



# Debates

WEEKLY HANSARD

Legislative Assembly for the ACT

**NINTH ASSEMBLY**

**13 DECEMBER 2016**

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**Tuesday, 13 December 2016**

**MADAM SPEAKER** (Ms Burch) 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.

### **Absence of Clerk**

*Madam Speaker informed the Assembly that, due to the absence of the Clerk, the Deputy Clerk would act as Clerk.*

### **Petition**

*The following e-petition was lodged for presentation, by **Mr Rattenbury**, from 222 residents:*

#### **Access to cannabis medicines—petition 1-16**

**TO: The Speaker and Members of the Legislative Assembly for the Australian Capital Territory**

The following residents of the ACT draw to the attention of the Assembly residents of the Australian Capital Territory are currently using Cannabis medicines to life changing effect, yet access is restricted to the black market.

Your petitioners, therefore, request the Assembly to legislate for safe and adequate access to Cannabis medicines.

*The Clerk having announced that the terms of the petition would be recorded in Hansard and a copy referred to the appropriate minister for response pursuant to standing order 100, the petition was received.*

### **Petitions**

#### **Ministerial responses**

*The following further response to a petition was lodged by **Mr Gentleman**, Minister for Planning and Land Management, dated 18 August 2016, in response to a petition lodged by **Mr Corbell** on 3 August 2016 concerning the rezoning of Mr Fluffy houses in Bragg Street, Hackett:*

#### **Hackett rezoning—petition 6-16**

I refer to my letter of 10 August 2016 in response to petition No. 6-16 lodged in the Assembly by Simon Corbell on 3 August 2016.

I can advise that in Hackett there are 21 blocks in the RZ1 suburban zone and of these blocks, nine blocks are between 700 and 800m<sup>2</sup>.

*The following response to a petition was lodged by Ms Fitzharris, Minister for Transport and City Services, dated 1 September 2016, in response to a petition lodged by Mrs Dunne on 2 August 2016 concerning the upgrade of playground facilities on the corner of Knaggs Crescent and Birrell Street in Page:*

### **Page playground facilities—petition 5-16**

Thank you for your letter of 2 August 2016 about petition No. 5-16, lodged by Mrs Vicki Dunne MLA regarding the playground on the corner of Knaggs Crescent and Birrell Street in Page.

The ACT Government is committed to providing a range of outdoor activities for the Canberra community. The 2016-17 Budget is delivering a \$3 million investment to further improve the amenity of Canberra's parks and playgrounds.

I am pleased to advise that the playground in Page has been included in the package of renewal works to be delivered across Canberra's playgrounds in 2016-2017. I understand that play equipment was removed from the park some time ago due for operational reasons. Following a review of the play equipment in the park, a new item of play equipment has been selected in line with the Transport Canberra and City Services (TCCS) Design Standards for Urban Infrastructure guidelines for local neighbourhood playgrounds.

The new climbing unit includes a range of play opportunities for young children with the provision of a wave slide, fire pole, timber bridge, monkey bar, chin-up bar, spider web climber and steering and abacus panels for creative play. The new equipment is programmed for installation by end June 2017.

In regard to the option for a barbeque recreational area in the local neighbourhood park, barbeques are generally only provided in high use town, district and community parks. Based on the park hierarchy and provision of facilities for suburban parks, Page does not meet the high volume of use required for a barbeque facility. That said, local park users may bring their own portable barbeques into the park for their private use.

Thank you for raising this matter with me. I trust this information is helpful.

*The following response to a petition was lodged by Ms Fitzharris, Minister for Health, dated 8 November 2016, in response to a petition lodged by Mrs Dunne on 11 August 2016 concerning the repeal of the ban on pro-life actions near certain health clinics:*

### **Freedom of speech—petition 8-16**

Thank you for your letter of 11 August 2016 regarding Petition No 8-16 - Repeal of ban on Pro-Life actions near abortion clinics.

As referenced in your letter, standing order 100 requires the Minister responsible to lodge a response with the Clerk for presentation to the Assembly within three months of the tabling of the petition. As this date is after the conclusion of the Eighth Assembly I formally submit my response as follows.

Petition No 8-16 states that the legislative amendments introduced by the *Health (Patient Privacy) Amendment ACT 2015* seek to ban pro-life actions in designated areas near an abortion clinic, including praying. The petition further argues that these provisions trample on basic human rights involving freedom of expression which are essential in a democracy such as Australia.

I am confident that the Act does not impinge on basic human rights as the legislation was developed in consultation with key stakeholders, including the ACT Human Rights Commission and ACT Policing. The intention of the Act is to strike a balance between a woman's right to access safe and legal health care and the rights of protesters to voice their opinion.

The former ACT Attorney General undertook a compatibility assessment between the Act and the *Human Rights ACT 2004*, particularly in relation to the right for the Freedom of Movement and Peaceful Assembly. The limitations on human rights in this Bill were found to be proportionate and justified because they are the least restrictive means available to ensure that Canberrans can access these particular services without the potential for intimidation or harassment.

The ACT Government's focus when delivering health care services remains with the patient at the centre of care. In this way, the ACT Government recognises the principles set out in the Australian Charter of Health Care Rights, that everyone has the right to access health care in a way that respects the patients, their cultural beliefs, values and personal characteristics.

The Government's primary intention is to ensure access to care by preventing the behaviours which may act to increase emotional distress or prevent women from accessing legal, medically recognised health services. The Act does not limit the ability to protest in other settings, such as the ACT Legislative Assembly or other public areas.

It is my belief that the repeal of the legislation provisions referred to under Petition No 8-16 is not warranted.

Thank you for allowing me to provide a response to this petition.

*The following response to two petitions was lodged by **Mr Ramsay**, Minister for the Arts and Community Events, dated 14 November 2016, in response to two petitions lodged by **Dr Bourke** on 11 August 2016 concerning funding for the Belconnen Arts Centre.*

### **Belconnen Arts Centre—e-petitions 4-16 and 7-16**

Thank you for your letter of 11 August 2016 regarding petition numbers 4-16 and 7-16 lodged by Dr Chris Bourke MLA and received by the ACT Legislative Assembly on 11 August 2016.

I understand the petition brings to the attention of the Assembly the proven success of the Belconnen Arts Centre since stage 1 opened in 2009 and the anticