or
 - (iii) becomes or commences to act as a member of a federal, state or territory political party executive or administrative committee, or similar;shall thereupon cease to engage in lobbying activities and shall so advise the Clerk of the ACT Legislative Assembly; and
- (p) a lobbyist shall ensure that any owner, partner, shareholder or other individual involved in the management of the business of the lobbyist does not occupy or act as a member of a federal, state or territory political party executive or administrative committee, or similar.

I thank members for allowing me to move this motion today. It is an important motion and it builds on previous debates the Assembly has had in terms of improving our own accountability and integrity framework. I think more than most, my own view around the lobbyist register, and it is something that members will acknowledge that I have been after for some time now, is that our constituents, the people we represent, expect good government and good processes through our parliament. This will only strengthen the processes that we have available to ensure that our constituents have trust in the way that we conduct our duties and that, following on from Mr Coe's speech on the electoral report that was tabled earlier today, we keep ACT politics clean.

You do not have to look too far over either side of the border to see where problems have arisen with the way politicians conduct their business and, importantly, with the way interested stakeholders, lobbyists, also conduct their business and seek approvals, favours, influence or power within particular administrations and, in a parliament with one house with very strong Assembly committees, to influence all members.

I believe very firmly that by agreeing to this continuing resolution today we are strengthening the processes available to us. We are improving accountability to our community. By doing so I hope that, with some of the odour that hangs around politicians it seems in this day and age, we are continuing to provide confidence to the ACT community and hopefully generating some view that politics can be an honourable profession.

Territory citizens rightly expect transparency and open decision-making from their elected representatives. They expect decisions to be made objectively and on merit without any reference to private gain or personal interest. Shortly after becoming Chief Minister, I started a program of open government featuring a comprehensive integrity framework. This integrity framework has been key for ensuring high standards of probity in public life. It comprises a suite of mutually reinforcing initiatives designed to address the standards, values, behaviour and integrity of our work and our people.

We have modernised the codes of conduct applying to ministers and public servants, introduced improved public interest disclosure legislation and provided additional funding for the Auditor-General and the Ombudsman. We also in this place have seen the establishment of a Legislative Assembly Commissioner for Standards to complement the work of the Assembly's ethics and integrity adviser.

Additionally, in the program coming up, I will introduce a public service bill which will also embed the ACT public service code of conduct, values and signature behaviours and establish an independent office of the public sector standards commissioner, which I notice is a recommendation of the recently tabled estimates report.

Our integrity framework represents an investment in open and accountable governance of the territory. Today this continuing resolution is proposing that our integrity framework be further enhanced and expanded with the introduction of a register of lobbyists. Political lobbyists' influence on the democratic process is a source of frequent comment and concern around the world and across Australia. Lobbying is clearly a legitimate activity and one which plays an important part in our democracy. It is only right that individuals and groups should seek to express their views to elected officials.

However, there is a strong perception that lobbyists can occasionally have undue influence and, in the absence of appropriate regulation, may distort government decision-making. If confidence in our system of government is to be safeguarded, public officials and decisions must be seen to be objective, in line with established procedures and guided by the merits of each case.

In this respect, I strongly believe that lobbying should be as transparent and open to scrutiny as any other part of the decision-making process. At the moment we do not currently maintain a public register of lobbyists, nor do we have a code of conduct to guide members and public officials on how best to engage with lobbyists. I think this does present a risk to good governance.

Members will recall that earlier this year a motion was moved that referred this matter to the Standing Committee on Administration and Procedure to draft a lobbyist register for the ACT Assembly, including an associated code of conduct supporting principles and guidelines. The motion passed that day recognised the valid role of lobbyists to advocate on behalf of their clients and the value that a register could provide in ensuring transparency and accountability.

The standing committee presented its report on lobbyist regulation in June this year. I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the work of the committee and to thank members for their commitment to improving the practices and procedures of the Assembly. In particular, I note that the Assembly's ethics and integrity adviser, Mr Stephen Skehill's advice on the regulation of lobbying is a concise and insightful analysis of a potentially complex area of regulation. Among other things, the report observed:

Committee members noted that in their common experience as Members of the Assembly, and in the experience of two Committee members as Ministers, third party lobbying of them by paid lobbyists was exceptionally rare and that, in each instance that could be recalled, there had been no issues of concern raised by the manner in which that lobbying had been conducted.

Notwithstanding this, the committee concluded:

... it would nevertheless be appropriate for the ACT, as a matter of proactive precaution and consistent with a strong commitment to transparency and integrity in public administration, to introduce a form of lobbying regulation.

In assessing the manner of regulation that could be applied, the committee considered whether lobbying regulation should be confined to the executive, or extended to all members of the Assembly. A majority view on that subject was not reached. Proponents of limiting regulation to the executive argued that ministers are more likely to be targeted by lobbying activity and that most Australian lobbying regulation is confined to the executive. Both of these, of course, are true statements.

However, it is my longstanding belief that an ACT lobbyist register should be applicable to all members of the Assembly, not just ministers or their staff. In forming this view, I considered the small size of the Assembly, the fact that private members bills and motions can pass the Assembly and that MLAs sit on very powerful committees.

Mr Skehill's advice to the committee, which is an attachment to the report, supports this view. Mr Skehill observed that non-ministerial members of the Assembly are also lobbied as they are not without power which lobbyists seek to influence. For example, they vote to pass or not pass legislation, even though those votes obviously are transparent and clear. They participate in committee inquiries that may lead to changes in legislation or practice. They raise questions in proceedings of the Assembly that may influence the conduct of the business of government, and they formulate policies which they take to elections and which they promise to implement if elected to form government.

Mr Skehill found that in many respects the decisions of non-ministerial members are little different to those of ministers. On this basis, the resolution that I am making today applies to all members of the Assembly and the ACT public service. The continuing resolution I put to the Assembly today is in line with the one recommended by the standing committee, with some very minor amendments. Moreover, the standing committee's report will guide the Clerk and the Speaker's

work on the detailed development of the ACT lobbyists register. I acknowledge the work and support of both the Speaker's office and the Clerk's office in refining this resolution to bring to the Assembly today.

I am very confident that the ACT register of lobbyists and supporting code of conduct will further build public confidence in our system of government and that it is a good thing to do. I do, however, acknowledge and endorse Mr Skehill's advice to the standing committee:

Regulating lobbying may be an important tool ... but it can never eliminate corruption in public office. Personal integrity and commitment to and compliance with meaningful codes of conduct remain key essentials in combatting public corruption.

The ACT community has been very well served by members in this place. I think this will enhance the framework available to members to ensure that the members of the ACT community continue to be well served by members that are guided by these important documents. But, at the end of the day, it is what we bring to the job. I look forward to working with members to continue to build on the public's perception of politicians and the valuable role that we do play in the ACT community.

MR HANSON (Molonglo—Leader of the Opposition) (11.53): Madam Deputy Speaker, I can inform the Assembly that the opposition will be supporting the Chief Minister's motion here today. I am not sure what happened over the winter break, but we seem to have come back into this place with a new-found sense of bipartisanship. It seems that on all of these issues that we have been discussing today there has been consensus. Even an estimates report has been presented without a dissenting report. If I reflect on last year's report, there was a slightly different response. Maybe it is because you and I are no longer on the committee, Mr Gentleman. I do not know.

It is pleasing to see that when it is in the interests of the community, this place can work together to achieve an outcome, be it for Mr Fluffy residents, on condolence motions, estimates reports and, as we have here today, an initiative that should go some way to making sure that the integrity of this Assembly is maintained.

This is not a new topic. It has been discussed at length both here in the Assembly and around the country. It has been dealt with in committee, as the Chief Minister pointed out, and I think that it is the right time for us to introduce a lobbyist register here into the ACT Assembly. I do not think that we have the same problems that we might find in other jurisdictions. Just in the sense of volume, there are in the federal register 300 company lobbyists and 600 individuals. That simply is not the case here in the ACT.

However, I think that given what has recently happened in New South Wales with ICAC and in Victoria with the Royal Commission into Trade Union Governance and Corruption, we simply must be open about our associations and dealings with lobbyists and other entities. It is important for the community to see that we are open. It is not the fact that I think there is any untoward lobbying in the ACT. None of that has been brought to my attention. But for the prevention of a perception and the prevention of potential future undue lobbying I think it is timely that we actually bring a register into the ACT Assembly.

I note that this motion comes to us having been through the proper preliminary stages, including discussions amongst the parties and consultation with the Clerk and the officers of the Legislative Assembly. They have provided input and advice on the content and implementation. We have also looked to other commentators and experts with experience in other jurisdictions to provide us with guidance. Burdett Loomis from the University of Kansas is the Flinders University Fulbright Distinguished Professor of American Politics. He wrote an opinion piece for the *Sydney Morning Herald* in support of a register that stated:

In the end, if the public, journalists and academics know who lobbies, who they target, and how much money they spend on what, lobbyists and government officials can be held more accountable. To an extent, US rules provide these data. If Australia adopted similar regulations, lobbyists' actions would become far more transparent.

We have also considered the approaches adopted in other jurisdictions here and overseas. The United States has long had a register, but continued behind-the-scenes scandals show how vigilant we must be to match action with intent. The European Union is moving towards mandatory registration for member countries, signing up to what they intend as a "transparency register" by 2017, which has been reported as "one of a number of innovations intended to strengthen transparency and openness in European policymaking."

Our own newly appointed Commissioner for Standards has urged action, stating in reports in February of this year that:

It seems to me that we are at a stage of perhaps almost unique cynicism in Australia towards the political process.

He went on to say, "It is vitally important that trust must be encouraged." This register may go some way to encourage that trust. Most notably, we have also looked to the commonwealth parliament, with which many lobbyists would already be familiar, to be able comply with the registration requirements in that forum. That code, like the ACT code, recognises the important role that lobbying and communications play in a proper functioning representative government. But it also notes:

... promote trust in the integrity of government processes and ensure that contact between lobbyists and Government representatives is conducted in accordance with public expectations of transparency, integrity and honesty.

The code goes on to state:

... there is a public expectation that lobbying activities will be carried out ethically and transparently, and that Government representatives who are approached by lobbyists can establish whose interests they represent so that informed judgments can be made about the outcome they are seeking to achieve.

That is the final and proper goal of this proposal: that we, as representatives of the community, can establish who we are speaking to and what interests they represent.

The Canberra Liberals want to encourage openness. We are here to be accountable, but we are also here to listen to groups within the community, including the professional representatives of those groups. It is right that they be heard; it is right that they be known; and it is right that we approach that balance with the best intentions.

The lobbyist register itself and the preamble in the motion contains a number of aspects. The preamble states:

- (a) Free and open access to the institutions of government is a vital element of our democracy.
- (b) Ethical lobbying is a legitimate activity and an important part of the democratic process.
- (c) Lobbyists can enhance the strength of our democracy by assisting individuals and organisations with advice on public policy processes and facilitating contact with public officials.
- (d) In performing this role, there is a public expectation that lobbyists will be individuals of strong moral calibre who operate according to the highest standards of professional conduct.
- (e) This Code of Conduct is designed to ensure that contact between lobbyists and public officials is conducted in accordance with public expectations of transparency, integrity and honesty.

It is my view that this Assembly has nothing to hide. Therefore, let us be as open as we can in with our dealings to make sure that the very good reputation that this Assembly enjoys and its members enjoy—current and past members—for integrity and ethical behaviour are maintained.

We support the motion today. Because this is new to the ACT Assembly, I think that it would be prudent to say at this point that we will monitor its progress and its workability. We certainly support its intent, as I have said, but as is often the case with these new initiatives as they roll out there can be technical issues and amendments that can improve the functioning of the register. If that were the case, I look forward to working with other members of the Assembly to make sure that this register actually provides on the ground the intent that we all agree with here today.

MR RATTENBURY (Molonglo) (12.01): I thank the Chief Minister for bringing forward this motion today. I know it is an issue that she has advocated for some time now. It came before the admin and procedures committee, which I am a member of, and we have discussed it in recent months. The ethics and integrity adviser, Stephen Skehill, was also asked to provide advice to the committee and he did so in May this year. It was very useful advice. Certainly, the Greens are very happy to support provisions that increase transparency and accountability and improve the quality of our democracy. I believe that moving down the path of having a register for lobbyists is one step in that and I am happy to support the motion today on that basis.

There are a number of options when it comes to developing a lobbying register. The first issue is whether it should be legislated or not legislated. Obviously this path today is a version that is not legislated. Instead, it will take the form of a register with accompanying guidelines for lobbyists and public officials. That is probably right at this stage. Given the history in the ACT, which both Mr Hanson and Ms Gallagher have spoken to, it is right to start off with this style of approach. If we find down the line that it needs a stronger basis or a further basis then that is something we can evolve the system to. I think at this stage the approach that is being proposed is a good starting point.

One of the other areas of discussion, the second key area I intended to touch on, is whether it should apply to all members of the Assembly or just the executive. This was certainly something that had some discussion in the committee. I am of the view that, while in some parliaments provisions may only apply to the executive, in reality the size of the Assembly and the size of this town perhaps means that all members of the Assembly and their officials are susceptible to lobbying and can easily find themselves in a position where people seek to influence them. So in that context I think it is quite appropriate.

Stephen Skehill supports that there is a strong case that any lobbyist register should cover both the executive and the non-executive. Whilst the executive performs the day-to-day functions of government, non-executive members engage in activities that lobbyists may be keen to exercise some influence over. They vote in the chamber, they participate in committees, they raise questions of the government and, of course, they formulate policies that they take to the next election.

In addition to all of the generic issues we need to also consider the history of the ACT Legislative Assembly. Given the fact that, bar the Sixth Assembly, there has never been a majority government in this place, we have had a strong tradition in the Assembly of private members being able to pass motions and legislation. I think this moves us into a slightly different category as well where we are simply saying that it is only the executive that has the ability to influence a range of important matters. It does not tell the full story of the ACT Legislative Assembly. So for me that is a key issue. The nature of this Assembly means that all members should be included and I am pleased that that is the version that is being brought forward.

One of the other questions we need to consider in establishing such an approach is: who constitutes a lobbyist? In other regimes, a lobbyist register has only ever covered third-party lobbyists who are paid by the client they are representing. This is what is being proposed here in the ACT. For me, this issue raises questions about the effectiveness of a regime such as this in the territory. In my own experience, I am quite certain that I can count on one hand the number of times I have been lobbied by a paid third-party lobbyist. Again, we had some discussion about this in the committee and, while some other members had slightly more extensive experience, we agreed that there were very few recognised paid lobbyists in town. Most often, we are approached directly by a representative of a company, a non-government organisation or even a community group.

There is an interesting discussion around what is a lobbyist in that context because clearly each of those groups is seeking to influence our opinions. It is probably true to say that the ACT Assembly is not heavily trafficked by professional lobbyists because there are not that many in town. There are certainly plenty in town for federal parliament, but in my experience at least, and from my sense of the discussions with my colleagues, there are not too many coming to the ACT Assembly.

As Mr Skehill points out in his report, regulating lobbying may be an important tool but it can never eliminate corruption in public office. I think that underlines it and points to the fact that we should support this motion today. It sets up an important part of a puzzle, but it is certainly not the sole part; constant vigilance is required. Mr Hanson made a similar comment earlier, and I agree with him, that constant vigilance is required in this space. Certainly, Stephen Skehill commented that personal integrity and a commitment to and compliance with meaningful codes of conduct remain key essentials in combating public corruption. He makes very well that broader point around you can have all the rules you like but if someone is determined or perhaps careless in the way they are influenced then they are going to find ways around the systems.

The motion also includes an extensive code of conduct for lobbying in the territory. The code of conduct outlines some general principles about open and transparent institutions and then sets out the expectations on lobbyists who wish to engage in the ACT. It starts with the initial contact with a public official where a lobbyist must identify that they are a lobbyist, whether or not they are listed on the ACT register of lobbyists, who they are lobbying on behalf of and the nature of the matters they wish to raise in lobbying activities.

The code of conduct then proceeds to outline a series of principles such as acting honestly, keeping political activity separate, not making misleading statements and not representing conflicting or competing interests without the consent of the parties whose interests are involved. It also places restrictions on lobbying activities for people who previously were a member or employed as a staffer, setting time limits for when they may be able to engage in lobbying after ending their previous roles. Having made those few remarks, the Greens support mechanisms that seek to improve the integrity of our governance institution. On that basis I am pleased to support this motion on behalf of the Greens today.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Holidays Amendment Bill 2014

Debate resumed from 8 May 2014, on motion by **Mr Corbell**:

That this bill be agreed to in principle.

MR SMYTH (Brindabella) (12.09): The opposition will not be opposing this bill today. We do have some concerns with it and that particularly comes from the lack of consultation with industry over the implementation of the bill. My understanding is

that many of them found out about it when it was announced that the government was going ahead with it. I think that if you want to bring industry along with changes then you need to make sure that they are involved with the process.

Part of the problem with public holidays—and, let's face it, who is not in favour of a public holiday; it is a time for family to get together and for relaxation and enjoyment and, particularly with Christmas and the new year that are specifically addressed by this bill, it is important that people have time to celebrate, relax and get ready for the coming of the new year—is that there is an effect on business. What people may find is that some businesses will simply shut rather than open and pay large overtime payments. They may choose not to open or, indeed, the owners may choose to do the work themselves, offering perhaps reduced services. For some firms, those that have premises in the big malls, they will have no choice. If the mall is open then normally their contract would suggest that they be open at the same time. But that is a decision that they have made and they understand that that is what is expected when they sign their contracts to move into those malls.

I think it is important that we monitor the effect of the public holidays and make sure that people are not out of work, because it is impossible for small businesses in particular to meet the required wages when a day is gazetted as a public holiday. That said, the role of public holidays in the community is important. They are occasions for family, for relaxation and specifically for bringing communities together, and we all enjoy the outcomes there.

MR RATTENBURY (Molonglo) (12.11): I will be supporting the passage of this bill today. It makes a simple change; it designates Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Year's Day as public holidays. It also ensures that if any of these days fall on a weekend then the official public holiday is the following Monday or the following Tuesday if Boxing Day falls on a Sunday.

I think this is an appropriate change, and it should be the norm in our modern working environment. If Christmas is on Sunday then a worker will get the public holiday on the next weekday. I think that is what people expect, and it is only fair. The Christmas and new year period is an important time for people to spend with their families and their friends. It is a time that a busy full-time worker, for example, might get to spend some precious time with their children. It is an important time for people to have a break and to rest and recover for the new year.

There should be no contest that Australian workers are already working very hard, long hours, and their work is intruding more and more into their home lives. Despite an enduring reputation that Australia is a relaxed nation where we all have barbecues and go to the beach, Australia is frequently near the top of a list of nations with the longest working hours.

A 2013 global report, for example, found that more and more Australians now take their work home. Almost three-quarters of Australians now take work home with them at least once a week. That is more than Britain at 67 per cent, Japan at 54 per cent and India at 67 per cent. This was the fourth highest result of all surveyed countries. The same report found that 41 per cent of Australian workers usually work

between nine and 11 hours every day, compared with 38 per cent of workers globally. According to this survey, Australians are working longer hours than people in countries like Britain, the United States, Canada and China.

I think workers in Australia deserve their public holidays. They deserve some time off and they deserve full public holiday entitlements when they work on those public holidays. In any case, this is not a controversial change, in my view. As the minister noted during his introduction speech, the New South Wales government has already made the same change to enshrine these public holidays. The ACT government has also legislated in individual years to make subsequent weekdays a public holiday where the official holiday fell on a weekend. So this practice has been occurring and today's bill simply makes that permanent.

The ACT government will itself bear some costs in order to implement this change. That is something we need to weigh up, just as we need to weigh up the impact it will have on private businesses, particularly businesses in hospitality and retail for example. As I have said, I think the right side of this balance is to look after the workers and to ensure they have options for a reasonable work-life balance and family time and access to reasonable entitlements.

On the subject of balance, I think it is also worth noting that there is a sweet spot of productivity that actually comes from ensuring people have access to entitlements such as time off and work-life balance opportunities. It is quite well known that issues like overwork, lack of family time and fatigue can actually lead to problems such as reduced health and lower quality of work. These can impact the overall productivity of a business and also have wider costs to society. So even from the pure productivity perspective, I think it is still important to be mindful of the value of holidays and entitlements. In conclusion, I will support this bill and I thank the minister for bringing it forward.

MS BERRY (Ginninderra) (12.15): As Mr Gentleman has outlined, the Holidays Amendment Bill 2014 amends the Holidays Act 1958 to ensure that Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Year's Day are counted as public holidays for workers, regardless of the day of the week they fall on. In addition, when any of these days fall on a weekend, the bill provides for an additional public holiday the following Monday or Tuesday, as appropriate.

This is a good Labor reform, Madam Speaker. It is one that will help many members in our community. Today we are expanding the rights of retail, hospitality and service industry workers to have their work properly compensated when working on days that are normally set aside for family time and recreation. I would like to acknowledge the work of Minister Corbell in steering this legislation through during his time as minister for industrial relations. I would also like to acknowledge the Shop, Distributive and Allied Employees Association, who are here today. The nurses union are here as well—the ANMF. I thank them for campaigning for the inclusion of these holidays and for their efforts in defending the rights of workers to be compensated for work on public holidays and weekends.

This amendment allows me to again make the case in this place for the importance of penalty rates. And let us be clear: the "penalty" in penalty rates does not refer to any

cost that the employers might have to pay for opening on public holidays and weekends; the penalty rates relate to the penalty that workers face for having to work on days that are normally set aside for family time and recreation.

I have heard that some employer groups are not happy with these changes. I say to them that they have a role to play in educating their members. Employer groups need to do more to help businesses develop sustainable models for operation and to provide them with advice on their obligations to employers.

The federal government, through *business.gov.au*, and the ACT government, through Canberra BusinessPoint, provide small businesses with support to get them onto a sustainable and profitable basis. There is no excuse, in this day and age, for a business to have to contemplate underpaying or not paying their staff loadings on public holidays in order to remain afloat.

Our economy works best when we work together—government, workers and business. I welcome this amendment today and I look forward to seeing the retail, hospitality and service industry workers getting the pay that they deserve.

MR GENTLEMAN (Brindabella—Minister for Planning, Minister for Community Services, Minister for Workplace Safety and Industrial Relations, Minister for Children and Young People and Minister for Ageing) (12.18): I thank members for their contribution to this bill today and I seek to close debate as the new minister for industrial relations. I recognise members from the shop, distributive and allied workers union and ANF here today. These are people that work shiftwork and are affected by public holidays and penalty rates.

This bill will enshrine in the act the government approach that was taken in 2010, 2011 and 2012, when these days fell on a weekend. In these years, the government declared additional public holidays under section 3(1)(b) of the Holidays Act 1958. This issue will arise again in 2015, 2016 and 2017, when at least one of the relevant days falls on a weekend.

The bill will affect employers who operate over the Christmas and new year period where penalty rates under an award or agreement would apply, and enable all workers to refuse to work on those relevant days. The act already provides for additional holidays on Monday or Tuesday if these days fall on a weekend; however, this is in lieu of the actual day. The approach in the bill provides certainty for employers and workers with the least complexity and administrative burden. It also is consistent with the New South Wales current practice.

It is acknowledged that the amendment is likely to have the greatest impact on essential services, including the health and hospitality sectors. There have been several unsuccessful attempts by employers to remove penalty rates from some of the awards in these sectors, and the addition of public holidays in some years will inevitably encounter a level of opposition.

I understand that the Australian Hotels Association has raised concerns that there has been no consultation on the bill. This is not the case. On 17 May 2013, the ACT Work Safety Council, as a statutory tripartite advisory body, was given the opportunity to make submissions. Members include the ACT Council of Social Service, the ACT

and Region Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and the Master Builders Association. Members were initially given seven weeks to respond, and this period was later extended to encourage submissions. No submissions were received. Employer groups raised their objection to additional public holidays at the Work Safety Council meeting, and these were considered during the development of this bill.

In December 2013, the previous Minister for Workplace Safety and Industrial Relations, Simon Corbell, wrote to the Canberra Business Council to seek comment on the proposal, and gave them a significant period to provide submissions. The Australian Hotels Association is a kindred organisation of the Canberra Business Council.

I am informed by Mr Corbell, the responsible minister at the time, that he met personally with members from the AHA to address concerns about their perceived lack of consultation on the bill. The Australian Hotels Association also raised specific concerns around the impact of penalty rates, citing the results of its recent member survey, which showed that 55.56 per cent of hotels planned to reduce services over the Easter period for this reason, and more than 61 per cent of members did not operate as normal on Good Friday and Easter Monday, with 92 per cent of those blaming penalty rates.

There are various studies and views around the impact of penalty rates on the hospitality sector, with far-ranging results. Later this year, the Productivity Commission is expected to undertake an inquiry into the Fair Work Act 2009, the commonwealth act, which is likely to include the impact of penalty rates on business. I am looking forward to the opportunity to contribute to the review of the Fair Work Act and I am expecting that the government will prepare a submission to the Productivity Commission to ensure that the rights of workers are protected and retained in the interests of fairness.

In 2009, Professor Joellen Riley was engaged by the New South Wales government to conduct a review of the Banks and Bank Holidays Act 1912, with a view to recommending measures for modernising the recognition of public holidays in the state. Importantly, her work was significant in the New South Wales government's forming the view that the influence of the movement of certain public holidays to additional days other than the significant day itself restricted the ability for Australians as working citizens and members of families and communities to enjoy the celebration of community holidays.

Particular times of the year permit people, especially those whose families are separated by distance, to join together. This is particularly true at Christmas. The health and social wellbeing of people, supported by their ability to maintain some family connections, are a valuable good to be weighed heavily in the balance against the interests of other groups.

The grievance experienced by those who are forced to work on Christmas Day far outweighs the inconvenience caused to people who wish to eat at a restaurant or use some other service which may be unavailable or in some way altered due to the day being a public holiday. It should not fall upon employees who have often irregular

hours in the service, retail or other industries to work without additional reimbursement in order that those with regular hours can enjoy these special days.

I am very pleased to be able to commend this bill here today. It is my hope that in the near future we will include similar arrangements for Anzac Day and for Easter Sunday as a public holiday, for which I have already received many personal letters of support from members of the community. It is important for us all, as elected government members, to value the interests of those members of the community who have to work in the retail or hospitality sectors, at the hospitals or as part of emergency services, or who have family members working in these industries.

Personally, I worked for 12 years in the security industry, for federal government, working shiftwork. It had a great impact on my family life. Due to the fixed rosters that were in place, it was almost impossible to plan public holiday weekends with the family. You have to try and swap those shifts with other shift members in order to get that time with the family.

In closing, let me say that it is our responsibility, as representatives of these members of the community, to ensure that they are entitled to unite as families for at least some time in the space of a calendar year or, at the very least, are properly compensated for the time spent away from their family on these important occasions.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Bill agreed to in principle.

Leave granted to dispense with the detail stage.

Bill agreed to.

Sitting suspended from 12.25 to 2.30 pm.

Questions without notice

Canberra Hospital—gastroenterology and hepatology unit

MR HANSON: My question is to the Minister for Health.

Members interjecting—

MR HANSON: Welcome back. I see the happy mood that we generated this morning continues.

Minister, in June 2014 the Auditor-General produced a performance audit report titled *Gastroenterology and hepatology unit, Canberra Hospital—GEHU*—for tabling in the Assembly. This report says that governance of the GEHU “is inadequate” and that the GEHU outpatient waiting list has not been managed efficiently. Minister, why is GEHU’s governance inadequate and why is its management inefficient?

MS GALLAGHER: I thank the Leader of the Opposition for the question. These are difficult issues, I think, when you look at them in terms of how individual units run within the hospital. There is an administration point of view, but there is also how clinicians seek to operate and want to operate. Over time, I think that at the Canberra Hospital in particular we are building up the capacity to improve our systems all the time.

It comes down to a range of different issues. Some of them are to do with how the administration and management side of the hospital interacts with particular clinical units. The outpatients area is undergoing very significant change, and indeed has undergone a lot of increased demand for its services. But I think the recommendations of the Auditor-General align with the work that management was doing at the hospital to improve particularly the waiting list and how appointments were managed, and some of those management decisions within the unit.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Mr Hanson.

MR HANSON: Minister, why is it that “patients of GEHU have not been receiving treatment within the time frames recommended by the Health Directorate” or that access to consultants does not occur “according to a patient’s medical need”?

MS GALLAGHER: In terms of timeliness of people regarding access to appointments and treatment, it is really to do with the workload and the demand for services. Could you repeat the second part of your question, Mr Hanson?

MR HANSON: The question, which is a quote from the report, was about access to consultants not occurring “according to a patient’s medical need”—so patients’ medical need is not being met.

MS GALLAGHER: What the audit found overall—and there was independent expert advice commissioned as part of it—was that the triage category was appropriate in the vast amount of cases, and that, for those cases where outcomes could be assessed, the patients were managed appropriately and in a timely manner.

Whilst the audit did acknowledge that there was scope for improvement within the unit, I think that overall finding, as part of the audit report, is important. Again, right across the outpatients unit and in particular regarding the demand for outpatient services, we are undergoing some quite significant change, and that is to deal with the level of demand for outpatient services and the triaging of those patient needs right across the hospital and not just in the gastroenterology and hepatology unit at the Canberra Hospital.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Ms Lawder.

MS LAWDER: Minister, what changes will you make to ensure the GEHU is used efficiently to provide tertiary healthcare?

MS GALLAGHER: There have been a number of changes to date to improve systems. All administrative staff have been combined under one management model to provide overall leadership and management of all the referrals. This is being managed and led by a senior medical specialist. The number of patients with a referral and waiting for clinical triage for June—and I can tell you in terms of how that process is working—is 46, which is a decrease of 552 patients since May 2014. So we have seen a massive reduction just from implementing that change.

Changes have also been introduced to improve processes for acceptance and registration of referrals, and a focus on increasing consultants' utilisation of IT systems to triage has been undertaken in an effort to improve referral processing. There are a number of other changes which I can also outline, but this was a piece of work that was started, I think, just prior to the Auditor-General's report and certainly the audit process has aligned with the work that has been done by management to improve some of the issues that were identified and that staff were raising concerns about.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Ms Lawder.

MS LAWDER: Minister, what is the impact on an individual's health as a result of the failures identified in the Auditor-General's report?

MS GALLAGHER: Again, I would go back to the quote from the independent expert that was commissioned to review the triaging and outcomes of the selection of patients—it was a selection, but that is in line with most audit processes—that the triage category was appropriate in the vast majority of cases and that patients were managed appropriately and in a timely manner.

Obviously I do not want to dismiss the fact that some of the delays for having referrals processed and appointments made are not distressing on individual people; they are. I think one of the really difficult areas in health is the management of the demand for outpatient services, which just continues to escalate. We are having to manage that through triaging processes. But you would hope, through that triaging process, that for those people that were the most urgent and needed to be seen in the most timely way, from a clinician's point of view, that that was being managed through the changes that we have introduced over the last few months to improve that for patients.

Visitors

MADAM SPEAKER: Before I proceed I would like to acknowledge the presence in the gallery of members of staff from the Territory and Municipal Services Directorate. Welcome to your Assembly.

Questions without notice

Health—antenatal visits

MRS JONES: My question is to the Minister for Health. On the 31 July the National Health Performance Authority published its report *Healthy communities: child and*

maternal health in 2009-12. That report lists the percentage of women who had at least one antenatal visit in the first trimester. Coming in at 57 out of 61 Medicare Locals across Australia, the ACT has one of the worst attendance rates in the country, but it also notes that this may be due to a lesser collection of data. Minister, given the importance of antenatal visits for the long-term health of mothers and babies, why is this antenatal rate worse or why are we not collecting the same data as the rest of the country about these attendance rates?

MS GALLAGHER: There is a whole range of information in that report that, when you look at the surface, is quite concerning—reports of the smoking rate, for example, and some of the low birth weight babies. I think one of the issues for us in that report is that it does not identify areas of disadvantage within the ACT. We are given one classification of a rating from which we are then compared to other jurisdictions with that metro 1 classification—although I cannot remember what the actual classification is. For a small jurisdiction like the ACT, it does not allow for those smaller pockets where we know there is disadvantage to be identified as part of the data. So you get treated as one set.

In relation to the antenatal visits, I will come back to you on that. My experience is that women have excellent access to antenatal care in the ACT. We collect that data. That issue was not raised specifically with me in terms of some of the briefings I had on this report, so I will come back to you on it. But our experience is that certainly in the public and private systems the arrangements in place are really good for women. We have the CatCH program—that is, the continuity of care program—we have the midwifery-led program, we have shared care arrangements with GPs, and we deal with all those different types of antenatal care arrangements for women. I would be very surprised if there was any issue in terms of access to antenatal care and antenatal visits as part of a woman's pregnancy in the ACT. But I will certainly drill down a bit further and come back to you.

MADAM SPEAKER: Supplementary question, Mrs Jones.

MRS JONES: Given the range of options available, what are the health impacts if we do have a low rate of antenatal visits? Also, what is being done to investigate the concerning take-up rate?

MS GALLAGHER: I go back to my previous answer, which is that I am very happy to come back and take some further advice on that. I must say that I got more concerned by a range of other indicators in that report—

Mrs Jones: We will get to them.

MS GALLAGHER: Yes, I am sure. Some of the answer back was around being treated in a particular classification that did not allow for the difference of classification to deal with some of the disadvantage that we see in the ACT. I will come back to you and I will get some further advice from the relevant nursing area.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Mr Hanson.

MR HANSON: Minister, what are you doing to make sure that the data that is collected and presented is actually relevant to the ACT?

MS GALLAGHER: I am not aware that we are not collecting the data that is required for any of the reporting that we do to the commonwealth. We do extensive reporting to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, the Department of Health, IHPA, the NHPA—what was previously known as the National Health Performance Agency. So we collect a whole range of datasets, and that is all provided to the commonwealth. I have certainly not had any issues raised with me around that.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Mr Hanson.

MR HANSON: Minister, what are you doing to ensure that disadvantaged women in the ACT have a high rate of antenatal visits?

MS GALLAGHER: One of the things we do is support the programs that have been run particularly at Winnunga Nimmityjah who do a lot of the antenatal care programs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women who are highlighted in this report and who, we know, suffer from particular disadvantage when it comes to accessing mainstream health care. So that is one of the things we do. We also have a lot of our services provided through the child and family centres in west Belconnen and Gungahlin and through our community-based services which are particularly targeted at those people who may be at risk and who are in vulnerable families.

I do not want to give anyone a pat on the back but, in terms of support for women undergoing pregnancy, antenatal or postnatal care, the services that are provided at the women's and children's hospital really are first rate and I do not think there is any need to be concerned about access to services here for women during their pregnancy.

I will follow up on the issue that has been raised around visits to antenatal care but, from my experience and from the feedback I get, actually the area in health I get the most compliments on is the services provided through the women's and children's health program.

Visitor

MADAM SPEAKER: Before I proceed, I acknowledge the presence in the gallery of Mr David Lamont, former Deputy Chief Minister. Welcome to the Assembly.

Questions without notice Planning—Tuggeranong

MS PORTER: My question is to the Minister for Planning. Minister, what will the government's master plan program deliver in terms of development opportunities in Tuggeranong?

MR GENTLEMAN: I thank Ms Porter for her question. The master plan program is already delivering significant development opportunities and benefits across

Tuggeranong. The master planning processes have been comprehensive in their review of the various commercial centres, including Kambah, the town centre itself and Erindale. And there has been extensive public consultation and input which have informed the recommendations and priority outcomes for the various master plans.

The Kambah group centre master planning process has already resulted in amendments to the territory plan, and territory plan variation 317 commenced in May this year. The amendments increase the commercial zoning of the centre to promote an increased range of commercial uses across the centre. This was coupled with moderate increases in building heights to stimulate development and redevelopment at the centre. Longstanding pedestrian and vehicle connections issues have also been resolved. There were four public submissions received in relation to a draft of variation 317 relating to the floor area of the supermarket, parking and clarity of the wording of the territory plan provision. The issues were dealt with in a report on consultation and amendments made to the draft variation accordingly.

The Tuggeranong town centre master planning process has been the most extensive of the Tuggeranong master plans, because it dealt with the town centre itself. By its very nature, it needed to take a long-term approach to revitalisation of the town centre. Territory plan variation 318 is stage 1 in the implementation of the Tuggeranong town centre master plan. It focuses on implementing the priority areas of the master plan. The variation seeks to increase building heights in the key locations of the town centre to stimulate office and residential development and redevelopment in these locations. This includes a landmark site on Athllon Drive where building heights of up to 12 storeys are recommended, and it provides ample opportunity for large-scale offices suitable for the use of commonwealth government agencies. The variation rezones parts of the town centre to bring it in line with the master plan recommendations for consolidation of the commercial centre of Tuggeranong. This is focused around Soward Way. Residential development has been promoted through zone changes to the eastern side of the lake. This activates an underutilised part of the lake side and provides links with surrounding residential development and the Southquay lake side development that is already under construction.

These changes implement the government's broader strategic planning for Canberra outlined in the ACT planning strategy of increased development opportunities and residential development in the town centres. This means that more people are able to live and work in town centres and have excellent access to public transport.

On the Erindale master plan, we had quite a bit of community consultation. Master plans are designed to use community consultation, amongst other information, to define what is the important part about the centre within the territory and try to conserve, develop and put into best practice its features. An example of the master plan that has been developed in Tuggeranong is the Erindale group centre master plan, which was completed in September 2012. The Erindale master plan outlines a vision to guide the development of the growth of the Erindale group centre over the next 30 years. The master plan process was conducted along with the Erindale major bus station feasibility study. This study was run closely with the master plan project in order to examine the options for locating a new bus stop in the vicinity of the centre. The development of this master plan and feasibility study includes a large amount of public consultation.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Ms Porter.

MS PORTER: Minister, can you outline some examples of planned developments in the Tuggeranong area?

MR GENTLEMAN: I thank Ms Porter for her supplementary question. I would be glad to outline the development which is happening on the Greenway Lakeside or the Southquay Greenway development. The construction of Southquay Greenway west has commenced and the date for completion is expected to be February 2015. This project has sold 306 dwellings on the western side of Tuggeranong Pond. The dwellings were sold in March this year.

The remaining areas of commercial and residential development will be released by the Land Development Agency over the coming three financial years. The entire development of this estate will consist of 13 mixed use blocks which will incorporate approximately 1,000 residential dwellings ranging from medium to high density in nature.

On the western side, approximately 3,300 square metres of commercial gross floor area will also be available. Sites with frontage of Anketell Street will allow for buildings up to six to eight storeys, plus an allowance for three higher buildings of up to 12 storeys. In order to maximise lake use for residents, there will be a step-down effect in the development until the developments closest to the water's edge will consist of developments of no more than two to three storeys.

On the eastern side of Tuggeranong Pond buildings of two to three storeys will be permitted between the edge of the pond and Drakeford Drive. The sites on the eastern side of Tuggeranong Pond are the subject of a draft variation to the territory plan and are expected to be released for development by the LDA in the 2016-17 financial year.

The development of this area is guided by the Tuggeranong town centre master plan and it is a perfect example of the elements of a master plan, such as building height recommendations, coming into action.

MADAM SPEAKER: Supplementary question, Mr Coe.

MR COE: Minister, since becoming minister responsible for planning, have any of the three backbench Ginninderra MLAs contacted you about master planning in Belconnen?

MR GENTLEMAN: We have not had any direct conversations about master planning in Belconnen at this stage, but it is early days and I look forward to working with my colleagues both on this side of the chamber and on the other side of the chamber.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Ms Berry.

MS BERRY: Minister, can you update the Assembly how the Kingswim facility at Calwell will benefit the local community?

Mr Coe interjecting—

MADAM SPEAKER: Mr Coe, I am feeling that the outbreak of love may have ceased.

MR GENTLEMAN: I thank Ms Berry for her question and look forward to working with her on master planning across the territory. The Kingswim facility in Calwell will provide employment for approximately 70 people on a long-term basis. Not only will these 70 jobs be provided after its completion, but the project will provide jobs during construction on the site. This facility will also provide more opportunities for exercise and leisure to the local community. During winter the pool will be an especially useful asset for the community, being heated to a warm 34 degrees.

Having this new facility in Calwell will also reduce the travel time and distance for residents of southern Tuggeranong who are already using similar facilities. For people living in Banks, the new facility in Calwell will be approximately 2.7 kilometres closer than the one which already exists in Greenway and approximately 5.7 ks closer than the other similar facility near the Erindale shopping centre.

Members of the Tuggeranong Community Council have shown their support for the Kingswim facility as a great investment in the area which will benefit local residents and schools along with many seniors and provide vital industry jobs. The ACT government has also demonstrated their support with the waiving of the extension of time fees to commence and complete provisions in order to facilitate the development.

The ACT government has also committed to providing a master planning exercise for the Calwell group centre. The master plan is anticipated to start in the second half of this year and, once completed, will provide a long-term strategic planning framework for the group centre that will retain the area's unique character whilst directing and managing future growth as it occurs. The arrival of the Kingswim centre in Calwell will, along with recommendations made through the master plan, improve patronage of the Calwell group centre which, in turn, will provide more jobs and facilities in the community.

Transport—light rail

MR COE: My question is to the Minister for Capital Metro. Minister, the government recently released figures which show 3,500 people will catch capital metro in the morning peak. Minister, why is the government constructing capital metro when less than one per cent of Canberra's population will catch it to work or school?

MR CORBELL: The government is proceeding with the development of this important piece of infrastructure because it is about meeting long-term transport needs for our city. What we know, of course, is that light rail systems, when they have been established in cities around the world, have been genuinely welcomed and, in many instances, over-patronised compared to original passenger projections.

We are establishing the framework for a broader transport network for our city. This is a long-term vision to harness real, effective, rapid transit along key corridors across our city. This is a project that delivers a positive economic benefit for our city. It returns more in economic benefit than it costs to build. It provides real and reliable public transport services along those key inter-town public transport connections, which are always envisaged to be the rapid transit corridors in our transport planning, and have been for as long as the city structure has been established. What we also know is that Canberrans and public transport users generally respond very effectively to the provision of that high-quality rapid service.

It delivers a capacity into the future that buses will never be able to deliver along these key corridors.

Mr Hanson interjecting—

MADAM SPEAKER: Order, Mr Hanson!

MR CORBELL: Buses can deliver a very effective service and a very important service in integrating with the delivery of light rail services. We are very focused on making sure that buses and light rail integrate effectively to provide a much better level of public transport service for our city. But as you, Madam Speaker, have previously observed in some of the commentary you have written on this, what we know is that light rail delivers a carrying capacity, a long-term carrying capacity, that cannot be delivered by a bus network. It delivers a quality of service and a quality of ride that cannot be delivered by bus rapid transit along these corridors.

It allows us to integrate public transport into this corridor in a way that bus rapid transit will never be able to deliver along this corridor. If the view of those on the other side of this chamber is that building bus rapid transit with dedicated priority along this corridor is going to work along this corridor, they have to explain two simple problems. The first is: is it acceptable to turn the median strip of Northbourne Avenue into a two-lane road, because that would be the option? Alternatively, is it acceptable to convert the left-hand lane on either side of Northbourne Avenue into bus rapid transit only and reduce the number of general traffic lanes on Northbourne Avenue from three to two?

Those are the two simple propositions that Mr Coe and those opposite need to address if they continue to assert that bus rapid transit is the best option along Northbourne Avenue. Clearly, bus rapid transit does not stack up in either of those two issues. This is the right long-term investment for our city.

Opposition members interjecting—

MADAM SPEAKER: Order, members!

MR CORBELL: It is a project that is supported by a clear majority of Canberrans. The government will continue to pursue this important city-building project for our city.

MADAM SPEAKER: Before I call Mr Coe, I will call members to order. On a number of occasions I have called Mr Hanson specifically and members of the opposition generally to order. When things went quiet for a while, there was a general outbreak, with the Chief Minister chiming in as well. It is disrespectful to your own colleagues if I am straining to hear Mr Corbell over everybody else. And while we are at it, Mr Corbell is a seasoned campaigner in this place, but the level of interjection over Mr Gentleman, to someone who was answering his first question, was disrespectful. Mr Coe, a supplementary question.

MR COE: Minister, of the 3,500 people who apparently will use capital metro in the morning peak, how many of these people will be travelling north from the city?

MR CORBELL: I do not have that break-up in front of me at the moment but I am happy to provide it to the member. I will take that question on notice.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Mr Doszpot.

MR DOSZPOT: Minister, how can a resident of Amaroo effectively use capital metro to get to work in Barton?

MR CORBELL: There will be a range of opportunities for people right across the Gungahlin district to be able to utilise the services provided by the capital metro light rail route, both in the short term and in the long term. In the short term, what we know is that increasingly people are making choices about the cost of using their private motor vehicle, and the opportunity, for example, to park and ride as part of their transport journey can be very effectively leveraged through light rail. To give you an example, in South Australia, with the extension of the light rail route from the CBD down towards the Adelaide Entertainment Centre, we now see large numbers of people commuting to the entertainment centre, parking their vehicles there, because until recently it was free and is now at a very cheap rate, and avoiding higher parking charges in the city centre.

We expect similar decisions will be made by Canberrans, particularly with the introduction of paid parking in the parliamentary triangle. People are going to make assessments about the relative merits and costs of driving compared to using low-cost, efficient, rapid, reliable, high-quality public transport services. And that is what this new piece of infrastructure is all about. It is about laying the foundations for a better public transport system for our city, particularly between the major centres, and then integrating it effectively with bus services. In the short term there will be very good integration between the light rail service and the existing bus operations at the city interchange.

In the longer term, of course, with this infrastructure in place, there is the capacity to extend it to other parts of the city, in particular locations like Russell, locations like the parliamentary triangle, in the short to medium term. These are real opportunities for our city, and this government is determined to grasp those opportunities. This government is determined to make the investment in the infrastructure our city needs. *(Time expired.)*

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Mr Doszpot.

MR DOSZPOT: Minister, how many tourists does the government assume will catch capital metro every day?

MR CORBELL: The government is not making assessments about tourist use as part of patronage demand for capital metro. Our focus is on commuters, but obviously some tourists will use the light rail network, for whatever reason, depending on their destinations. Over time, as the network grows, there is great capacity for tourists to take further advantage of it.

The focus of this project is about providing real, meaningful choice for commuters, for Canberrans, to move around the city more efficiently, more effectively and in a way that gives them a real and meaningful alternative to the car. We are determined, as a government, to make this important transition—a transition to a more sustainable transport future and a transition towards the provision of public transport infrastructure that meets the long-term needs of our city.

We know that these projects are not without controversy. We know that these projects are not without political debate. But what we also know is that when these investment decisions are made, when the infrastructure is provided, people respond very positively to these projects. We know that a majority of Canberrans can see that vision and they support it. They are out there saying they want the government to get on and do this work, whether it is in Gungahlin or whether it is in Tuggeranong. People are saying they support this project. We will continue to engage both with those who support it and, of course, with those who are sceptical—those that have questions and those that have concerns. The government is committed to engaging with all Canberrans about why this project is so important for the future of our city.

Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders—legal services

MR WALL: My question is to the Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs. Minister, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are overrepresented in our jails and make up a disproportionate percentage of the representation in our court system. At the end of July, the Aboriginal Justice Centre, one of the few accessible legal services available for this section of the community, closed its doors. Minister, what are you doing to ensure that adequate legal representation is available for Indigenous people in the ACT?

MR RATTENBURY: Mr Wall has rightly identified an overrepresentation of Indigenous people right through the justice system. It is an area of great concern. Unfortunately—

Mr Coe interjecting—

MADAM DEPUTY SPEAKER: Mr Coe, I warn you. Mr Rattenbury, the Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs.

MR RATTENBURY: We have seen a very unfortunate situation with the closure of the AJC due to internal problems at the AJC. I have been working with the Attorney-General on this. It is actually funded through Justice and Community Safety and the attorney has lead responsibility on this issue. But I have been working with and speaking to him and his office on this matter regularly. Certainly, two things are happening. One is that JACS has sought to work closely with the AJC over recent months to work through the process of trying to resolve the internal problems the AJC has and that ultimately led to its unfortunate demise.

The second thing is that JACS is now working with a range of other service providers to ensure that at least in the interim alternative arrangements are made to fill certain statutory obligations that the AJC has around providing—the expression is “an interview friend”, essentially, for Indigenous people. This is one of the issues arising out of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody.

Those sorts of statutorily required matters are being addressed through other agencies, through support from JACS. In the medium term JACS is also looking to work to re-establish some sort of alternate service. But it is early days for that. I do not wish to pre-empt any announcements that the attorney might make but work is being done to fill the gap left by the AJC.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Mr Wall.

MR WALL: Minister, what additional resources are being provided to alternative legal representation services to pick up any shortfall in the short term, and when is an announcement likely as to a long-term solution to this problem?

MR CORBELL: Madam Speaker, I will take the question as Attorney-General. I am responsible for oversighting and administration of the grant by the Justice and Community Safety Directorate to the Aboriginal Justice Centre. Regrettably, as Minister Rattenbury has indicated, the Aboriginal Justice Centre has not been able to continue to deliver its services to the Aboriginal community under the funding agreement with the Justice and Community Directorate, and that funding agreement has, therefore, been terminated.

The Justice and Community Safety Directorate is now in close discussion with a range of alternative potential service providers to provide the same services that were previously funded for the AJC to deliver. We are proposing to use the same amount of money that was previously going to the AJC and redirect that funding to alternative service providers. Right now my directorate is in discussion with a range of organisations, such as the Aboriginal Legal Service of New South Wales and the ACT to see whether they are able to pick up and deliver those services.

I have met with the Aboriginal Legal Service of New South Wales and the ACT. They have indicated to me their willingness to undertake in the short to medium term the delivery of a range of the services previously provided by the Aboriginal Justice Centre. I welcome their willingness to step into that gap and to deliver it on a short to medium-term basis while the government works with the broader Indigenous

community, particularly through the new elected body, in resolving the governance and other issues that have created problems with the current AJC and to establish a new community-driven and governed framework for the delivery of those important Aboriginal justice services in our community.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Mrs Jones.

MRS JONES: Minister, what were the reasons leading to the termination and the problems that have been referred to?

MR CORBELL: Fundamentally, the inability of the AJC to meet the deliverables set out in its funding agreement with the government.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Ms Porter.

MS PORTER: I presume this is to the attorney. What other strategies are being implemented to reduce the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people that Mr Wall mentioned in his initial question?

MR CORBELL: I thank Ms Porter for the supplementary. The government remains very committed to addressing the fundamental causes of over-representation of Indigenous people in the criminal justice system. We have had for a period of four to five years an Aboriginal justice agreement with the broader Indigenous community in the ACT, which is designed to set out a whole range of steps and actions to address over-representation driven by disadvantage suffered by Aboriginal people in our community and their interaction with the criminal justice system.

That justice agreement has been the subject of significant negotiation and reformatting for a new justice agreement, which we will now be pursuing with the new elected body, now that the new elected body has been elected and is establishing its portfolio responsibilities and preparing to engage with the government. I want to congratulate those new, as well as those returned, members of the elected body. The government's commitment is to work with them on the finalisation of the justice agreement. Our commitment is to work with them and seek their guidance, views and advice on how we can re-establish a framework for an Aboriginal justice centre in the ACT, because it is a critically needed service. It needs to be community owned and community driven, and it needs to be delivering the outputs that we need to support Aboriginal people when it comes to the problems they face in interactions with the criminal justice system and their over-representation.

We need to tackle the issues associated with reoffending behaviour. We need to tackle the issues with disadvantage that lead to offending behaviour. These are all key issues that we are committed to continuing to address, in engagement with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community in the ACT.

Taxation—payroll tax rate

MR SMYTH: My question is for the Treasurer. Treasurer, in a 17 June 2014 article in the *Canberra Times*, you were quoted for having “pointed out that the ACT

charged one of the lowest rates of payroll tax in the country”. Treasurer, are we lower than New South Wales’s payroll tax rate of 5.45 per cent?

MR BARR: The ACT has the highest threshold for payroll tax in the nation, so for businesses with a payroll of I think about \$4.5 million the payroll tax paid in the ACT is considerably lower than across the border in New South Wales. We have adopted a system where, of I think the 26,000 businesses in the territory, we exempt about 24,000 from paying the tax altogether. So we have the highest threshold, but those who do pay payroll tax pay the highest rate in the nation. That is a deliberate policy choice so as to only hit those who have very large payrolls—largely multinational companies and national-level companies, with a few local players who have a payroll over \$1.85 million.

It is worth noting that payroll tax, while it is not the most efficient tax that we levy, is by no means the least efficient tax that states and territories levy. And it is an important part of the territory’s revenue base. Without it, we would need to cut \$300 million worth of services to this community, and that would be an unacceptable outcome for the government.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Mr Smyth.

MR SMYTH: Treasurer, where does the ACT rank in the country with its payroll tax rate of 6.85 per cent, and how many local players, as you call them, pay payroll tax?

MR BARR: I refer that member to my previous answer. It is the highest rate with the highest threshold. Nearly 24,000 businesses in the territory are exempted altogether. If they were operating in New South Wales, where the payroll tax threshold is around \$600,000, there would be 20,000 businesses in the territory who would be paying payroll tax. That is the New South Wales model. It is a lower rate but they have many more businesses paying it.

Our approach in the ACT is to have a very high threshold to support small and medium-sized enterprises and to only levy payroll tax on businesses with a payroll of more than \$1.85 million. As I have indicated—

Mr Coe interjecting—

MADAM SPEAKER: Order, Mr Coe, you are on a warning.

MR BARR: If the Deputy Leader of the Opposition is arguing that we should extend payroll tax to 20,000 extra businesses, which appears to be the position that he is advocating, let him make that Liberal Party policy. I will very happily have that debate.

But the government’s position is that we have the highest threshold. We exclude the most number of businesses of any jurisdiction in Australia. But we also have the highest rate—and that is acknowledged—at 6.85 per cent. It is a little above other jurisdictions but because we exempt so many businesses by having the highest

threshold I think our system favours small and medium-sized businesses. That is a preferable outcome to the arrangements that are in place across the border in New South Wales.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Mr Wall.

MR WALL: Treasurer, what exactly were you referring to when you made those statements to the *Canberra Times*?

MR BARR: The *Canberra Times* did not, of course, include the complete statement I made, which was that we have the highest threshold—

Opposition members interjecting—

MR BARR: We exempt the most businesses.

Mr Hanson interjecting—

MR BARR: Yes, and for businesses with a payroll of up to \$4.85 million or thereabouts we do, because we exempt them from paying payroll tax. Looking at the rates in other jurisdictions, in Tasmania it is 6.1 per cent and in the Northern Territory and Western Australia it is 5.4. So, yes, we are a little above those jurisdictions, but they have thresholds. In New South Wales, once your payroll goes over \$750,000 you are slugged with payroll tax. If that is your position, if that is what you want, every business—

Mr Hanson: No, we just want you to tell the truth.

MR BARR: If you want every business in the ACT—

MADAM SPEAKER: Mr Barr, address the chair.

Mr Hanson: We just want you to tell the truth.

MR BARR: If the opposition want every business in the ACT with a payroll of more than \$750,000—

MADAM SPEAKER: Sit down, Mr Barr. Can you stop the clock, please? Would you withdraw that, please, Mr Hanson? You said that you wanted Mr Barr to tell the truth. The imputation is that he was lying. Please withdraw the imputation.

Mr Hanson: I withdraw.

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you. Mr Barr.

MR BARR: Thank you, Madam Speaker. As I was saying, in New South Wales, if your payroll hits over \$750,000 you are hit with the payroll tax. In Victoria it is \$550,000. They are the two policy choices—higher threshold, higher rate, or low threshold, low rate. It depends how many businesses you want to catch within your

payroll tax net. We have made the policy decision that we will exempt small and medium size enterprises from payroll tax in the territory. That is a comparative advantage for small and medium size enterprises to locate in Canberra. That is the bulk of our private sector. Nearly 24,000 of the 26,000 businesses that operate in the territory are exempt from payroll tax. That is the policy choice we have made. If those opposite wish to see the payroll tax net extended then, yes, you could. Theoretically, an alternative policy option would be to lower the threshold and lower the rate. (*Time expired.*)

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Mr Wall.

MR WALL: Treasurer, is your payroll tax consistent with your philosophy for taxation policy generally?

MR BARR: Yes, Madam Speaker. We are reforming the territory's taxation system. We are getting rid of the most inefficient taxes. But the Liberal Party seems to have an addiction to inefficient taxes. They are the party that wishes to keep stamp duty and that wants the average homebuyer in this city to be paying \$50,000 on a transaction for stamp duty to purchase the average house. By 2040 Jeremy Hanson, Alistair Coe, Brendan Smyth, Andrew Wall, Steve Doszpot, Nicole Lawder and Giulia Jones want the average Canberran to be paying \$50,000 to purchase a house—just for the right to own a home, Madam Speaker. I exclude you, Madam Speaker, because you are sitting up there independently, but if you wish to join them, you can. I will add you in—Mrs Dunne also wants that.

I know the Liberal Party is opposed to sensible tax reform. We are targeting the most inefficient taxes that we levy—stamp duty and insurance tax. As I said, payroll tax is not the best tax we levy, but it is not the worst either, and that is why we have made adjustment.

Mr Smyth: It is one you're hanging on to desperately.

MR BARR: Again, if the Liberal Party wants to abolish payroll tax, where are you going to get the \$300 million-odd it raises? Where are you going to get that money from? You have just delivered an estimates committee report that says spend more and tax less, and yet you are worried about debt. Well, you cannot have all of that. It is magic pudding economics again from the Liberal Party. There is one party in this place prepared to reform tax to ensure that this territory is able to meet its future service needs so we can fund the schools, the hospitals, the community services, public transport—all of the important things that this community needs with the fairest possible tax system. That is my philosophy, the Labor Party philosophy and what we are working towards.

Education—facilities

MS BERRY: My question is to the Minister for Education and Training and Minister for the Arts. Could you please update the Assembly on upgrades to facilities in your portfolios in Tuggeranong and southern Woden and plans for future upgrades in the region, particularly in early childhood education?

MS BURCH: I thank Ms Berry for her interest. This government has a clear commitment to ensuring that we deliver the very best to our students, and we will maintain that commitment. In early childhood education, we have commenced the upgrade and expansion of the Appletree House Childcare and Education Centre in Wanniasa. This will add more places to the centre and ensure its compliance with the national quality framework. These works will be completed by next January.

Design work is underway to upgrade and extend the Bunyarra Children's Centre in Chisholm and the Salem Children's Centre in Kambah, with construction work expected to be completed in the middle of next year. Works to upgrade and extend Appletree, Bunyarra and Salem are in addition to the recent works that expanded the centre at Taylor Primary School and the Greenway Childcare and Education Centre. When completed, these works will provide an additional 91 childcare places in the Tuggeranong region. Indeed, just on Taylor, members will be aware that earlier this year the Taylor Primary School rectification and renovation created a fantastic new facility for the community in Kambah.

In addition, construction tenders will soon be called for the new Tuggeranong introductory English centre at Wanniasa Hills Primary School. This facility will support Tuggeranong primary school students newly arrived in Australia with intensive English tuition prior to returning to their "home" school.

We also have further planned works, which include a new purpose-built learning support unit at Gowrie Primary School, a virtual learning classroom at Calwell high, the upgrade of school toilets and the front administration area at Gilmore primary—that is in addition to the recent resurfacing of the car park there—a new security fence at Mawson primary, and a new audiovisual system for the hall at Bonython Primary School.

In conjunction with the ACT government's healthy weight initiative, water refill stations will be installed at all schools during this financial year. So by mid next year all of our schools will have a water refill station. They have already been installed at Erindale and Lake Tuggeranong colleges, Namadgi School, Melrose high, Taylor primary and Isabella Plains Early Childhood School.

To support special education students, a new library and refurbishment of two classrooms at Malkara have been completed. This was in addition to the new hydrotherapy pool that was handed over to the school late last year.

MADAM SPEAKER: Supplementary question, Ms Berry.

MS BERRY: Minister, could you tell the Assembly about the work being done at the Lanyon High School with its new virtual learning environment and what that will mean for students in the Lanyon valley.

MS BURCH: The virtual learning environment at Lanyon high was opened at the beginning of this year. It has provided a contemporary resource for innovative thinking and collaborative learning at the Lanyon High School and surrounding

schools. In term 1, 40 students from the Lanyon High School feeder primary schools were invited to participate in a creative writing day and extension mathematics day. Students from the primary schools worked alongside leadership students from Lanyon high to explore creative writing and to participate in drama activities.

Students in years 4, 5 and 6 from the primary schools and years 7 and 8 from Lanyon high worked in multi-age groups to problem solve and build structures in the cluster maths workshop under the guidance of staff and leadership students from Lanyon High School. Further events are planned in science and the performing arts.

Later this term, leadership students will be linking with elderly residents at the retirement village in Gordon using a virtual learning environment. They will use iPads and desktop computers to teach residents how to communicate with their families using email, take photos and videos, use internet banking, online shopping and download applications for everyday use. I look forward to visiting Lanyon high and to see firsthand the great addition to the school.

MADAM SPEAKER: Supplementary question, Dr Bourke.

DR BOURKE: Minister, could you provide information on Melrose High School's new dirt bike track and how this has enhanced outdoor education at the school, given that it serves students in the south Woden area and a number from Tuggeranong?

MS BURCH: I thank Dr Bourke for his interest in dirt bike tracks. I recently had the privilege of joining Paralympian Michael Milton at the opening of the Melrose High School new dirt bike track. The track has turned a previously unused area of the school grounds into an inviting area for physical activity. It also provides another sporting facility for the local community and is proving very popular with many of the young people utilising it after school and a wider cross-section of community members using it over the weekends.

The track will cater for all school levels, from beginners to the more advanced. As an example of how this track is being used, the years 7-8 cycling program now includes a mountain bike component while the students from the years 7-10 learning support unit are using the track to improve their balance and coordination. Previously the only option for students at the school was an excursion to Mount Stromlo mountain bike track. Students can now use the facility on site and are riding a number of times a week.

Stage 1 of this project had a value of \$105,000 and includes the dirt track, shade trees, native understorey plants, an automatic irrigation system and signage. Stage 2 will see a shipping container relocated to be used as a workshop and storage facility, shade sail seating and water refill station and bike racks.

As part of the towards zero growth healthy weight action plan, the ACT government is committed to supporting a healthy, active and productive community through projects such as this. I know, as observed over the weekend, that it has been used by many in the community and is a great addition to Melrose High School.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Ms Porter.

MS PORTER: Minister, what works have recently been undertaken at Lanyon Homestead?

MS BURCH: I thank Ms Porter for her interest in Lanyon Homestead. Lanyon Homestead is, indeed, a very important and much loved part of our Canberra history. Over the past year the ACT government has undertaken major works in the Lanyon heritage precinct, including roadworks to allow future access to a new heritage experience at the woolshed precinct.

We have refurbished the former Nolan Gallery so that it can now be used for heritage displays and education. We have started an audio guide project that will not only enhance the experience for visitors but will also allow Lanyon to cope with larger groups at the three historic sites. An irrigated greenhouse will help staff propagate heirloom variety plants and ensure continuity of plant type in the gardens.

We have also undertaken projects such as fencing improvements to better manage stock grazing, improvements to heritage cottages, reinstating the stone barn historic display of convict life at Lanyon, commencing the restoration of an historic hedge and improved signage to help visitors navigate themselves through the homestead precinct.

This is all work that demonstrates the ACT government's commitment to this important site. Indeed, I am a frequent visitor to Lanyon. It is an absolutely wonderful piece of the ACT. I encourage those that have not visited to please go down and do so.

Budget—infrastructure costs

MS LAWDER: My question is to the Treasurer: key elements of the government's increased expenses in the outyears include its projects for the University of Canberra public hospital, capital metro, and the courts project, which amount to approximately \$1.3 billion. Treasurer, when will you make details of the total cost of the individual projects available to the Assembly?

MR BARR: When they are procured.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Ms Lawder.

MS LAWDER: Treasurer, what is the time frame of the spending for these projects?

MR BARR: Over the forward estimates period and beyond.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Dr Bourke.

DR BOURKE: Minister, could you tell us more about the benefits of these projects to the territory?

MR BARR: These projects, of course, bring a range of benefits to service delivery within the territory, focusing on areas of health, the justice system and also public transportation. There are a number of projects that are contained within the government's forward infrastructure agenda that not only contribute to the social and cultural life of the city but also add to our capacity to deliver services in a cost-effective way.

The rollout of these projects over the rest of this decade and beyond will contribute significantly to employment opportunities and will also leverage new private sector investment into our economy. The projects that are aligned with the city plan, the city to the lake work, obviously have significant opportunities for private sector investment. That investment is being sought internationally, nationally and locally, and with tremendous success. In recent times we have seen significant international interest. The purchase of all five sites associated with the Campbell 5 land release is a good indication of the level of international interest in investment in Canberra. We will continue to pursue this through the Invest Canberra arm of the Economic Development Directorate, as well as the work that the Chief Minister and I are undertaking in China, South-East Asia, North America and other key investment markets for the ACT.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Mr Coe.

MR COE: Treasurer, what BCR does Treasury require for each of these projects to get off the ground?

MR BARR: That will vary depending on the nature of the project. Some obviously are social infrastructure and so have a variety of benefits to the community beyond just the economic. Things of that vein include the convention centre, new stadia facilities and new hospitals, for example, none of which would have an anticipated economic return to the government. They may have a return to the territory, but it would be difficult to quantify all of those in the longer term. So in terms of social procurement we look at a range of factors.

In terms of investment in infrastructure that might generate a return to the budget, we would certainly be looking for a return greater than one.

Budget—ICT cost savings

MR DOSZPOT: My question is to the Treasurer. Treasurer, you announced savings of approximately \$93.6 million over four years with a focus on generating these through the use of digital and online technology. What proportion of these savings will be derived through the government's ICT initiatives?

MR BARR: Over time, a significant proportion. We are certainly looking at the opportunity to have the bulk of transactions with the territory government undertaken utilising digital means, be that through apps and smartphone payments or online on the web. We recognise that the cost of a face-to-face transaction with the ACT government is approximately \$10 per transaction. That can be reduced to 1c, or thereabouts, per transaction if it is undertaken online.

We also recognise the fact that the community is demanding 24/7 access to government services and also the capacity to interact with government in terms of the various fees and charges that apply. We should be able to do that online. That trend is growing so we need to regularly update our systems in order to, firstly, achieve a level of service to the community that is commensurate with their expectations and, secondly, continue to drive reduced costs across service delivery.

We will look at a variety of measures. There are a number of projects that are underway. We look forward to the successful delivery and procurement of those particular solutions and lower administrative costs into the future.

MADAM SPEAKER: Supplementary question, Mr Doszpot.

MR DOSZPOT: Will the government be replacing low-skilled work at service locations with ICT workers?

MR BARR: I think that, over the longer term, that is a reasonable expectation that has occurred in most areas of management of high-volume transactions. Consumers are making that shift. What we as the government can certainly look to do across our workforce of nearly 20,000 staff is provide new, higher skilled opportunities to invest in the training and development of our staff and provide a range of career options. We look forward, as these projects and this evolution continue, to being able to deliver better services to the people of Canberra and to add more value. We see clearly a role for staff to be able to add value, but in terms of manual processing jobs, particularly in relation to the payment of charges and the like to government, it is a reasonable expectation that, over time, more of those will be automated. Consumers will drive that, simply by making their payments online.

MADAM SPEAKER: Supplementary question, Mr Smyth.

MR SMYTH: Treasurer, will ICT workers who develop and maintain the government's ICT initiatives be all locally sourced?

MR BARR: No, they would not all be locally sourced. I imagine that the vast majority will but there will be obviously some pieces of work that may be tendered for by companies that operate nationally or internationally but that have a presence in the ACT. Our procurement guidelines certainly give a weighting in favour of local SMEs, "local" defined as the capital region of councils. So there is a weighting in favour of locals. I guess it would depend on what your definition is. Are people who work for Microsoft but who are based in Canberra local or not? My view is yes, they are.

Certainly, there will be opportunities for partnerships between smaller local providers with larger multinational or national level companies. We do not need to reinvent the wheel in some new systems. We can certainly adopt or adapt systems that are in place in other councils or other state governments. So I imagine there will be a mixture of opportunity but we are very conscious of the economic development opportunities that this agenda presents to this community and we look forward to working with the local industry in order to maximise the outcomes for them from this government procurement.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Mr Smyth.

MR SMYTH: Treasurer, will any of these services to be delivered through ICT be processed outside the ACT or include processing outside the ACT?

MR BARR: I think that will potentially depend on the location of servers. I would imagine that the bulk of transactions will take place within the ACT but I could not rule in or out anything at this stage. We will get best value for money for taxpayers. We will ensure that we can deliver services efficiently because, in the end, we wish to maximise the level of resource we can apply to community services, to our health system, to our education system, to our public transportation system—to the range of areas that the community expects us to focus on—and to minimise our administrative costs in order to maximise the level of resource we can apply to services that directly impact on the lives of Canberrans.

Roads—Ashley Drive

DR BOURKE: My question is to the Minister for Territory and Municipal Services: with the further 2014-15 budget allocation for stage 2 of the duplication of Ashley Drive in Tuggeranong, can you inform the Assembly of how this will progress this project?

MR RATTENBURY: Ashley Drive is an area where the government already has a range of works underway. The members who have driven out there recently will have seen the works taking place at the northern end of that corridor, particularly the end near the Erindale centre. We have just seen the opening of new traffic lights on the corner of Comrie Street and Ashley Drive, which have improved safety, particularly during the busy evening shopping peak period at the Erindale centre. They have just been opened in the past week or so, and the early indications are that they have been beneficial for commuters in that area.

In terms of the broader forward plans for Ashley Drive stage 2, which I think was the key part of Dr Bourke's question—although I had trouble hearing him at the end with the interjecting that was going on—approximately 22,000 vehicles a day use Ashley Drive south of Erindale Drive, which is causing congestion issues. The forward design of stage 2 works started in late 2013. That includes the duplication of Ashley Drive from Johnson Drive to Erindale Drive, installation of traffic signals at a number of intersection as well as upgrade of other intersections and a range of other measures necessary to go with that, such as the duplication of bridges over existing pedestrian underpasses between Isabella Drive and Ashley Drive. That design work is currently underway and funds will be sought in future budget preparations.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Dr Bourke.

DR BOURKE: Minister, what is the current expected completion date for stage 1 of the project and what is this going to deliver to those travelling in Tuggeranong?

MR RATTENBURY: Yes, the stage 1 works are currently underway. In the 2013-14 budget \$7 million was authorised for the construction of Ashley Drive upgrade stage 1

works. The works began in September 2013 and they are currently nearing completion. The road is expected to be open to traffic in September 2014. However, the final phase of asphalt works is planned for November 2014. That is due to needing warmer weather to ensure that the quality of pavement is achieved.

There are a range of benefits arising from stage 1. These include the duplication of Erindale Drive between Ashley Drive and Sternberg Crescent, the installation of part-time traffic metering signals on Sternberg Crescent at the intersection with Erindale Drive, the signalisation of Ashley Drive at the intersection with McBryde Crescent, an additional slip lane on Erindale Drive southbound into Sternberg Crescent, and improvements to the shared path network connecting the suburbs of Gowrie and Monash with the Erindale group centre.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary question, Mr Smyth.

MR SMYTH: Minister, when will the section of Erindale Drive between Ashley Drive and Sternberg be completed?

MR RATTENBURY: Erindale Drive between Ashley Drive and Sternberg? If I understood Mr Smyth correctly, they are the ones I was just referring to. The road is due to be opened to traffic in September this year, with the subsequent asphalt works in November due to warmer weather. If I have misunderstood you geographically, Mr Smyth, I am happy to come back to you on notice.

Mr Smyth: How can it open in September if you are doing the asphalt in October?

MR RATTENBURY: Upgraded surface.

MADAM SPEAKER: No conversation! A supplementary question, Ms Berry.

MS BERRY: What are some of the other transport infrastructure projects that were funded in the 2014-15 budget that will benefit the residents of Tuggeranong?

MR RATTENBURY: I will take that question on notice and provide the full details to Ms Berry.

Ms Gallagher: I ask that all further questions be placed on the notice paper.

Assistant Speaker

MADAM SPEAKER: Pursuant to the provisions of standing order 8, I have revoked the appointment of Mr Gentleman as an Assistant Speaker and nominated Dr Bourke as an Assistant Speaker. I present the following paper:

Pursuant to the provisions of standing order 8, I—

1. revoke the nomination of Mr Gentleman as an Assistant Speaker; and
2. nominate Dr Bourke to act as an Assistant Speaker.

Given under my hand on 31 July 2014.

Vicki Dunne MLA
Speaker
31 July 2014

Papers

Madam Speaker presented the following papers that were circulated to members when the Assembly was not sitting:

Auditor-General Act—Auditor-General's Reports—

No 4/2014—Gastroenterology and Hepatology Unit, Canberra Hospital, dated 6 June 2014.

No 5/2014—Capital Works Reporting, dated 27 June 2014.

Madam Speaker presented the following papers:

Standing order 191—Amendments to the Information Privacy Bill 2014, dated 10 June 2014.

Legislative Assembly for the Australian Capital Territory—Office of the Legislative Assembly—Budget Protocols for the Office of the Legislative Assembly, signed by the Speaker and the Chief Minister, dated 24 June 2014.

Estimates 2014-2015—Select Committee—Schedule of outstanding answers to questions on notice.

Executive contracts

Papers and statement by minister

MS GALLAGHER (Molonglo—Chief Minister, Minister for Health, Minister for Higher Education and Minister for Regional Development): For the information of members I present the following papers:

Public Sector Management Act, pursuant to sections 31A and 79—Copies of executive contracts or instruments—

Long-term contracts:

Brett Stanton, dated 29 May 2014.

Coralie McAlister, dated 27 May 2014.

Craig Simmons, dated 30 April and 2 July 2014.

Damon Hall, dated 30 April and 27 May 2014.

Gary Byles, dated 13 and 16 June 2014.

Glenn Lacey, dated 1 July 2014.

Mary Toohey, dated 2 July 2014.

Moira Crowhurst, dated 16 and 21 May 2014.

Tracy Stewart, dated 14 July 2014.

Short-term contracts:

Andrew McIntosh, dated 2 July 2014.
Anita Hargreaves, dated 4 and 7 July 2014.
Brett Monger, dated 2 July 2014.
Bruce Fitzgerald, dated 7 and 8 July 2014.
Carolyn Grayson, dated 19 June 2014.
Carolyn O'Neill, dated 1 July 2014.
Christopher Wilson, dated 28 and 30 May 2014.
Conrad Barr, dated 22 and 27 May 2014.
Daniel Childs, dated 14 and 16 July 2014.
David Collett, dated 30 June 2014.
David Miller, dated 24 and 30 June 2014.
Geoffrey Rutledge, dated 1 and 2 July 2014.
Greg Corben, dated 9 and 21 May 2014.
John Rees, dated 2 and 3 July 2014.
Leanne Power, dated 1 and 2 July 2014.
Leesha Pitt, dated 16 and 17 July 2014.
Lisa Salerno, dated 19 and 20 June 2014.
Marina Buchanan-Grey, dated 4 and 7 July 2014.
Mark Whybrow, dated 26 and 27 May 2014.
Maureen Sheehan, dated 25 and 26 June 2014.
Michael Young, dated 1 and 16 July 2014.
Peter Gillin, dated 14 and 15 July 2014.
Robert Gotts, dated 12 and 13 June 2014.
Sushila Sharma, dated 29 May 2014.
Timothy Norris, dated 17 July 2014.
Wilhelmina Blount, dated 25 and 26 June 2014.

Contract variations:

Andrew Kefford, dated 1 July 2014.
Andrew Parkinson, dated 23 and 26 June 2014.
Ann Lyons Wright, dated 30 May 2014.
Austin Kenney, dated 25 and 26 June 2014.
Bronwen Overton-Clarke (2), dated 21 and 23 May 2014 and 24 and 26 June 2014.
Carolyn Grayson, dated 10 and 11 July 2014.
Christine Nolan, dated 20 and 23 June 2014.

David Colussi, dated 2 July 2014.
David Dawes, dated 7 July 2014.
Fiona Barbaro, dated 1 July 2014.
Geoffrey Rutledge, dated 6 and 23 May 2014.
Helen Pappas, dated 23 June 2014.
Jacinta George, dated 22 and 23 May 2014.
Joanne Rosewarne, dated 19 and 20 June 2014.
Kate Starick, dated 29 May 2014.
Mark Collis, dated 20 June 2014.
Paul Wyles, dated 20 and 23 June 2014.
Russell Noud, dated 2 July 2014.
Somasunderam Jeyendren, dated 25 and 26 June 2014.
Steve Wright, dated 21 and 23 May 2014.
Tracey Allen, dated 16 and 27 May 2014.

I seek leave to make a short statement in relation to the papers.

Leave granted.

MS GALLAGHER: I present another set of executive contracts. These documents are tabled in accordance with sections 31A and 79 of the Public Sector Management Act, which require the tabling of all director-general and executive contracts and contract variations. Today I present nine long-term contracts, 26 short-term contracts, and 22 contract variations. The details of the contracts will be circulated to members.

Financial Management Act Paper and statement by minister

MR BARR (Molonglo—Deputy Chief Minister, Treasurer, Minister for Economic Development, Minister for Housing and Minister for Tourism and Events): For the information of members I present the following paper:

Financial Management Act, pursuant to section 18A—Statement of authorisation of expenditure from the Treasurer's Advance in 2013-2014.

I ask leave to make a statement in relation to the paper.

Leave granted.

MR BARR: Section 18A(3) of the Financial Management Act requires that where I, as Treasurer, have authorised Treasurer's advance expenditure under section 18, within three sitting days after the end of the financial year I must present to the Assembly a summary of the total expenditure authorised for that financial year.

The Appropriation Act 2013-2014 provided for \$28.1 million for the Treasurer's advance. The final expenditure against the Treasurer's advance for the 2013-14 financial year was approximately \$20.3 million. On each occasion other avenues of cash management were explored prior to providing a Treasurer's advance to the relevant directorate.

The Treasurer's advance is made available for urgent and unforeseen expenditure. In 2013-14 the major additional costs for agencies that were not foreseen at the time of the original budget included the inquiry into the conviction of Mr Eastman, higher than expected demand for emergency clients, aged care and disability services experienced by the Community Services Directorate, unexpected sporting facilities maintenance for the Canberra Olympic Pool and Gungahlin Leisure Centre, the funding of short-term cash flow needs needed for a number of directorates until the anticipated passage of the Appropriation Bill 2013-14 (No 2), and higher than expected demand for working with vulnerable people background checks.

I have presented the statement of authorisation, and I commend the fiscal year statement to the Assembly.

Financial Management Act Papers and statement by minister

MR BARR (Molonglo—Deputy Chief Minister, Treasurer, Minister for Economic Development, Minister for Housing and Minister for Tourism and Events): For the information of members I present the following papers:

Financial Management Act—Instruments, including statements of reasons, pursuant to:

Section 14—Directing a transfer of funds within—

Commerce and Works Directorate—

Dated 12 and 16 June 2014.

Dated 5 June 2014.

Community Services Directorate, dated 12 and 16 June 2014.

Economic Development Directorate, dated 30 June 2014.

Section 16—Directing a transfer of appropriations from the Economic Development Directorate to the Justice and Community Safety Directorate, dated 16 June 2014.

Section 16A—Authorising appropriation for payment of accrued employee entitlements within the Legal Aid Commission (ACT), dated 22 June 2014.

Section 17—Varying appropriations relating to Commonwealth funding to—

Community Services Directorate, dated 22 June 2014.

Education and Training Directorate—

Dated 30 June 2014.

Dated 30 June 2014.

Dated 30 June 2014.

Health Directorate, dated 30 June 2014.

Territory and Municipal Services Directorate, dated 24 June 2014.

Section 18A—Authorisations of expenditure from the Treasurer's Advance to—

Community Services Directorate, dated 16 June 2014.

Economic Development Directorate, dated 24 June 2014.

Housing ACT, dated 24 June 2014.

Justice and Community Safety Directorate—

Dated 17 June 2014.

Dated 24 June 2014.

Dated 24 June 2014.

Section 19B—Varying appropriations related to—

Commonwealth Grants—

Long Stay Older Patients NP, dated 24 June 2014.

Public Hospital System—Additional Funding NP, dated 30 June 2014.

Commonwealth/State and Territory Joint Group Training Program National Partnership, dated 30 June 2014.

Industry and Indigenous Skills Centres National Partnership, dated 30 June 2014.

I seek leave to make a statement in relation to the papers.

Leave granted.

MR BARR: As required by the FMA, I have tabled a number of instruments issued under sections 14, 16, 16A, 17, 18 and 19B of the act. Advice on each instrument's direction and a statement of reasons must be tabled in the Assembly within three sitting days after it is approved, so I have tabled a total of 22 instruments today.

Section 14 of the FMA allows for the transfer of funds between appropriations as endorsed by me and another minister. This package includes four such instruments authorised under section 14. The first transfers \$2 million of capital injection, territorial, to expenses on behalf of the territory within the then Commerce and Works Directorate in relation to first home owner grants. The second instrument transfers \$1.874 million of the capital injection, controlled, area to the net cost of outputs for the then Economic Development Directorate for the ACT film investment fund, and for the government office building project.

The third instrument transfers \$1.4 million of expenses on behalf of the territory appropriation to the net cost of outputs for the Community Services Directorate to meet cost pressures within the directorate. The fourth instrument transfers \$500,000 from the then Commerce and Works Directorate's net cost of outputs appropriation to

the capital injection, controlled, appropriation in relation to the investment in finance and human resources improvement initiative.

Under section 16, which provides for the transfer of responsibility for a service or function from an entity for which an appropriation is made to another entity, I have presented one instrument today in relation to the management and responsibility of the smart parking project, which transfers \$2.1 million in a capital injection, controlled, appropriation from the then Economic Development Directorate to the Justice and Community Safety Directorate.

Section 16A of the FMA enables the provision of additional appropriation for payment of accrued employee entitlements as directed by me. I present one section 16A instrument today in relation to the Legal Aid Commission's higher than appropriation funded accumulated long-service leave entitlement of \$151,259 which was paid out during the financial year.

Section 17 of the FMA allows for variations to appropriation where there is an increase in existing commonwealth payments for a specific purpose. This package today includes six such instruments. The first provides an increase of \$36.4 million in the capital injection, controlled, appropriation for the Territory and Municipal Services Directorate in relation to the Majura parkway project. The second instrument provides an increase of \$1.464 million in expenses on behalf of the territory appropriation for the Education and Training Directorate in relation to the national education reform (students first) non-government schools grant.

The third instrument provides \$1.104 million in capital injection, controlled, appropriation, again to the Education and Training Directorate, in relation to the trade training centres schools (government schools) national partnership. The fourth instrument provides an increase of \$464,000 in the net cost of outputs appropriation, again to the Education and Training Directorate, in relation to the national education reform (students first) government schools grant.

The fifth instrument provides an increase of \$234,000 in capital injection, controlled, appropriation, this time for the Health Directorate in relation to the health and hospital fund projects—national cancer system national partnership agreement. The sixth instrument in this area provides for an increase of \$106,000 in expenses on behalf of the territory appropriation for the Community Services Directorate in relation to the pensioners and senior card holders national partnership agreement.

Section 18 of the act allows me to authorise expenditure from the Treasurer's advance. I have presented six instruments today. The first is for \$3.997 million in expenses on behalf of the territory appropriation to the Justice and Community Safety Directorate for the additional costs to ACT Policing in relation to the Eastman inquiry and for legal and compensation expenses.

The second instrument provides \$2.8 million in the net cost of outputs appropriation to the Community Services Directorate to address a number of cost pressures, mainly relating to additional demand experienced for emergency clients, aged care and disability services. The third instrument provides \$2.116 million in net cost of outputs

appropriation to the then Economic Development Directorate to address urgent repairs to the Canberra Olympic Pool, the operating costs of the Gungahlin Leisure Centre and a one-day international cricket match.

The fourth instrument provides \$1.767 million in net cost of outputs appropriation to the Justice and Community Safety Directorate for additional costs related to the board of inquiry into the conviction of Mr David Eastman. The fifth instrument provides \$244,000 in net cost of outputs appropriation to the Justice and Community Safety Directorate to meet costs associated with judges' entitlements as a result of the Remuneration Tribunal determinations. The sixth and final instrument provides the princely sum of \$30,000 in net cost of outputs appropriation to Housing ACT for supported accommodation to apprentices and trainees.

Finally, section 19B of the FMA allows for the authorisation of expenditure of certain commonwealth grants. This package today includes four such instruments. The first provides an increase of \$4.373 million in the net cost of outputs appropriation for the ACT local hospital network in relation to the commonwealth public hospital system—additional funding national partnership agreement.

The second instrument provides an increase of \$3.207 million in the net cost of outputs appropriation, again for the Health Directorate, in relation to the commonwealth long stay older patients national partnership agreement. The third instrument provides an increase of \$293,000 in the net cost of outputs appropriation, this time to the Education and Training Directorate, in relation to the commonwealth/state and territory joint group training program national partnership. The final instrument provides an increase of \$55,000 in the net cost of outputs appropriation to the Education and Training Directorate in relation to the industry and Indigenous skills centres national partnership.

Additional details regarding all of the instruments are provided in the statement of reasons accompanying each of them that I have tabled today. I commend them to the Assembly.

Independent Competition and Regulatory Commission—reports

Papers and statement by minister

MR BARR (Molonglo—Deputy Chief Minister, Treasurer, Minister for Economic Development, Minister for Housing and Minister for Tourism and Events): For the information of members I present the following papers:

Independent Competition and Regulatory Commission Act, pursuant to section 24—Independent Competition and Regulatory Commission—

Report 4 of 2014—Standing offer prices for the supply of electricity to small customers—1 July 2014 to 30 June 2017—Final report, dated 13 June 2014.

Report 5 of 2014—Standing offer prices for the supply of electricity to small customers—1 July 2014 to 30 June 2017—Price direction.

I ask leave to make a statement in relation to the papers.

Leave granted.

MR BARR: I present to the Assembly two final reports of the ICRC. The ICRC Act 1997 requires the referring authority for an investigation to present the Assembly with the final report of those investigations undertaken by the commission. As the referring authority for these investigations, I present the commission's final report and price direction for the standing offer prices for the supply of electricity to small customers in the ACT from 1 July 2014 to 30 June 2017.

The prices outlined in these reports are the electricity prices charged by ActewAGL to residential users on a standard retail contract. It is estimated that these prices apply to 81 per cent of all ACT small customers. The final report and price direction was the result of an extensive investigation by the ICRC which was informed by consultation with the community, ActewAGL and the government.

As a result of the changes to carbon pricing that have occurred at the commonwealth level, the ICRC calculated two standing offer prices: one with a price on carbon and the other without. As the Australian government repealed the carbon tax legislation on 17 July, the price without carbon determination has now taken effect.

The ICRC has determined that the impact of removing the price on carbon will be a price decrease of 7.3 per cent compared to 2013-14 prices. For an average household consuming 8,000 kilowatt hours a year this would mean a decrease of \$143 in electricity bills in 2014-15. The ICRC's final report for retail prices to small customers takes into account a decrease in energy purchase costs for retailers as well as the costs of the ACT's small-scale and large-scale solar auction schemes.

The ICRC advises that the ACT small-scale and large-scale solar auction schemes will cost \$21.8 million in 2014-15, which translates to around \$69 per household per annum. The costs of the ACT small-scale and large-scale solar auction schemes account for around 4.6 per cent of the regulated energy prices.

ActewAGL has released an updated schedule of charges from 1 July 2014 which takes into account the removal of the carbon price for ACT customers. These charges have been approved by the ICRC as consistent with the pricing decisions for customers who are on a standard retail contract.

I commend both reports to the Assembly.

Papers

Mr Corbell presented the following papers:

Developing an ACT crisis response to women with disabilities who experience domestic violence and/or sexual assault—Report of the ACT Disability and Community Services Commissioner, dated 27 June 2014.

Legislation (Penalty Units) Amendment Bill 2014—Revised presentation speech.

Subordinate legislation (including explanatory statements unless otherwise stated)

Legislation Act, pursuant to section 64—

ACT Teacher Quality Institute Act—ACT Teacher Quality Institute Board Appointment 2014 (No 2)—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-68 (LR, 29 May 2014).

Adoption Act—Adoption (Fees) Determination 2014 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-199 (LR, 30 June 2014).

Agents Act—Agents (Fees) Determination 2014—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-116 (LR, 12 June 2014).

Animal Diseases Act—Animal Diseases (Fees) Determination 2014 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-167 (LR, 30 June 2014).

Animal Welfare Act—

Animal Welfare (Australian Code for the Care and Use of Animals for Scientific Purposes) Code of Practice 2014 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-195 (LR, 30 June 2014).

Animal Welfare (Fees) Determination 2014 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-168 (LR, 30 June 2014).

Animal Welfare Amendment Regulation 2014 (No 1)—Subordinate Law SL2014-13 (LR, 30 June 2014).

Architects Act—

Architects (Fees) Determination 2014 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-149 (LR, 26 June 2014).

Architects Board Appointment 2014 (No 2)—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-223 (LR, 18 July 2014).

Associations Incorporation Act—Associations Incorporation (Fees) Determination 2014—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-117 (LR, 12 June 2014).

Births, Deaths and Marriages Registration Act—Births, Deaths and Marriages Registration (Fees) Determination 2014—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-118 (LR, 12 June 2014).

Building Act—Building (Fees) Determination 2014 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-150 (LR, 26 June 2014).

Building and Construction Industry Training Levy Act and Financial Management Act—

Building and Construction Industry Training Levy (Governing Board) Appointment 2014 (No 2)—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-74 (LR, 2 June 2014).

Building and Construction Industry Training Levy (Governing Board) Appointment 2014 (No 3)—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-73 (LR, 2 June 2014).

Building and Construction Industry Training Levy (Governing Board) Appointment 2014 (No 4)—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-75 (LR, 2 June 2014).

Building and Construction Industry Training Levy (Governing Board) Appointment 2014 (No 5)—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-76 (LR, 2 June 2014).

Casino Control Act—Casino Control (Fees) Determination 2014 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-108 (LR, 10 June 2014).

Cemeteries and Crematoria Act—Cemeteries and Crematoria (Public Cemetery Fees) Determination 2014 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-188 (LR, 30 June 2014).

Civil Law (Wrongs) Act—

Civil Law (Wrongs) (Fees) Determination 2014—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-110 (LR, 12 June 2014).

Civil Law (Wrongs) Institute of Chartered Accountants in Australia Professional Standards Scheme (ACT) 2014 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-222 (LR, 17 July 2014).

Civil Law (Wrongs) Law Society of Western Australia Scheme 2014 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-98 (LR, 5 June 2014).

Civil Law (Wrongs) Professional Standards Council Appointment 2014 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-86 (LR, 5 June 2014).

Civil Law (Wrongs) Western Australian Bar Association Scheme 2014 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-189 (LR, 30 June 2014).

Civil Unions Act—Civil Unions (Fees) Determination 2014—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-111 (LR, 12 June 2014).

Classification (Publications, Films and Computer Games) (Enforcement) Act—Classification (Publications, Films and Computer Games) (Enforcement) (Fees) Determination 2014—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-119 (LR, 12 June 2014).

Clinical Waste Act—Clinical Waste (Fees) Determination 2014 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-151 (LR, 26 June 2014).

Community Title Act—Community Title (Fees) Determination 2014 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-152 (LR, 26 June 2014).

Construction Occupations (Licensing) Act—Construction Occupations Licensing (Fees) Determination 2014 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-153 (LR, 27 June 2014).

Cooperatives Act—Cooperatives (Fees) Determination 2014—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-120 (LR, 12 June 2014).

Court Procedures Act—

Court Procedures (Fees) Determination 2014 (No 2)—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-112 (LR, 12 June 2014).

Court Procedures Amendment Rules 2014 (No 2)—Subordinate Law SL2014-9 (LR, 30 June 2014).

Crimes (Child Sex Offenders) Act—Crimes (Child Sex Offenders) Amendment Regulation 2014 (No 1)—Subordinate Law SL2014-14 (LR, 10 July 2014).

Dangerous Goods (Road Transport) Act—Dangerous Goods (Road Transport) Fees and Charges Determination 2014 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-94 (LR, 3 June 2014).

Dangerous Substances Act—Dangerous Substances (Fees) Determination 2014—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-121 (LR, 12 June 2014).

Disability Services Act—

Disability Services (Specialist Disability Service Types) Declaration 2014 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-190 (LR, 30 June 2014).

Disability Services Approved Standard 2014 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-191 (LR, 30 June 2014).

Disability Services Regulation 2014—Subordinate Law SL2014-12 (LR, 30 June 2014).

Domestic Animals Act—Domestic Animals (Fees) Determination 2014 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-169 (LR, 30 June 2014).

Education Act—

Education (Government Schools Education Council) Appointment 2014 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-70 (LR, 2 June 2014).

Education (Government Schools Education Council) Appointment 2014 (No 2)—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-69 (LR, 23 June 2014).

Education (Non-Government Schools Education Council) Appointment 2014 (No 2)—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-71 (LR, 5 June 2014).

Education (Non-Government Schools Education Council) Appointment 2014 (No 3)—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-72 (LR, 7 July 2014).

Education (Non-Government Schools Education Council) Appointment 2014 (No 4)—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-95 (LR, 5 June 2014).

Education (Non-Government Schools Education Council) Appointment 2014 (No 5)—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-96 (LR, 5 June 2014).

Electoral Act—Electoral (Fees) Determination 2014—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-67 (LR, 26 May 2014).

Electricity Feed-in (Large-scale Renewable Energy Generation) Act—Electricity Feed-in (Large-scale Renewable Energy Generation) FiT Capacity Release Determination 2014 (No 2)—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-107 (LR, 16 June 2014).

Electricity Safety Act—Electricity Safety (Fees) Determination 2014 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-154 (LR, 26 June 2014).

Emergencies Act—Emergencies (Fees) Determination 2014—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-122 (LR, 12 June 2014).

Environment Protection Act—

Environment Protection (Consultation on Application for Environmental Authorisation) Declaration 2014—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-221 (LR, 10 July 2014).

Environment Protection (Fees) Determination 2014 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-155 (LR, 26 June 2014).

Fair Trading (Motor Vehicle Repair Industry) Act—Fair Trading (Motor Vehicle Repair Industry) (Fees) Determination 2014—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-123 (LR, 12 June 2014).

Firearms Act—Firearms (Fees) Determination 2014—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-113 (LR, 12 June 2014).

First Home Owner Grant Act—First Home Owner Grant (Objection Fees) Determination 2014 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-178 (LR, 30 June 2014).

Fisheries Act—Fisheries (Fees) Determination 2014 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-156 (LR, 26 June 2014).

Freedom of Information Act—Freedom of Information (Fees) Determination 2014—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-124 (LR, 12 June 2014).

Gaming Machine Act—Gaming Machine (Fees) Determination 2014 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-109 (LR, 10 June 2014).

Gas Safety Act—Gas Safety (Fees) Determination 2014 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-157 (LR, 27 June 2014).

Guardianship and Management of Property Act—Guardianship and Management of Property (Fees) Determination 2014—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-125 (LR, 12 June 2014).

Hawkers Act—Hawkers (Fees) Determination 2014—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-126 (LR, 12 June 2014).

Health Act—Health (Fees) Determination 2014 (No 3)—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-148 (LR, 26 June 2014).

Heritage Act—

Heritage (Council Member) Appointment 2014 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-101 (LR, 11 June 2014).

Heritage (Council Member) Appointment 2014 (No 2)—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-102 (LR, 11 June 2014).

Heritage (Council Member) Appointment 2014 (No 3)—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-103 (LR, 11 June 2014).

Heritage (Council Member) Appointment 2014 (No 4)—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-104 (LR, 11 June 2014).

Heritage (Council Member) Appointment 2014 (No 5)—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-105 (LR, 11 June 2014).

Heritage (Council Member) Appointment 2014 (No 6)—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-106 (LR, 11 June 2014).

Heritage (Register Fees) Determination 2014 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-158 (LR, 26 June 2014).

Juries Act—Juries (Payment) Determination 2014—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-197 (LR, 30 June 2014).

Land Titles Act—Land Titles (Fees) Determination 2014—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-127 (LR, 12 June 2014).

Legal Aid Act—Legal Aid (Commissioner—Bar Association Nominee) Appointment 2014—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-202 (LR, 3 July 2014).

Legal Profession Act—Legal Profession (Solicitors Practising Fees) Determination 2014—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-194 (LR, 30 June 2014).

Legislative Assembly (Members' Staff) Act—

Legislative Assembly (Members' Staff) Members' Salary Cap Determination 2014 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-160 (LR, 26 June 2014).

Legislative Assembly (Members' Staff) Speaker's Salary Cap Determination 2014 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-159 (LR, 26 June 2014).

Lifetime Care and Support (Catastrophic Injuries) Act—

Lifetime Care and Support (Catastrophic Injuries) Guidelines 2014 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-192 (LR, 30 June 2014).

Lifetime Care and Support (Catastrophic Injuries) Guidelines 2014 (No 2)—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-203 (LR, 3 July 2014).

Lifetime Care and Support (Catastrophic Injuries) Guidelines 2014 (No 3)—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-204 (LR, 3 July 2014).

Lifetime Care and Support (Catastrophic Injuries) Guidelines 2014 (No 4)—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-205 (LR, 3 July 2014).

Lifetime Care and Support (Catastrophic Injuries) Guidelines 2014 (No 5)—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-206 (LR, 3 July 2014).

Lifetime Care and Support (Catastrophic Injuries) Guidelines 2014 (No 6)—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-207 (LR, 3 July 2014).

Lifetime Care and Support (Catastrophic Injuries) Guidelines 2014 (No 7)—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-208 (LR, 7 July 2014).

Lifetime Care and Support (Catastrophic Injuries) Guidelines 2014 (No 8)—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-209 (LR, 7 July 2014).

Lifetime Care and Support (Catastrophic Injuries) Guidelines 2014 (No 9)—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-210 (LR, 7 July 2014).

Lifetime Care and Support (Catastrophic Injuries) Guidelines 2014 (No 10)—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-211 (LR, 7 July 2014).

Lifetime Care and Support (Catastrophic Injuries) Guidelines 2014 (No 11)—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-212 (LR, 10 July 2014).

Lifetime Care and Support (Catastrophic Injuries) Guidelines 2014 (No 12)—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-213 (LR, 10 July 2014).

Lifetime Care and Support (Catastrophic Injuries) Guidelines 2014 (No 13)—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-214 (LR, 10 July 2014).

Lifetime Care and Support (Catastrophic Injuries) Guidelines 2014 (No 14)—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-215 (LR, 10 July 2014).

Lifetime Care and Support (Catastrophic Injuries) Guidelines 2014 (No 15)—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-216 (LR, 10 July 2014).

Lifetime Care and Support (Catastrophic Injuries) Guidelines 2014 (No 16)—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-217 (LR, 10 July 2014).

Lifetime Care and Support (Catastrophic Injuries) Guidelines 2014 (No 17)—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-218 (LR, 10 July 2014).

Liquor Act—Liquor (Fees) Determination 2014—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-128 (LR, 12 June 2014).

Lotteries Act—Lotteries (Fees) Determination 2014 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-144 (LR, 23 June 2014).

Machinery Act—Machinery (Fees) Determination 2014—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-129 (LR, 12 June 2014).

Nature Conservation Act—Nature Conservation (Fees) Determination 2014 (No 2)—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-161 (LR, 26 June 2014).

Official Visitor Act—Official Visitor (Homelessness Services) Visit and Complaint Guidelines 2014—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-87 (LR, 5 June 2014).

Partnership Act—Partnership (Fees) Determination 2014—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-130 (LR, 12 June 2014).

Pawnbrokers Act—Pawnbrokers (Fees) Determination 2014—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-131 (LR, 12 June 2014).

Planning and Development Act—

Planning and Development (Fees) Determination 2014 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-162 (LR, 26 June 2014).

Planning and Development (Remission of Lease Variation Charges for Community Purpose—Childcare Services) Determination 2014 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-97 (LR, 5 June 2014).

Planning and Development (Remission of Lease Variation Charges) Determination 2014 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-201 (LR, 3 July 2014).

Planning and Development Act and Financial Management Act—Planning and Development (Land Agency Board) Appointment 2014 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-143 (LR, 19 June 2014).

Prostitution Act—Prostitution (Fees) Determination 2014—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-114 (LR, 12 June 2014).

Public Baths and Public Bathing Act—

Public Baths and Public Bathing (Active Leisure Centre Fees) Determination 2014—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-193 (LR, 30 June 2014).

Public Baths and Public Bathing Amendment Regulation 2014 (No1)—Subordinate Law SL2014-7 (LR, 10 June 2014).

Public Health Act—Public Health (Chief Health Officer) Appointment 2014 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-141 (LR, 16 June 2014).

Public Sector Management Act—Public Sector Management Amendment Standards 2014 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-66 (LR, 22 May 2014).

Public Trustee Act—Public Trustee (Fees) Determination 2014—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-115 (LR, 12 June 2014).

Public Unleased Land Act—Public Unleased Land (Fees) Determination 2014 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-187 (LR, 30 June 2014).

Race and Sports Bookmaking Act—Race and Sports Bookmaking (Fees) Determination 2014 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-100 (LR, 10 June 2014).

Racing Act—Racing Appeals Tribunal Appointment 2014 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-145 (LR, 26 June 2014).

Rates Act—Rates (Deferral) Determination 2014 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-183 (LR, 30 June 2014).

Rates Act, Land Tax Act and Land Rent Act—Rates, Land Tax and Land Rent (Certificate and Statement Fees) Determination 2014 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-179 (LR, 30 June 2014).

Registration of Deeds Act—Registration of Deeds (Fees) Determination 2014—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-132 (LR, 12 June 2014).

Retirement Villages Act—Retirement Villages (Fees) Determination 2014—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-133 (LR, 12 June 2014).

Road Transport (Driver Licensing) Act and Road Transport (General) Act—Road Transport Legislation Amendment Regulation 2014 (No 2)—Subordinate Law SL2014-8 (LR, 10 June 2014).

Road Transport (General) Act—

Road Transport (General) (Pay Parking Area Fees) Determination 2014—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-142 (LR, 17 June 2014).

Road Transport (General) Driver Licence and Related Fees Determination 2014—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-89 (LR, 3 June 2014).

Road Transport (General) Fees for Publications Determination 2014 (No 2)—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-93 (LR, 3 June 2014).

Road Transport (General) Numberplate Fees Determination 2014 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-90 (LR, 3 June 2014).

Road Transport (General) Parking Permit Fees Determination 2014 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-92 (LR, 3 June 2014).

Road Transport (General) Refund and Dishonoured Payments Fees Determination 2014 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-91 (LR, 3 June 2014).

Road Transport (General) Vehicle Registration and Related Fees Determination 2014 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-88 (LR, 3 June 2014).

Road Transport (General) Vehicle Registration and Related Fees Determination 2014 (No 2)—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-220 (LR, 10 July 2014).

Road Transport (Public Passenger Services) Act—Road Transport (Public Passenger Services) Maximum Fares for Taxi Services Determination 2014 (No 2)—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-147 (LR, 26 June 2014).

Road Transport (Safety and Traffic Management) Act—Road Transport (Safety and Traffic Management) Amendment Regulation 2014 (No 2)—Subordinate Law SL2014-11 (LR, 26 June 2014).

Road Transport (Safety and Traffic Management) Regulation—

Road Transport (Safety and Traffic Management) Parking Authority Declaration 2014 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-198 (LR, 3 July 2014).

Road Transport (Safety and Traffic Management) Parking Authority Declaration 2014 (No 2)—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-219 (LR, 10 July 2014).

Sale of Motor Vehicles Act—Sale of Motor Vehicles (Fees) Determination 2014—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-134 (LR, 12 June 2014).

Scaffolding and Lifts Act—Scaffolding and Lifts (Fees) Determination 2014—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-135 (LR, 12 June 2014).

Second-hand Dealers Act—Second-hand Dealers (Fees) Determination 2014—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-136 (LR, 12 June 2014).

Security Industry Act—Security Industry (Fees) Determination 2014—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-137 (LR, 12 June 2014).

Stock Act—

Stock (Fees) Determination 2014 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-170 (LR, 30 June 2014).

Stock (Levy) Determination 2014 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-171 (LR, 30 June 2014).

Stock (Minimum Stock Levy) Determination 2014 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-172 (LR, 30 June 2014).

Surveyors Act—Surveyors (Fees) Determination 2014 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-163 (LR, 26 June 2014).

Taxation Administration Act—

Taxation Administration (Amounts and Rates—Payroll Tax) Determination 2014 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-180 (LR, 30 June 2014).

Taxation Administration (Amounts Payable—Duty) Determination 2014 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-83 (LR, 3 June 2014).

Taxation Administration (Amounts Payable—Duty) Determination 2014 (No 2)—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-186 (LR, 30 June 2014).

Taxation Administration (Amounts Payable—Home Buyer Concession Scheme) Determination 2014 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-175 (LR, 30 June 2014).

Taxation Administration (Amounts Payable—Land Rent) Determination 2014 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-176 (LR, 30 June 2014).

Taxation Administration (Amounts payable—Over 60s Home Bonus Scheme) Determination 2014 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-84 (LR, 3 June 2014).

Taxation Administration (Amounts Payable—Pensioner Duty Concession Scheme) Determination 2014 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-85 (LR, 3 June 2014).

Taxation Administration (Land Tax) Determination 2014 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-181 (LR, 30 June 2014).

Taxation Administration (Objection Fees) Determination 2014 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-177 (LR, 30 June 2014).

Taxation Administration (Rates) Determination 2014 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-185 (LR, 30 June 2014).

Taxation Administration (Rates—Fire and Emergency Services Levy) Determination 2014 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-182 (LR, 30 June 2014).

Taxation Administration (Rates—Rebate Cap) Determination 2014 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-184 (LR, 30 June 2014).

Taxation Administration Amendment Regulation 2014 (No 1)—Subordinate Law SL2014-15 (LR, 9 July 2014).

Territory Records Act—

Territory Records (Advisory Council) Appointment 2014 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-58 (LR, 22 May 2014).

Territory Records (Advisory Council) Appointment 2014 (No 2)—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-59 (LR, 22 May 2014).

Territory Records (Advisory Council) Appointment 2014 (No 3)—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-61 (LR, 22 May 2014).

Territory Records (Advisory Council) Appointment 2014 (No 4)—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-62 (LR, 22 May 2014).

Territory Records (Advisory Council) Appointment 2014 (No 5)—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-63 (LR, 22 May 2014).

Territory Records (Advisory Council) Appointment 2014 (No 6)—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-64 (LR, 22 May 2014).

Territory Records (Advisory Council) Appointment 2014 (No 7)—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-65 (LR, 22 May 2014).

Training and Tertiary Education Act—Training and Tertiary Education (Fees) Determination 2014—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-196 (LR, 30 June 2014).

Tree Protection Act—Tree Protection (Fees) Determination 2014 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-174 (LR, 30 June 2014).

Unit Titles (Management) Act—Unit Titles (Management) (Fees) Determination 2014—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-138 (LR, 12 June 2014).

Unit Titles Act—Unit Titles (Fees) Determination 2014 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-164 (LR, 26 June 2014).

Unlawful Gambling Act—Unlawful Gambling (Charitable Gaming Application Fees) Determination 2014 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-99 (LR, 11 June 2014).

Utilities Act and Legislation Act—Utilities (Electricity Network Capital Contribution Code) Revocation 2014—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-146 (LR, 23 June 2014).

Victims of Crime Act—

Victims of Crime (Victims Advisory Board) Appointment 2014 (No 1)—
Disallowable Instrument DI2014-77 (LR, 5 June 2014).

Victims of Crime (Victims Advisory Board) Appointment 2014 (No 2)—
Disallowable Instrument DI2014-78 (LR, 5 June 2014).

Victims of Crime (Victims Advisory Board) Appointment 2014 (No 3)—
Disallowable Instrument DI2014-79 (LR, 5 June 2014).

Victims of Crime (Victims Advisory Board) Appointment 2014 (No 4)—
Disallowable Instrument DI2014-80 (LR, 5 June 2014).

Victims of Crime (Victims Advisory Board) Appointment 2014 (No 5)—
Disallowable Instrument DI2014-81 (LR, 5 June 2014).

Victims of Crime (Victims Advisory Board) Appointment 2014 (No 6)—
Disallowable Instrument DI2014-82 (LR, 5 June 2014).

Waste Minimisation Act—Waste Minimisation (Landfill Fees) Determination
2014 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-173 (LR, 30 June 2014).

Water and Sewerage Act—Water and Sewerage (Fees) Determination 2014
(No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-165 (LR, 26 June 2014).

Water Resources Act—Water Resources (Fees) Determination 2014 (No 1)—
Disallowable Instrument DI2014-166 (LR, 26 June 2014).

Work Health and Safety Act—

Work Health and Safety (Fees) Determination 2014—Disallowable
Instrument DI2014-139 (LR, 12 June 2014).

Work Health and Safety Amendment Regulation 2014 (No 1)—Subordinate
Law SL2014-10 (LR, 25 June 2014).

Workers Compensation Act—Workers Compensation (Fees) Determination
2014—Disallowable Instrument DI2014-140 (LR, 12 June 2014).

Working with Vulnerable People (Background Checking) Act—Working With
Vulnerable People Background Checking (Fees) Determination 2014 (No 1)—
Disallowable Instrument DI2014-200 (LR, 30 June 2014).

Petitions—Out-of-order

Petitions which do not conform with the standing orders—

Increase in discrimination in the ACT as a result of actions by the
Commonwealth Attorney-General—Mr Rattenbury (888 signatures).

Kingston Group Centre—Draft Variation 314—Mr Corbell (142 signatures).

Lake Tuggeranong—Clean-up and creation of wetlands—Ms Lawder
(165 signatures).

Yarralumla Brickworks remediation—Extract of online petition, dated August
2014—Ms Gallagher, together with a Government response, dated 21 July
2014.

Ms Burch presented the following paper:

Cultural Facilities Corporation Act, pursuant to subsection 15(2)—Cultural
Facilities Corporation—Quarterly report 2013-2014—Third quarter (1 January to
31 March 2014).

Legislation (Penalty Units) Amendment Bill 2014

Statement by minister

MR CORBELL (Molonglo—Attorney-General, Minister for Police and Emergency Services, Minister for the Environment and Minister for Capital Metro), by leave: I wish to make a statement in relation to the corrected introduction speech for the Legislation (Penalty Units) Amendment Bill I just tabled. When I made that speech to the Assembly on 3 June I incorrectly stated the current penalty unit amounts in the territory as \$110 for an individual and \$550 for a corporation. The error was identified in the following June sittings of the Assembly. The current amounts as provided in section 133 of the Legislation Act are, in fact, \$140 for an individual and \$700 for a corporation. My incorrect statement was a result of an error in the introductory statement prepared by my directorate and, therefore, I am correcting the record.

Child care

Discussion of matter of public importance

MADAM ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Ms Lawder): Madam Speaker has received letters from Ms Berry, Dr Bourke, Ms Lawder, Ms Porter and Mr Wall proposing that matters of public importance be submitted to the Assembly. In accordance with standing order 79, Madam Speaker has determined that the matter proposed by Ms Berry be submitted to the Assembly, namely:

The importance of investing in quality childcare and early education in the ACT

MS BERRY (Ginninderra) (4:03): I am happy to take this opportunity to speak about an issue that is very important to me and the ACT community—that is, quality early childhood education and care in the ACT. I know there is a lot of hope, discussion and concern surrounding the Productivity Commission's draft report into child care and early learning, and it is, therefore, timely that we step back and consider why the ACT government's investment in early childhood education and care is so critical and so timely.

I know I do not have to convince anyone in this chamber that accessible and affordable care is a necessity for working parents. What I think is just as important is to recognise that the need in our community extends beyond simply having access to child care. Through national and international research we are becoming more and more aware of how a child's earlier experiences impact on their later health, development and educational outcomes. As a mum whose children attended early childhood education and care, it reinforces what I know about what parents value in early childhood education. When I enrolled my children in early childhood education, I was not just looking for the cheapest or most convenient care—it had to be quality.

Historically the focus of education academics has been on that of children over three years, but the research that is developing now shows that the first three years of life are particularly influential in a child's brain developing. While physical care of infants is important, so too are the interactions and experiences that will lay the foundations for all aspects of their learning and development. That is why it is important that the national early years learning framework recognises children as learners from birth.

I know this confuses some people, but learning from birth is not about teaching children their letters and numbers while they are still in nappies; it is about play-based programs that support children to develop a strong sense of identity and become confident and successful learners. It is also about recognising the incredible capacity of young children to actively participate and to have a say in matters that affect their lives. All kids should have access to the level of learning and care enshrined in our existing frameworks. The national quality framework plays a strong role in ensuring that no parent ever has to choose between cost and quality care for their kids.

The ACT has a high number of children using formal early childhood education and care settings, and we owe it to these children, their families and our community as a whole to provide them with opportunities that maximise their potential and develop a foundation for success in the future. That is why the ACT government has been such a strong supporter of the national quality framework. This historic reform sets a new benchmark for quality education and care in Australia. It was based on solid national and international evidence about what elements of service delivery are likely to lead to better outcomes for our children. I am happy to see that the Productivity Commission has acknowledged the national quality framework as a driver of improvement in quality of education and care.

The commission's draft report makes a number of recommendations to support the good work already being done across the sector to improve quality care. Whilst I am happy to see these recommendations, I am concerned by the implications in the report that some parts of the NQF were unnecessary red tape. As a jurisdiction we need to be clear that the NQF is not an inconvenience for business; it is a set of educational and robust, well-researched standards as important as any school-age policy. These regulations provide the framework for structural elements of quality education and care, such as minimum qualifications and educator-to-child ratios, that directly influence the quality of teaching and learning in early childhood settings. These are not the standards that we want to compromise or back away from.

We are already seeing significant improvements in the ACT as services strive towards the NQF. For example, one long day care service improved their overall rating from working towards the national quality standard to exceeding it within the space of 18 months. This is a fantastic achievement, especially considering the national quality framework has a much higher standard for care than previous accreditation systems.

It is also clear that these frameworks and the emphasis on quality care are supported by workers in the sector. Judy Kuzma, an educator with more than 20 years of experience, describes the NQF as:

... an acknowledgment by society that working in this sector does require a high level of skill, training and dedication. It's having the capability to apply the knowledge to ensure all children benefit from a quality early education system where the commitment to sustaining quality is undisputed.

Haiying Li, who is an infants educator, describes the importance of quality in the ECEC sector as:

Respect from the community and promoting and fostering a play-based safe and happy environment for young children through engagement of intentional teaching techniques.

When workers, parents, directors and researchers are on the same side of the debate government should listen and respond. This is by no means a niche issue.

There are currently around 9,600 places available for children of preschool age and under in centre-based services in the ACT. There are also around 3,300 places offered in government preschools. Over the past few years, the ACT government has embarked on a program of facility upgrades to support services to meet new quality standards and to increase available spaces. The infrastructure program includes extensions, refurbishments and upgrades to facilities owned by the Education and Training Directorate, including long day care centres and public preschools. The government has also invested significantly in new facilities, most recently with the construction of the Franklin Early Childhood School, which includes a long day care centre as well as a public preschool, and the Holder early childhood centre.

The ACT government is continuing to identify suitable sites for education and care centres as part of the planning for new suburbs to respond to emerging demand in newly established areas as well as changing demand in established areas. It is great to see as I drive past Kippax on a very regular basis that work has begun on an early childhood centre in Holt, which will be gratefully received by parents who live in west Belconnen.

As a result of these initiatives, the ACT early childhood sector has seen a steady growth with additional places created in suburbs including Campbell, McKellar, Greenway, Narrabundah, Taylor and Macarthur through the establishment of new services and expansion of existing services. We are also assisting the sector with the cost of leasing premises, which means that the majority of long day care services operating from ACT government-owned facilities pay a discounted rent.

We know quality early childhood education and care is so important for our children, even from birth. We know it starts them off on their educational journey on a positive note. It helps them to develop a strong sense of identity and become confident and successful learners. There is so much more to do in this area, and I know the sector is waiting for certainty from the federal government. In the meantime, the ACT government will continue its strong commitment to early childhood education and care because it benefits children, their families and our broader Canberra community.

MS LAWDER (Brindabella) (4.11): This matter is very important to our community, and I thank Ms Berry for bringing this issue here today. The quality, the cost and the availability of child care affects many families in our community, and quality is very important to every family. There is a great importance in investing in quality child care and early education in the ACT. I would like to add to the discussion today, as Ms Berry has already alluded to, that, along with quality, the cost and availability of child care is a serious matter for Canberra families. Although I personally do not need child care any longer for my children, I see firsthand the struggles that come with raising a family in Canberra at present, not least through my own grandchildren and also through other residents.

Child care is an incredible cost imposed upon a family. According to the 2011 census, 45 per cent of women now in the workforce who have young children returned to work before their youngest child turned one, and we do not appear to have an adequately flexible system. A good system must have variety and quality, but at the moment we know the system is struggling and families are struggling.

Federal Labor's changes to the childcare system focused on improving the quality of services, but the decision to increase the rebate paid to families to help them with out-of-pocket costs was not good policy. Boosting the payment from 30 per cent to 50 per cent of parents' out-of-pocket costs was an electorally popular decision, but childcare operators warned that paying the rebate directly to parents rather than to centres would have an inflationary effect, and this is exactly what happened.

In Canberra it is very common to find charges of \$100 a day per child. The price rises have led to a debate about child care that focuses too much on affordability. This, in effect, hinders women's participation in the workforce. If it is financially penalising for a family, someone may give up work and, unfortunately, all too often that is the mother.

Apart from raising the rebate, Labor required centres to hire more qualified staff and increase overall staff numbers, and it is at a tipping point where many families say it is not worth going back to work after the birth of the child. While the value of high quality early learning has enormous potential for long-term productivity, the cost is making it unsustainable for some who need it most, especially people for whom quality child care may have enormous benefits for the future social and educational outcomes for their children. The quality of the system must be maintained to give all children a fighting chance of doing well at school, but the cost must be monitored to ensure parents earning low and medium incomes do not decide to give up work because child care is too expensive.

A few weeks ago, as we heard, the Productivity Commission released its draft report on future options for child care and early childhood learning. The report has a focus on developing a system that supports workforce participation, which is essential for individual families and our economy as a whole whilst still addressing children's learning and development needs. All you have to do is read some of the comments submitted to this review to get an understanding of how much this affects people every day.

Childcare costs in the ACT have doubled in the past six years, and that is a phenomenal impost on families. You also then must take into account the increases in other daily necessities across the board—electricity, rent, rates, fuel, food—and it seems everything has increased at a greater rate than the average income and the belt gets tightened more and more. This is even more noticeable for those who work in casual positions outside the public service and who may be on far lower incomes than their public service counterparts.

Earlier today a Conder resident said to me:

It's ~~**expletive deleted**~~ expensive. I've always been lucky getting a place, but I would hate to work shift work as the hours 7.30 to 6.00 are very strict. And before and after school care is a disaster too.

In the ACT child care accounts for roughly 12 per cent of gross income after subsidies as opposed to the rest of the country where childcare accounts for around eight per cent of gross income. That is a significant difference and a huge burden on our ACT families who are already struggling.

A parent from Gilmore with a young baby told me earlier today:

It's definitely a question about whether the cost of childcare is worth returning to work. It's a decision that we will have to weigh up. Even with our two incomes, the cost of living costs, the childcare expenses, mortgage payments, the rising cost of electricity, gas, et cetera, will be a struggle for us.

I could go on and on with the concerns of Canberra families, but I think we all get the picture—comment after comment that talk about the cost, availability, and quality of child care in our city.

We need to acknowledge that the ACT has the highest cost of child care in the country. It is disingenuous to put quality completely above affordability and availability. If you cannot afford a Rolls Royce or a Ferrari, there is no point talking about the quality that you get from it because it is completely out of your price bracket and it does not matter how good the performance is of that car. You do not get to make those choices if you cannot afford it. We really need to consider the impact that the cost of child care and the cost of living is having on our families—the rate increases, electricity and fuel costs, parking and transport costs and all the other expenses.

I look forward to what changes can be made as a result of the Productivity Commission draft review, but I also encourage this government to consider what else they can be doing to help our families who are struggling while ensuring that the quality of our childcare is uncompromised. Quality affordable and available child care is the key to ensuring not just the best educational outcomes for children but also women's long-term participation in the workforce. We need to get it right.

MS BURCH (Brindabella—Minister for Education and Training, Minister for Disability, Minister for Multicultural Affairs, Minister for Racing and Gaming, Minister for Women and Minister for the Arts) (4.18): I thank Ms Berry for bringing this very important subject on. This government is very committed to investing in early childhood education and care to promote the best possible start in life for young children in Canberra. That is why this government has made it such a high priority. In February, I believe, I reported to the Assembly that we have delivered a 94 per cent increase in the number of long day care places since we came to office. Between 2011 and now, according to a recent update, we have increased the number of long day care places by 2,068, with almost 700 of these places being created in the last year alone.

Ms Lawder made comment about cost. I simply ask the Canberra Liberals to actually put forward something that they think will reduce cost. You want quality; you expect quality; you say you want to reduce cost. We have increased it by 700 places in the last year alone. In any other market, an increase in availability will drive the market down. There has been a 94 per cent increase in the number of long day care places since we came into office. You made mention that you expect quality. I am yet to see anything from the federal Liberal Party, the current government or the Canberra Liberals about the impact on quality and how they think the changes to the NQF will result in reduced cost. Nothing has been forthcoming. And nothing is forthcoming in the Productivity Commission report.

A recent report from NATSEM in June 2004 recognised that the gross cost of childcare has increased. Ms Lawder, you made mention of the cost of childcare here in the ACT. The report, as I understand, provided a table of comparisons of the affordability of childcare as a percentage of disposable income between regions, including those within the ACT. That table indicates that childcare is consistently priced across the ACT, Queanbeyan and Goulburn. The most affordable, at 6.9 per cent, is in south Canberra. Queanbeyan is at 8.6 per cent and Goulburn and Yass are at 8.3 per cent. So in relation to the argument about cost, yes, we do have a cost; there would be places that would cost over \$100 a day for childcare. But think of the quality; think of the rebates on offer and the benefit to those families who need it most. That is what it is about—ensuring it for those families that need it most.

The Productivity Commission acknowledges the evidence on the importance of investment in early childhood education and care. Those on the other side have done zip, zero, nothing in my entire presence here. Since 2008, since I have been here, there has been nothing forthcoming from the Canberra Liberals to invest in early childhood education and care.

We know that better qualified educators are more likely to provide rich learning environments and to develop a responsive, respectful relationship with children in education and care settings. I will say very early in the piece that I want to say a big thankyou to all the early childhood educators that work across our centres, providing support for over 9,500 children and places across the ACT. I thank them for what they do—the teachers, those with the diplomas, those with the certificate III qualifications and those that are just coming into this workplace and are looking to have a long and very fruitful career in early education and care.

Early education scholarships were established in 2012 because we on this side know that you need to look after your workforce and to grow and develop them to provide quality care. The scholarships that have been on offer supported people to attain a certificate III qualification. That included start-up payments to cover incidental costs and backfilling funding for educators while people study. As I understand it, over 100 early educators have taken advantage of that scholarship; 48 students have completed their cert III; and, with the extended funding, another 80-plus workforce participants will be able to be skilled up to have the minimum qualifications. This does give us confidence that our young children are being educated by professionals with appropriate skills and knowledge.

We continue to invest in these scholarships. Indeed, we broadened out those scholarships just recently to ensure that university-qualified teachers are also supported. This degree scholarships program was launched last week; the first scholarships will be awarded in mid-September. This will allow, in the first round, 25 early educators to be supported, to the tune of \$1,500 per year over the four years of their degree, to achieve their early childhood degree. We recognise that it is important to support the workforce. Our investment is not only in bricks and mortar and ensuring that we have a great regulating unit; we know that the workforce is an important part of this.

We have developed a workforce strategy in partnership with what was the ACT children's educators forum; they have recently changed their name to Children's Educators ACT. I work very closely with that group.

The ACT government recognises the critical importance of quality early education and is committed to ensuring that all children have access to high-quality preschool programs and services. Over the last five years, the ACT has enhanced and developed our systems of service delivery and early childhood education under the national partnership for universal access to early childhood education. This has included increasing the hours of access to preschool education in government preschools from 12 to 15 hours a week for all ACT students in the year before they enter formal schooling. This program has ensured that our families have access to 15 hours of affordable, quality early childhood education.

There is concern, because the Australian government are funding through to the ACT, that that agreement ceases in December of this year. We are four months away from a national partnership coming to an end—a partnership that guarantees 15 hours of universal access to preschool for Canberra families. The question mark over that funding belongs to the Australian government. Tony Abbott or the relevant ministers are yet to confirm what they will do with that national partnership. Canberra families right now face losing access—universal access—to 15 hours of preschool. To date, there has been no comment from the Prime Minister, Minister Pyne or Assistant Minister Ley about the future of that program.

If your focus is on access to affordable early education, I would have thought that there would be a strong interest from those over there in those hours—15 hours—of universal free access to preschool and government schools. I would have thought they would have been an important matter for your consideration. Mrs Jones asked me in estimates to raise this, and I will keep on raising it with the relevant federal ministers as we come closer to the end of this year. We will not be able to sustain that extra load; it will cost us many millions of dollars. The federal government, and I think the Productivity Commission, acknowledge the benefit of those universal access hours, ensuring 15 hours for those very important years. I think it behoves all of us in this place to make sure that the federal government continues to support that.

I am very pleased to see Mrs Jones agree with that sentiment. When I fight the good fight for Canberra families, hopefully, I will be able to say that the Canberra Liberals may just once agree with me on this and support universal access for our Canberra families to the tune of 15 hours with funding from the federal government.

Discussion concluded.

Electoral Amendment Bill 2014

Debate resumed from 5 June 2014, on motion by **Mr Corbell**:

That this bill be agreed to in principle.

MR HANSON (Molonglo—Leader of the Opposition) (4.28): I indicate at the outset that we will be supporting this bill today.

Democracy is imperfect, but Winston Churchill, in my view the greatest hero of democracy in the past century or more, said that democracy is the worst form of government except for all the others that we have tried. But democracy requires investment. Living in a prosperous city such as Canberra, in a prosperous nation where we all enjoy the benefits of a vibrant democracy, it is perhaps a little easy to take our democracy and our democratic institutions for granted. There will always be bad governments, poorly thought-through policies and mediocre politicians, but at the end of the day, that is the beauty of our democracy: we get to boot the bad ones out and we get to choose who governs us by participating in democracy. We get to influence who those politicians are and what sorts of policies they are going to implement. All of that, which is fundamentally what we are servants of here in this Assembly, requires an adequate investment.

Personally, I am a supporter of the federal system of government where we have the three tiers of federal, state and territory governments and local councils. We have a unique system here with two tiers. I accept that that is probably not particularly efficient in terms of having those three layers, but it dilutes the power of politicians, it brings governments close to the people, and it makes sure that not all the power is controlled centrally. The alternative unavoidably leads to less democratic freedom for the people and eventually less effective government.

That is a bit of a theoretical debate on democracy, but it is important, as we discuss what is a reasonably momentous step in progress on what we do here in this Assembly, that we put it into the broader context of what we are doing here in the first place.

For all of the failings of the various ACT governments over the time since self-government, I believe that in the ACT we are much better off for self-government. But in a democracy you get what you pay for. The question has to be asked: is our investment in the Assembly adequate to provide for effective government—as effective as it could be? In my view, the answer is no. I think it is reasonably clear that the government has come to the same conclusion.

I acknowledge that it was the government that commissioned the expert reference group to inquire into and report on this issue. That group has concluded that the Assembly should increase and has put forward some good arguments for that increase. It has recommended that there be an increase to 25 members across five electorates at the 2016 election. I think that is an appropriate increase. I do, however, disagree, and I

note this, that the Assembly should increase to 35 in the following election; I think that is just simply too big. The case, in my view, has not been made for 35 members. I also disagree with the view that it has taken in building the case of comparing this jurisdiction and the number of elected representatives in the ACT with other jurisdictions. Ultimately, it is my view that that is largely irrelevant. We have a unique system here; we should have as many MLAs as are required, and no more. If other jurisdictions have more, or less, that is their business, not ours.

As has been identified, the size of the Assembly as it is currently structured, with 17 members, has led to a number of failings over the years. The first is that the size of the ministry has been too small. It is worth noting that today we have moved to the sixth minister—I welcome the new minister, Mr Gentleman, in his role here today—and certainly the opposition has supported that. Six ministers is a good first step towards providing that governance. The reality is that, with less than five ministers, members have had too many portfolios. Even with six ministers, the distribution of portfolios means that ministers have too many responsibilities.

The second point I would make is that as a result of the small size of the Assembly, the Chief Minister struggles amongst a pool of eight, as she has, to find individuals to be ministers. I am not in the business of having a go at anyone personally, but I think that is a factor that has come to bear; it is a reality. Some people, through inexperience or through their skill set, are just not suited to be ministers. A greater expansion, a greater size for a party that forms government, would provide the ability to select from a greater talent pool.

The problem that arises out of those two issues is that, when you have ministers who perhaps are inexperienced and maybe would not have been ministers in other jurisdictions, compounded by the fact that ministers have an extraordinary number of responsibilities, unelected officials in the ACT in many ways have disproportionate power. When you have a chat to some of the directors-general and other bureaucrats—who are, in many cases or across the board, of high quality, well meaning, ethical and very hardworking—you will find that they will agree that they have a situation where their ministers are extraordinarily busy, where they are spread too thin. We have a situation where people who are not elected, who are not accountable to the people of the ACT, are in a position where they can implement policies, build fiefdoms, make decisions and influence policy. That is not as accountable as it should be. Ironically, more politicians, if they do their job right, because they are accountable to the people of the ACT, may actually limit the growth of unnecessary bureaucracy and unnecessary regulation.

Another key factor is the size of our three electorates. Those of us in the electorate of Molonglo in particular would understand the challenges that brings when you are trying to represent people in a number of disparate and diverse communities. In Molonglo, there is Gungahlin, the inner north, the inner south, the city, Woden and Weston Creek. The reality for all of us is that we simply are spread too thin. And because the bulk of the government is tied up in the ministry, in this case, for this government, there are three backbenches to do the bulk of that constituent work. That is not enough.

I note that today the government has missed the opportunity to move to three-member committees, which would have alleviated some of the problems in the shorter term, but the number of people required on committees, be it three-member or four-member committees, is too high. We will talk about the electorates in the next piece of legislation we are debating today, but I think that five electorates is an appropriate balance to provide representation and, as far as possible, create the community of interests that we all want. While I am speaking on this, I note that the Electoral Commissioner and his staff are here today. I welcome them to the Assembly. I am sure all of us here will encourage and welcome the Electoral Commissioner's speedy work to identify where those electorates are going to be.

I am very proud that the Liberal Party membership had a significant voice in determining this policy. This was a matter that our party took to a divisional council. There was a policy debate where all the members of the party were able to participate. There were mixed views; there were arguments for and against expansion. It was a very good debate where cases were put forward, but ultimately the view was that an increase in the size of the Assembly was warranted. It is great to be part of a democratic party where that debate occurred and it is great to be in an Assembly where we put politics aside to identify what is in the best interests of good governance and therefore ultimately in the interest of our community.

Ultimately, that is what it is about. It is not my natural disposition to support an expansion, but in this case I believe that this will provide for better governance of the ACT. As that is what we are here for, the Canberra Liberals will be supporting this bill.

MR RATTENBURY (Molonglo) (4.39): There are two bills that we are discussing today and Mr Hanson spoke a little bit about the next bill that we will be coming to—that is my understanding—which is the actual bill that expands the size of the Assembly. The first of these bills is really an electoral stitch-up between the Labor Party and the Canberra Liberals because today they have joined together to ensure that it will be harder for the people of the ACT to get diverse representation in the Legislative Assembly. They are locking in an electoral structure which will reduce the chances of others entering the Assembly, and increasing the chances of them entering the parliament.

As an observer of ACT politics would know, as a general rule, the ALP and the Liberals have to be dragged to the table to cooperate on anything in this place, but on this their interests clearly are aligned. They are supporting this bill because they know it benefits them. It benefits them more than it does the people of the ACT, and that needs to be made clear here today. The ACT Greens support an increase in the size of the Assembly, but we will not be supporting this—the Electoral Amendment Bill.

While simultaneously increasing the size of the Assembly, yet having electorates with only the minimum number of members allowed, it is a poor outcome for democracy and a wasted opportunity to enhance our electoral system. The Greens support having more members in the Assembly, and we have raised a number of options and configurations for how this could be done over the past year. But the two old parties have not even entertained a different model to the one that has been put forward today, and it is clear why: it suits them not to.

Mr Hanson will no doubt say in response—and I am sure I will get the interjection shortly—that the only reason I want more members in each electorate is because it will help get more Greens elected. Perhaps having electorates with more members may get more Greens elected, but it is not in itself the Greens' interests that I am here today defending. I am also defending the interests of proportional representation and the diversity of interests, concerns and values that proportional representation brings to our parliament.

I am defending the opportunity of those people in the ACT community who, in the past, voted for other people to represent them in this place, including the Democrats, the Gungahlin Equality Party, the Nurses Good Government party, the Canberra First Party, the Christian Democratic Party, the Liberal Democratic Party, Free Range Canberra, the ACT Equality Party, the Marion Le Social Justice Party, Community Alliance, the Australian Motorist Party, Mr Osborne, Mr Rugendyke and even the Bullet Train for Canberra Party. In the future there may well be people who will vote for the Palmer United Party, the Australian Cyclists Party, the Sex Party and the Animal Justice Party.

It may surprise members to know that I care about the interests of those voters and these parties, some of which include what I would consider to be radical right wing parties and even perhaps what I might consider to be illogical single-issue parties. But the ACT has chosen a far more democratic electoral system than the federal House of Representatives and most state lower houses.

I believe, and the Greens believe, that our parliament and our government are enhanced by the presence of people other than representatives of the Labor Party and the Liberal Party. The reason I think this is so is because they represent the diverse views of people in the community and they bring new ideas to this place; they put ideas on the table that have not been brought into this place before or perhaps for a while. They cause us to rethink our previous positions, perhaps justify them, perhaps change them, or perhaps solidify them, and they challenge us to think differently in new ways. This comes down to the idea that simply parties who get 40-odd per cent of the vote should not be the only ones represented in this place. If people vote, say, eight, nine, 10 or 12 per cent for a candidate, that is a solid vote and it is a vote that is worth representing in this place.

Mr Coe: And 12 per cent will get you there.

MR RATTENBURY: Not under a five-member electorate it will not, Mr Coe, depending on preference flows. You know well—

MADAM SPEAKER: Order, members! This is not a conversation; this is a debate.

MR RATTENBURY: It is for these reasons that I have just outlined that we should never be threatened by the presence of other parties in this Assembly. Yet as we move a bill to make our Assembly include more people, the Labor Party and the Liberal Party have decided that they do not want more types of people; just more people like them. That is a real shame. It is a shame for the representation of the people of

Canberra and for the diversity of this Assembly, and it is a wasted opportunity to improve representation and improve diversity. Should people continue to say that my agenda is only about defending the interests of the Greens in this debate, I would ask them this question: in supporting a five by five model, whose rights are they defending? The interests, of course, of the Canberra Liberals and the Labor Party.

Over the past few months we have certainly not seen the Canberra Liberals seek to put any justification around this position. They just headed off to a Canberra Liberals branch meeting one evening and locked it in. The Canberra Liberals have not engaged in any kind of public debate about their rationale. They have simply come out saying, “This seems about right.” At least the Labor Party did contribute to public debate and put a submission into the expert reference group in 2013 where they argued their case. It was a little like “pick a number and now figure out how to justify it” but, nevertheless, at least they contributed.

The ALP put the case in their submission to the expert reference group that they wanted to see communities of interest that can be represented by five electorates—multi-member electorates that are small enough to allow effective representation of the community. They argue that communities of interest will be well aligned with electorates and that the five town centres will align with electorates, presumably Belconnen, Tuggeranong, the city, Woden and Gungahlin.

This argument has little validity. Firstly, it takes no account of Molonglo, the suburb or the region, coming online over the next two decades. Secondly, having five electorates will not keep those communities of interest intact once the redistribution is undertaken. The five by five model merely moves the problem around. Currently the community of Gungahlin is split across two electorates, as are parts of Woden. But the expert reference group confirmed in its report that creating five electorates would, and I quote, “almost certainly result in Tuggeranong and Belconnen being split.” So I am not sure how much further ahead we will be in terms of keeping communities of interest together.

Let us look at the possible configurations for increasing the Assembly size in more detail through the lens of the expert reference group. The expert reference group reported back to the Chief Minister at the end of March last year. I would like to take this moment to thank the members of the group for their efforts in putting the review together. They were Mr Phillip Green—the Electoral Commissioner—Ms Anne Cahill Lambert, Emeritus Professor Meredith Edwards, Mr John Hindmarsh and Ms Louise Taylor.

The expert reference group established a number of guiding principles in their analysis and then applied these to the available options for increasing the Assembly size. Two of these principles are entrenched through legislation—namely, the Proportional Representation (Hare-Clark) Entrenchment Act—such as the requirement for at least five members from each electorate, and that there are an odd number of members in each electorate. However, the other two principles were not mandated.

The first of these was having an odd number of members in the parliament. This seems somewhat essential, especially as the Speaker currently uses their vote. The final guiding principle was that electorates should return the same number of members. This is not mandated anywhere and, of course, it is in actual fact the situation that we have had different sized electorates since 1995 when the Hare-Clark electoral system commenced here in the ACT. On the number of members in each electorate, the expert reference group said:

... the ERG concludes that 7 member electorates are preferable to either 5 or 9 member electorates as a general rule. However, as the overall size of the Assembly is also of paramount consideration, the ERG accepts that both 5 member and 9 member electorates are viable options to consider.

On the total number of members, the expert reference group were also clear that they thought 25 was the absolute minimum size that the Assembly should be increased to. There is, of course, also the fact that the expert reference group saw that as an interim step. They did say that they thought the Assembly should increase to 35, and they put some particular time frames on that. I think that is an issue that future assemblies need to consider. The electoral matters committee that I was just a member of has actually written a recommendation that puts a population trigger on that so that there is, I guess, a natural triggering of that debate at a certain point in time which keeps the politics out of it and enables an objective review to be undertaken. I think that is a positive way to proceed; rather than locking in a date now, simply ensuring that we discuss the matter in future.

If we go back to the comments that the expert reference group was making, given all these constraints delivered through the guiding principles, and a belief that an increase to at least 25 was required, options were somewhat limited. The expert reference group recommended an interim Assembly size of five by five electorates or an interim number of three by nine. But if one was not so rigid about having electorates with different numbers of members, there were definitely other options that could have been undertaken. We could have had 23 members, which could be two seven-member electorates and one nine-member electorate and then the electorates could have stayed broadly in the same regions as they currently are.

Twenty-five could have been two by nine plus one by seven or we could have gone to 27 members, which could have been three by nine, which was the expert reference group's second option. So we could have had a more modest increase in the size of the Assembly and at least two of our electorates would have had an ideal number of members—that is, seven members; and it was the expert reference group that identified seven as the ideal number—or we could have had the same number of members with increased diversity.

The expert reference group, in its recommendations for a transitional size of the Assembly, landed in a less than ideal place, and acknowledges as much. This is in part perhaps due to the rules that it has set itself. It would do the Assembly good too to recognise that, while the need for an increase in the size of the Assembly is agreed by all in this place, we are disagreeing today on the details of how to engineer a less than perfect solution in what may end up being a transitional arrangement.

Let us be clear here. Not only do electorates with fewer members increase the quota required to be elected, they also deliver results that are less aligned with what the people have voted for, and this goes to the point that I was making earlier. The fewer members in each electorate, the less likely it is that the result reflects the wishes of the voters.

While it is important to get a balance between good proportional representation and the workability of a parliament, I do not believe that balance has been reached here today. I believe that the people of the ACT would have been better served by electorates of between seven and nine members, and that this outcome should have been placed ahead of some of the other principles that have been raised in this debate. As such, the Greens will not be supporting this bill.

MS GALLAGHER (Molonglo—Chief Minister, Minister for Health, Minister for Higher Education and Minister for Regional Development) (4.51): I welcome the opportunity to speak on both of these important bills today. My comments will cover both of these bills being debated today. They essentially do the same thing: create five electorates with five members and expand the size of the Assembly from 17 to 25.

This Assembly routinely deals with bills of very significant importance. These bills are no different. Following the 2012 election, a clear priority for me was to address early in the term when there was room to consider openly the issues required to reach a consensus position, or as near to a consensus position as we could, on this matter to expand the size of the Assembly. My views on this were informed from being a member of this place since 2001 as a member for Molonglo during a time of rapid expansion and as a minister in this place for a number of years covering various portfolios across the government's administration.

During that time and through my dealings with ministers from other jurisdictions it became very clear to me that failure to deal with the issues of workload for this Assembly would be a failure on my part as Chief Minister. That is why I was very keen to address this cooperatively and collaboratively with fellow MLAs early in this electoral cycle.

About eight weeks after the election was declared—actually, I do not even think it was that long; I think about four weeks—and I was elected Chief Minister by this place I did appoint an expert reference group to conduct an up-to-date review into the size of this Assembly.

As you would note from reading the report, Madam Speaker, it also relied on previous work and reviews that had been done into the size of the Assembly over a number of years. The reference group was chaired by the ACT Electoral Commissioner, Mr Phil Green. Its membership was comprised of Ms Anne Cahill Lambert, Professor Meredith Edwards, Mr John Hindmarsh and Ms Louise Taylor. I again thank them for the work that they have provided for all members in this place.

The terms of reference for the review were to examine past reviews, to consider factors relevant to increasing the size of the Assembly, to consider any limitations

placed on changes to the size of the Assembly by the Proportional Representation (Hare-Clark) Entrenchment Act 1994, and to recommend options for increasing the size of the Assembly, including the number of electorates and the number of members for each electorate.

In addition, I asked the reference group to undertake community consultation and provide an opportunity for making submissions. The reference group undertook their work very diligently and promptly. They published a discussion paper to assist interested members of the public to make written submissions to the review. The reference group did receive a number of written submissions from a wide range of Canberra citizens, community groups, experts in electoral law and other stakeholders across the community, including the YWCA, the Woden Valley Community Council—in fact, most of the community councils—and some of the trade unions.

The consultation process overall demonstrated I think a wide understanding of the issues being faced by this Assembly in terms of workload and the additional demands being placed on it compared to when it was established in 1989 and overall supported and increase in the size of the Assembly. A minority of submissions either supported the status quo or raised issues such as winding back self-government or, indeed, other models of government.

The reference group provided me with its final report on 28 March 2013. In its report, the reference group noted that 11 inquiries held between 1974 and 2012 touched on the issue of the size of the Assembly. Nine of these inquiries recommended that the Assembly should be larger than its present size and two, held back in 1990 and 1999, recommended the Assembly remain at its present size.

The reference group expressed a view that an increase in the size of the Assembly was warranted and pointed to evidence that demonstrated that the small size of the Assembly, and particularly the ministry, posed a significant risk to good government in the ACT.

The reference group recommended that the Assembly be increased to 25 members at 2016, consisting of five electorates each returning five members and that the Assembly be increased to 35 members at the 2020 election, consisting of five electorates each returning seven members. On the second part—the expansion to 35—I note the recommendation in the committee's report into the electoral law amendments that there are options of dealing with further expansion for the Assembly if required. At this point I think the move to 25 members in 2016 is the most important matter to determine.

The reference group highlighted that the ratio of elected members to enrolled voters is the highest in Australia. Also, without the level of councils to represent the Canberra community, there is one member to 12,247 electors, with the next highest ratio being in Victoria, where there is one elected member per 4,480 electors. Even if you do not use that as a major consideration in a decision around expansion, it certainly has the ACT starkly ahead in terms of the numbers of constituents that each MLA is required to support. ACT voters have the lowest rate of representation of all Australian states and territories. Together these bills will contribute to providing an increased level of representation for ACT voters and give them a greater voice.

In terms of the experts and the experts' views, I think they have been well articulated through this report. Again, I come back to the experience that I have had sitting in the various jobs that I have. It is absolutely clear to me that the ACT community, in terms of good governance for the ACT in the years ahead, requires the Assembly to be expanded. I think it also requires the ministry to have a minimum of eight ministers—under that scenario, probably nine—and that that would allow under a 25-member scenario an appropriate level of other MLAs to manage the extensive committee workload that we are now asking just a small number of 11 MLAs to manage, which is a significant load on them as well.

In terms of the right model—25 versus other scenarios—I support the comments made by ACT Labor throughout the submissions that were made. ACT Labor members also made a submission to the expert reference group. In terms of the issues we are dealing with and the need for the cabinet in particular to have membership of between eight and nine, I do not think anything smaller than 25 will deal with those issues. Going to 21 or 23 would be tinkering at the edge but would not actually deliver the number of ministers available to manage the workloads that are going to be required in 2016.

I also think it deals nicely with the communities of interest that are quite well established. We saw that in stark detail in the 2012 election, where there are regions across the ACT. They are quite distinct regions with different views about particular matters. This will deal with that as well.

In terms of the history of self-government, it is clear that independents, Greens and small parties get elected in a five-member electorate. In fact, they have done so in every single election that I can recall. So I do not think that the argument that this entrenches a two-party model is right if you run a good campaign and if you are a good candidate. Let us not put down the Canberra electorate at all. They know who they are voting for. They know who they like. They know who they do not like. When they do not like someone, they get rid of them. This has been what we have seen in various elections since self-government and this will give people greater opportunity to stand for the Assembly.

Instead of 17 members, there will be 25. If there are those who have ever aspired to a political career, 2016 offers them the greatest opportunity since self-government was established to pursue that interest, whether they be a Green, an independent, a member of the Labor Party or a member of the Liberal Party. The reality is, should these bills pass today, that there will be an additional eight vacant seats for people to pursue their political career and add to the political fabric of this esteemed chamber.

This is the right way to go. Twenty-five members will give us the right level of support for the community. Importantly, it will give the community a right level of support for their issues and how they pursue them through this place. It will relieve, as Mr Hanson said, and I agree with him, some of the burden that is currently taken by non-elected representatives within our ACT public service, because they are probably required, because of ministers' capacity to deal with various portfolios, to take more responsibility than you would see in other jurisdictions. That is the simple reality of the way we are working at the moment.

Again, I think self-government has served the people of the ACT very well, but it is up to members in this place in 2014 to make sure that governments of 2016, 2020 and 2024 are actually able to do the job that we are going to be asking them to do. The only way to do that is to increase the size of the Assembly.

I would say to Mr Hanson—again, keeping the love going today—that I genuinely appreciate the way that this has been conducted across the Assembly. I think that these matters are very easy to be lost in political fights and opportunities that come with dealing with more politicians. Mr Hanson chose to pursue it in another way—running the issue through his party as a democratic process but also reaching agreement with me that we would deal with this cooperatively and without slinging mud at people through the media.

I think the end result was that your political party, my political party and Shane Rattenbury, even though he has not agreed with us on the number, have actually been able to project a mature parliament, genuinely wrestling with issues of workload without political point scoring. Without that cooperation and without that commitment, this issue would have been lost and we would be stuck in this place not dealing with it in 2016 when the chances are that the issues being faced would be much worse and we would not be able to fix those until the 2020 election.

So I genuinely thank the willingness that has been displayed to deal with this in the way that we have. I think certainly Assemblies of the future could learn from this. Also, I think it reflects well on this Assembly.

MR COE (Ginninderra) (5.04): I had not intended to say any words in this debate but having heard from Mr Rattenbury I felt somewhat inspired to say a few words in response.

Mr Rattenbury: I'm a source of inspiration, Alistair. Don't you hate that?

MADAM SPEAKER: Order, members! As I said before, this is not a conversation.

MR COE: Once again, Madam Speaker, I agree with Mr Rattenbury, because he does motivate me. He does motivate me. Sometimes in this chamber it is his comments which remind me why I am a Liberal. It is interesting hearing Mr Rattenbury talk about this issue. Of course, five-member electorates are almost immoral according to Mr Rattenbury. Five is just horrible; five is disastrous; five is terrible; five is anti-democratic; five is just absolutely horrendous for the people of Canberra. Seven, however, is the magical number. Seven or nine are just numbers that will bring peace and harmony to all the good people of Canberra; not five but seven.

One might say, "Why seven? Why nine? Why not 11 or 13 or 15?" Are they moral numbers, too, Madam Speaker? Who knows what Mr Rattenbury's thinking on this is. But it is also curious to hear him say that it is unfair that some of them get 12 per cent and not get elected. In my quick peruse on my phone of past election results, I do not think there has been any candidate ever that has got 12 per cent who has not been elected. In fact, I do not think there has ever been a party that has collectively got

12 per cent of first preferences that has not sent a member to this place for that electorate. Madam Speaker, these moral numbers which Mr Rattenbury talks about, I think, are somewhat of a furphy.

Then he accuses the old parties—the two old, evil, nasty parties—of feathering our own nests. Quite frankly, what is the real motivation for Mr Rattenbury wanting seven-member electorates or nine-member electorates? He says it is for the good people of the Christian Democratic Party. He says it is for the Motorist Party. He says it is for the Gungahlin Equality Party. No, Madam Speaker, it is for the Greens. It is for the Greens who, incidentally, are getting fairly old themselves actually. It is a bit much to be accusing the Liberal and Labor parties of being evil and old when, in fact, the Greens may well bear some very similar characteristics to those of the two major parties he refers to.

But another thing that is interesting that I think we often overlook is just how strategic the Greens are when it comes to their fundraising. Some of you may not be aware of the Greens national database for fundraising. This national database for fundraising is a fascinating beast. Whenever anybody donates to the Greens, they go into a national database. They actually get categorised as to what level of donor they are. They could be a potential donor, in which case their website on this database suggests how frequently they should be called, who should call them, what the script should be, how many times they should be called in any given year, whether they are a lost cause, whether they are a prosperous opportunity. This website, this database, I find to be quite staggering. I would find it very hard to believe that Labor or Liberal have anything like it.

It would be interesting for Mr Rattenbury to refute this. However, it just so happens that, very unfortunately, they left the procedures manual for this database on public display on the back of the ACT Greens website. It just so happens that the Greens on their ACT party website, perhaps to the extreme disappointment of the rest of the country, have left the real inner workings of the Greens' beast on full public display.

I understand that this database procedures manual which dictates how the Greens are meant to fundraise and how they are meant to call—

Mr Corbell: On a point of order, Madam Speaker. As interesting as this is—

Mr Hanson: It is fascinating; don't stop him.

Mr Corbell: It is fascinating, Madam Speaker, but the bill before us is a bill to amend the size of the Assembly; it is not about the fundraising practices of any particular party. I ask you to call Mr Coe to order.

MADAM SPEAKER: On the point of order, Mr Hanson.

Mr Hanson: On the point of order, Madam Speaker. The point is that I think Mr Coe is trying to explain the motivation of the Greens in this matter. The Greens minister has stood up and said that his intent in all things electoral is only morally pure and for the best interests of the people of the ACT, whereas it is fundamentally quite clearly

aimed at his wanting bigger electorates so he can get more Greens in this place. I think Mr Coe is providing an eloquent dissection of the Greens' real motives by pointing out the way that they behave electorally. Is that what you are doing?

MADAM SPEAKER: I have to say that it was a fascinating discussion and I was lost in it myself but I was starting to wonder about the relevance of it. I would ask that perhaps Mr Coe could bring that point to a conclusion so that we could continue the debate on the Electoral Amendment Bill.

MR COE: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Given Mr Rattenbury's mention of the old parties, the old, evil, nasty parties—he happens to be in coalition with one of them—I think my comments before were relevant in trying to get to the nub of the motivation for Mr Rattenbury's contribution to this debate and why it is he thinks that seven is moral but five is immoral, 16.66 per cent nasty and 12.5 per cent pure. That is what it comes down to. That is what it comes down to for Mr Rattenbury. Who knows where his delineation is between good and evil when it comes to quota sizes. But given the Tasmanian Greens have won a seat in each of the five member electorates in Tasmania, if the Greens here work hard enough and they convince enough people they too can match what their colleagues in Tasmania did and win a seat in each electorate.

The challenge is always up to the candidates and to the parties to prove to the people of Canberra why they should be elected. While 12.5, 16.6 or 50 per cent are perhaps crude numbers, we do have to choose a number somewhere. It is never going to be perfect but to claim one is perfect and one is not I think is a bit of a stretch. The opposition, as Mr Hanson has already articulated, will be supporting this bill. We call on Mr Rattenbury and the Greens to reconsider their view on this matter.

MR CORBELL (Molonglo—Attorney-General, Minister for Police and Emergency Services, Minister for the Environment and Minister for Capital Metro) (5.12), in reply: I thank members for their contributions to this debate this afternoon and the clear support across both sides of this chamber to amend the Electoral Act to provide for five electorates of five members at the next ACT election in 2016.

I would like to address the process that the Electoral Commission will need to proceed to from here once this bill is enacted today. Before I do, I will respond to criticisms of the five-electorate, five-member model. In many respects it is to reiterate the points made by Mr Coe. The Greens should not make the perfect the enemy of the good. The fact is that we are retaining a proportional representational model, a model that provides for the election of members based on the proportion of the vote that they are able to obtain determined through a quota, divided, which is the number of electors divided by the number of positions being elected, in essence.

The fact is that minor parties have continued to be effectively elected to this place under a model that provides for one electorate of seven and two electorates of five. The Greens have demonstrated their capacity to be returned in five-member electorates both here in the ACT and in Tasmania, the other jurisdiction that has a Hare-Clark proportional representational system—indeed, one that has had, for decades and decades, a system that returns members from five electorates. Tasmania

has always had that number of electorates. I think it is a reasonable observation that minor parties like the Greens can and do achieve success in five-member electorates.

And we have seen other instances where independents have been returned to this place. It is not uncommon for them to be returned from five-member electorates. It is worth highlighting the success of both Dave Rugendyke and Paul Osborne. Each of them was returned from five-member electorates—not from the seven-member Molonglo electorate but from the five-member Ginninderra and Brindabella electorates. So it is worth highlighting that five-member electorates are not evil; nor do they discriminate against smaller parties or independents. They deliver representation consistent with the capacity of candidates to secure the necessary quotas.

A 25-member model is a good model for our city. I think it is particularly good, as a member for Molonglo—other members from Molonglo can attest to this—because of the unworkability of a very large seven-member electorate in terms of the capacity to provide, firstly, clearly identifiable members associated with clear communities of interest. In Molonglo, I would argue, it is increasingly an impossible task to represent the interests of everybody, from those who live in the established inner north and inner south in the oldest parts of the city through to the rapidly growing suburbs of Gungahlin and the areas of Woden and Weston Creek, built largely in the 1960s and 1970s. These are very different communities, with people with very different interests and very different issues. The seven-member electorate simply does not do those communities justice.

A five-member constituency, whilst not being able to be perfect in terms of its alignment with the boundaries of the relevant districts in the ACT, has a far greater capacity to meet those needs of our community. As I have said, the ACT does currently have those three electorates. This bill changes that structure to provide for five electorates with five elected representatives each.

With the increase in size and the change in number per electorate, the bill will make a number of necessary consequential amendments. It removes all references to seven-member electorates, including on ballot papers and in relation to the expenditure caps in relation to campaign finance matters. As these changes will be in place for the next election in 2016, there will be a significant amount of work required in the next two years to support the new arrangements. After this bill and the ACT Legislative Assembly bill have been adopted by this place, the ACT Electoral Commission will be required to commence the important step of increasing the size of the Assembly through the redistribution process.

The Electoral Act requires that a redistribution of electorates for the Assembly must begin as soon as practicable after the day two years before the next general election is due—that is, after 15 October 2014. The commission's previous experience suggests that the redistribution process would take approximately 12 months. The redistribution is carried out in accordance with the provisions set out in the act and includes several opportunities for public participation throughout the process. The first is the appointment of the redistribution committee by the commission itself. This committee is specified in the act. It consists of the Electoral Commissioner, the Planning and Land Authority, the Surveyor-General and a member appointed by the

commission whose qualifications or experience would, in the opinion of the commission, enable a person to assist the redistribution committee, particularly in relation to practical and community considerations.

The technical requirements of the redistribution process are also set out in the Electoral Act and in the self-government act. The combined effect of both these pieces of legislation is to require the redistribution committee to undertake a number of processes and considerations. The committee must ensure that the number of electors in an electorate immediately after the redistribution is within the range of not greater than 110 per cent or less than 90 per cent of the quota. As far as practicable, they must ensure that the number of electors in an electorate at the time of the next general election of members of the Assembly will not be greater than 105 per cent or less than 95 per cent of the expected quota for the electorate at that time. This, of course, provides protections for the important principle of one vote, one value.

They must also consider the following factors: the community interests within each proposed electorate, including economic, social and regional interests; the means of communication and travel within each proposed electorate; the physical features and area of each proposed electorate; the boundaries of existing electorates; and the boundaries of divisions or sections fixed under the Districts Act 2002.

Before the redistribution committee makes its proposal, any interested people or organisations who wish to make suggestions are given time to make suggestions in writing to the committee. The committee's first proposed redistribution will be published in a newspaper and exhibited at the commission's offices and on its website. Time is allowed for the lodgement of any objections. Objections are considered by the augmented Electoral Commission, which comprises the chairperson of the Electoral Commission and the other member of the commission sitting together with the members of the redistribution committee.

The augmented Electoral Commission will consider any initial objections and make a second proposed redistribution. If this second proposal is not significantly different from the first, the second set of proposed boundaries will become the final boundaries for the ACT Legislative Assembly. If the second proposal is significantly different, however, there is the opportunity for any further objections to be made within a 28-day period before a final determination of boundaries is made by the augmented Electoral Commission.

This process is both robust and independent. It will ensure that there is the opportunity for the community to have its say on this, the most significant change to our electoral system since self-government—change which will be effected by this bill together with the ACT Legislative Assembly bill.

When I was first elected to this place in 1997, the now rapidly growing district of Molonglo was a pine forest. When I was first elected to this Assembly, the district of Gungahlin had three suburbs, and one of those was not yet complete. Today we see 100,000 extra electors on the roll compared to when self-government was first granted to the territory. It is time to make this reform. The Assembly should be proud of the manner in which it has conducted itself in this debate. I commend the bill to the Assembly.

Question put:

That the bill be agreed to in principle.

The Assembly voted—

Ayes 16		Noes 1
Mr Barr	Ms Gallagher	Mr Rattenbury
Ms Berry	Mr Gentleman	
Dr Bourke	Mr Hanson	
Ms Burch	Mrs Jones	
Mr Coe	Ms Lawder	
Mr Corbell	Ms Porter	
Mr Doszpot	Mr Smyth	
Mrs Dunne	Mr Wall	

Question so resolved in the affirmative.

Bill agreed to in principle.

Leave granted to dispense with the detail stage.

MADAM SPEAKER: The question is that this bill be agreed to. In accordance with the Proportional Representation (Hare-Clark) Entrenchment Act 1994 and the practice of the Assembly, I direct the Clerk to call the Assembly. The bells have been rung and all members are present, so I shall call the Clerk.

The Assembly voted—

Ayes 16		Noes 1
Mr Barr	Ms Gallagher	Mr Rattenbury
Ms Berry	Mr Gentleman	
Dr Bourke	Mr Hanson	
Ms Burch	Mrs Jones	
Mr Coe	Ms Lawder	
Mr Corbell	Ms Porter	
Mr Doszpot	Mr Smyth	
Mrs Dunne	Mr Wall	

Question so resolved in the affirmative, with the concurrence of a two-thirds majority of members.

Bill agreed to.

Australian Capital Territory (Legislative Assembly) Bill 2014

Debate resumed from 5 June 2014, on motion by **Mr Corbell**:

That this bill be agreed to in principle.

MR HANSON (Molonglo—Leader of the Opposition) (5.27): I must say that we are dealing with these bills in an odd way today, because now that we have decided that we are going to have five electorates of five, we have to make the decision to actually create an expanded Assembly. I will not repeat all of my comments from the discussion on the previous bill because, in essence, as the Chief Minister said, much of our discussion is, if not cognate, certainly relevant to both bills. But it is appropriate that I respond to some of the comments made by Mr Rattenbury in relation to the previous matter.

The point I would make is that five electorates is an appropriate balance to make sure that, by and large, communities of interest are represented. There is no perfect way to do that, but I think five is the best compromise. Electorates of five members do provide for fair proportional representation and an appropriate balance between representing communities of interest and representative democracy. I think that Mr Coe, in his colourful speech on the last bill, and also Mr Corbell, outlined that pretty clearly for us.

The expert reference group made the point that the overall size of the Assembly is of “paramount consideration”—and that is a quote from their report—when considering the size of electorates. The point—and this was my point earlier about determining the size of the Assembly and about which bill we should deal with first—is that we should look at what size this Assembly needs to be and make sure that it is no bigger than it needs to be but that it is adequate to have the economies of scale to fix some of those problems we have identified. And there is a consensus that 25 at this stage is the right number. That was the number put forward by the expert reference group. It is the number that has been agreed to by the Labor Party and the Liberal Party.

Mr Rattenbury’s approach seems to be different from the advice of the expert reference group, which said that the paramount consideration is how big this place needs to be. What Mr Rattenbury is trying to do is reverse engineering. What he is trying to say is, “What’s the optimal number to get Greens elected and then let’s retrofit that to the size of the Assembly.” So he is not really concerned about spending the extra money on MLAs that we do not need and he is not particularly concerned about not having enough MLAs and only having 21, which would not do the job, so long as he gets his optimal number.

So I am disappointed. I would have to say that, whilst we have worked together on this bill cooperatively between the parties to come up with a good solution for the people of the ACT, compromises have been made all round. It would be fair to say that members of the Liberal Party had some scepticism about this. We end up with Mr Rattenbury, in essence, trying to make a claim here about proportional representation, which is clearly seen by everybody for what it is, which is self-interest rather than community interest.

That said, we can probably mark 5 August 2014 as the most harmonious day that we have seen in the Assembly for a good while. I think it is a day about which we can all rightly be proud as a day when we worked together to achieve a good outcome for the people of the ACT in making this Assembly a more effective place.

MR RATTENBURY (5.31): As I indicated earlier, the Greens will be supporting this bill. We are pleased that the size of the Assembly is an issue that has been reviewed during this term despite, as I touched on earlier, the outcomes not being ideal. It is never popular for politicians to discuss increasing the number of politicians, and I do concur with the comments of Mr Hanson and Ms Gallagher in that I think we have conducted this discussion overall in a mature way. I think the process of having the expert reference group look at the issue and engage with the community was a very positive way to lead the discussion and come at it on an objective, factually-driven basis. In that context we have a good outcome in terms of the increase in the size of the Assembly.

Of course, various comments have been made about my earlier remarks. Mr Coe got all “colourful”, as Mr Hanson described it. It was interesting that all that I did was simply quote the experts. Mr Coe got rather carried away and used all sorts of terms like “moral” and “evil”, but it is worth reiterating that the expert reference group was the one that specifically stated that seven-member electorates were better than five or nine. So it was the experts who stated that. All of Mr Coe’s colourful comments cannot take that away.

Similarly, the Proportional Representation Society demonstrated clearly in their submission to the committee that representation is lowered when numbers of members go down. Again that was from the experts. It is not Greens self-interest, as members will seek to paint this, and that is what they will do, of course. It was the experts who said that. Clearly, the comments I have made have got rather close to the bone, because these are valid points made by external people with no self-interest whatsoever. I have simply quoted them. But given the ferocity of their reaction, and the sort of terms that Mr Coe threw around, it is quite clear that it has touched a little close to the bone.

It is interesting to reflect on the history of electorates in Tasmania. One of the conditions that has been put in place in the ACT is that we must have odd numbers of members in the electorates. I have discussed this matter with the Electoral Commissioner, because I was interested in that particular requirement. Certainly, in Tasmania there were six-member electorates for quite some years during the middle of the last century. The Senate often operates on a six-member basis. Of course there are 12 senators per state, but most often when we have a half-Senate electorate we have six members per electorate. So there is a range of possibilities open to us.

Mr Hanson made some observations about me seeking to reverse engineer it. I was quite comfortable with having 25 if that is the right number, and there is a range of possible permutations within that that we could have gone to. We could have had four electorates—three by six and one by seven. All sorts of permutations could have been possible. I think it is quite clear, and I have already given my reasons for why we have come to the model we have.

Overall I think increasing the size of the Assembly will deliver better governance for the people of the ACT. It will allow for a further increase in the size of the ministry. I think this is important because the role of the ACT government in combining both

state and local government roles in one set of functions does place a significant burden on the Assembly, and having the additional members will allow for some of the additional capacities that have been discussed earlier today—a possible increase in the size of the ministry, a capacity for members to have less of a committee workload and therefore spend more time on each committee. I think these are the sort of positive benefits that will improve the governance as the population of the ACT increases and the complexity of issues that we are facing increases.

There will undoubtedly be more discussion about this, but I look forward to the fact that we have now locked down what the model is going to be for the 2016 election. I look forward to the Electoral Commissioner getting underway with the redistribution task that he and his colleagues must now perform. I think we will all be keenly watching that process, and I am certainly confident that the Greens can perform strongly in 2016 in the framework that has been created.

MR CORBELL (Molonglo—Attorney-General, Minister for Police and Emergency Services, Minister for the Environment and Minister for Capital Metro) (5.35), in reply: This bill is a stand-alone bill made under the commonwealth Australian Capital Territory (Self-Government) Act 1988. The relevant provisions in the commonwealth act set the size of the Assembly at 17 “or other number under an enactment”. Any such enactment has no effect unless passed by a two-thirds majority of the Legislative Assembly.

This bill is therefore that enactment. It provides for a determined number made for the first time by the Legislative Assembly itself. The provisions that allow the Assembly to determine its size were addressed through amendments to the self-government act made by the previous federal Labor government, and they are a welcome change that provides for this place to determine its own destiny.

These changes will not have any effect unless they are adopted by a two-thirds majority of the Assembly, and they are an important change. They provide for an increase that reflects the growth and complexity of governance in the territory, in terms of the scope and range of ACT government functions, the matters that the community as a whole expects this place to address, and the need to have sufficient numbers of members to allow those issues to be effectively addressed.

It is particularly important not just in terms of the size of the executive, as critical as that is, but also in terms of the size of the non-executive—those non-executive members of this place, whether on government or opposition benches, or indeed crossbenches, who all play a critical role in their respective ways to hold the executive to account, to question it on its behaviour and its procedures, policies, practices and programs, and to advance those issues of concern to the people those members are here to represent.

These changes therefore are part of the ever-maturing nature of self-government in the territory, and provide us with new opportunities to best represent the interests of the people of the Australian Capital Territory. I commend the bill to the Assembly.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Bill agreed to in principle.

Leave granted to dispense with the detail stage.

MADAM SPEAKER: In accordance with the Proportional Representation (Hare-Clark) Entrenchment Act 1994 and the practice of this Assembly, I will direct the Clerk to ring the bells.

The bells have been rung and all members are present.

The Assembly voted—

Ayes 17

Noes 0

Mr Barr	Mr Gentleman
Ms Berry	Mr Hanson
Dr Bourke	Mrs Jones
Ms Burch	Ms Lawder
Mr Coe	Ms Porter
Mr Corbell	Mr Rattenbury
Mr Doszpot	Mr Smyth
Mrs Dunne	Mr Wall
Ms Gallagher	

Question so resolved in the affirmative, with the concurrence of a two-thirds majority of members.

Bill agreed to.

Adjournment

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

That the Assembly do now adjourn.

Telstra business awards

MR WALL (Brindabella) (5.42): I rise this evening to acknowledge and congratulate all recipients and nominees for the 2014 Telstra ACT business awards. I had the pleasure of attending the awards at the QT hotel on 4 July, when it was great to meet and talk to so many business owners and operators who are all such substantial contributors to our city's diverse economy.

Will Irving, the group managing director for Telstra Business, said in his opening address—and the remarks are in the booklet—that in every pocket of Australia, in far-flung remote towns, in suburban fringes and in our sprawling metropolises, small and medium-size businesses are being brilliant; they are the heart of many local communities and they are the backbone of the Australian economy. Small and medium-size businesses in the ACT are no different. I would like to echo those sentiments and also pay tribute to Telstra for their continuing initiative with the Telstra business awards to identify and celebrate the successes of local small and medium-size businesses.

There were several categories that businesses could nominate for, from a start-up business all the way through to a medium-size business. For the start-up category the nominees were Antique Salon, Capital Civil Contractors, Synergy Self Defence and Fitness and, taking out that category, Cogito Group.

Nominated for the microbusiness award were Barmco Mana Partnership, Bravium, Handmade Canberra, Paladin Risk Management and, the winner, Solace Creations.

Nominated for the small business award were Bruceworks, Choku Bai Jo, Coordinate, Interaction Consulting, Tailored Accounts and, a popular winner on the evening, Today's Homes.

For the medium business award the nominees were Adore Tea, Synergy Group and Intelledox, the winner, a very popular Canberra business which is familiar to most people in this place. The 2014 ACT business award also went to Intelledox for their substantial contribution to software engineering and innovations that have streamlined customer interactions with a variety of different kinds of businesses used by over a million people worldwide.

It is important to note that the majority of this year's award recipients are innovators, whether in software, security or home insulation. For Canberra to be a thriving and vibrant economy, we must encourage this sense of innovation as displayed by all the nominees and winners this year.

Again, I would like to thank Telstra for their ongoing support and for continuing to recognise the contribution made by the business community in the ACT. I also, once again, thank the people that were in attendance and the other businesses there for what was a most memorable and enjoyable night, paying tribute to some of the high achieving businesses that are proud to call our city home.

Multicultural affairs

DR BOURKE (Ginninderra) (5.45): Tonight I would like to highlight a small but important ACT government initiative—the work experience and support program run by the government's multicultural affairs community participation group and delivered by the Canberra Institute of Technology. I have spoken previously of my pride in the advances Australia has made to become an exemplar multicultural nation over the last 40 years. This is in spite of the regular reminders we get of old, entrenched attitudes and backward steps like Senator Brandis's failed attempt to gut the Racial Discrimination Act.

Meanwhile, the ACT government and this community get on with fostering community harmony. We value and benefit from the contributions by Canberrans of many cultural backgrounds. We work closely with organisations such as Migrant and Refugee Resettlement Services of the ACT to help new arrivals, and we have great introductory English programs in our schools amongst initiatives and human rights protections.

I recently had the pleasure of awarding certificates at the work experience and support program course graduation at the Theo Notaras Centre. The course assists Canberra residents from multicultural backgrounds who are experiencing significant barriers to meaningful employment. It provides an opportunity for them to update their skills and experience and to build a network of contacts in the ACT public service.

The three-month course provides training and work experience in the ACT public service, building people's confidence and knowledge as potential employees. It has helped launch the careers and fulfilled the dreams of skilled migrants in Canberra since its inception over a decade ago. At the graduation in June, I presented certificates to 20 Canberrans from Bangladesh, China, India, Iran, Japan, Nigeria, Pakistan, the Philippines, South Sudan, Sri Lanka and Vietnam—reflecting Canberra's diverse multicultural community.

Many already had impressive education experience and qualifications, including masters in business administration, and IT, economics and accounting degrees, but they had difficulty getting a job due to a lack of Australian workplace experience. The course is four weeks of formal training in office skills, the workplace and administration, delivered by the Canberra Institute of Technology, and eight weeks of voluntary work placements in an ACT government agency. The Community Services Directorate is delivering two programs this year, one from March to June and another from June to September. The program has been very popular. This year 120 people applied for the 40 places available.

The ACT government recognises that finding a job is one of the biggest challenges that the majority of migrants encounter as they undertake their new life in Australia. Providing work experience would not have been possible without the support of the managers, staff and executives of the various ACT government agencies in providing placements for the graduates. I thank them for their ongoing support. I also congratulate the graduates now entering a new phase of their lives as part of Canberra's workforce and having the chance to realise their dreams.

Victims of Malaysia Airlines flight MH17

MRS JONES (Molonglo) (5.49): As you all know, the world was shocked when Malaysia Airlines flight MH17 was shot down over eastern Ukraine on 17 July this year. I was very honoured to be invited to attend the memorial service which was held at St Nicholas Ukrainian Orthodox Church in Turner on Saturday, 26 July. My deepest thanks go to the Ukrainian church and the Ukrainian community in Canberra for organising and holding this beautiful service, MC'd by Peter Lutak very ably. The main speaker was the ambassador for the Netherlands, with a heartfelt message of sincere condolence for those who lost their lives and lost their loved ones.

The significance of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church holding this memorial shows that the actions in a war zone of a group of people does not represent the views of all Ukrainians or Ukrainians in Canberra. I was joined by the Chief Minister and Mr Doszpot from the Assembly, and Ms Brodtmann, member for Canberra, from the federal parliament. At the service, the choir, which was a collaborative effort between the Ukrainian Orthodox and Catholic communities, sang beautifully; it was great to see the two church communities come together for this event.

Our own city has been affected by this tragedy. Our thoughts and prayers, in particular, go out to the family of Canberra mother Liliane Derden. I join my prayers with those of the church community to pray for all who have died. As is my faith practice, I pray that their souls and the souls of all the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen.

I once again thank the Ukrainian church from my heart for organising this memorial, and I commend them for the short time frame in which they worked to organise this significant event.

Snow Foundation

MR COE (Ginninderra) (5.50): I rise tonight to speak about the good work of the Snow Foundation. The foundation was established in 1991 by Terry and George Snow as a vehicle to help those who are disadvantaged throughout Canberra and its neighbouring territories. Since its foundation the Snow Foundation has donated approximately \$6.5 million to 190 different charitable organisations and individuals. This funding has been primarily directed at those who do not benefit from government support and has helped to purchase equipment for people with disabilities, provide educational scholarships to disadvantaged youth, buy wigs for those suffering from cancer and even supply kitchen utensils to those who are blind.

Last year the foundation provided over \$1 million in funding. This money was shared between 62 organisations and 15 individuals and was focused on the areas of health, social welfare, education and employment. Of the 62 organisations which received funding, 26 had an existing funding relationship with the Snow Foundation, meaning that 36 organisations received new funding from the foundation.

Highlights of last year include: \$300,000 to the Big Issue's homes for homes project, which provides funds to increase the amount of affordable social housing; \$25,000 to Snowy Hydro SouthCare to purchase an upgraded ventilator; and \$70,000 to UnitingCare Kippax as part of an ongoing commitment over four years to help vulnerable families with children aged from birth to five years. I note also the ongoing support they provide to St John's Care in Reid. I know Sue Jordan, who runs St John's Care, very much appreciates their ongoing generosity.

Smaller donations last year included a \$6,000 donation to help supply customised bikes to children and \$5,000 donation to Communities@Work to start an introductory sailing program at the Canberra Yacht Club.

This year the foundation has already committed: \$125,000 to Good360 Australia, an organisation which passes on excess corporate products like toys, computers and bedding to charities that provide these products to people who need them most; \$33,000 to Cerebral Palsy ACT; and \$25,000 to a juvenile justice mentoring program known as Shine for Kids. The Pinnacle Foundation, One Disease at a Time and Global Sisters have all been beneficiaries of the Snow Foundation this year.

Finally, I take this opportunity to thank and congratulate all those who donate their time to the Snow Foundation. I particularly thank Terry Snow, the current chairman of the organisation, and George Snow for beginning the foundation. I also express my appreciation to the foundation's other board members, including CEO Georgina Byron, Ginette Snow, Stephen Byron, Karen Byron, Craig Betts, Scarlett Gaffey, Stephen Gaffey and Andrew Fleece.

I commend the work of the Snow Foundation to members of the Assembly. For further information regarding the foundation, including the latest news on their funding and the foundation's upcoming events, I encourage all members to visit their website at www.snowfoundation.org.au.

Cyprus Victims of Malaysia Airlines flight MH17

MR DOSZPOT (Molonglo) (5.54): During our winter break, on Sunday, 13 July, I had the pleasure of accepting an invitation from Ms Georgia Alexandrou, President of the Cyprus Community of Canberra and ACT, to attend a service at the Greek Orthodox Church of St Nicholas in Kingston to commemorate the 40th anniversary of the Turkish invasion of Cyprus on Sunday, 13 July 1974.

The Cyprus Community of Canberra has faithfully continued its commemoration of both the events of 13 July 1974 and the second round of the Turkish invasion of Cyprus which took place on 15 August 1974. It is now 40 years later and the impasse still exists. Cyprus is still occupied and still divided.

In a recent speech, the President of the Republic of Cyprus, Nicos Anastasiades stated:

We seek a solution that will reunify the country and safeguard the human rights of all Cypriots: Greek Cypriots, our Turkish Cypriot compatriots and all lawful Cypriots, irrespective of where they belong, what language they speak or what religion they believe in.

He went on to say:

Our goal is to reunite our common homeland. The reunification of the island must be supported by the people, withstand difficulties, develop opportunities for growth and prosperity, safeguard the European principles and rules, guarantee stability in Cyprus and the region and allow for the creation of alliances and conditions of mutual development for the benefit of all.

After 40 years this wish is still to be fulfilled. I know that there are many on both sides of this divide who are praying for such a much longed for solution. May their prayers be heard.

On 26 July, I attended the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of St Nicholas, in company with the Chief Minister, Ms Gallagher, and Mrs Jones, for the memorial service to

honour the memory of the 298 victims of flight MH17. One of the graphic illustrations of the loss was the 298 lit candles at the altar which signified the loss of many lives. The service included a moving address by the Netherlands Ambassador to Australia, Her Excellency Annemieke Ruigrok. And my congratulations to Peter Lutak and the Ukrainian Australian community for their solemn, dignified memorial and ongoing prayers for the victims and their families.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

The Assembly adjourned at 5.57 pm.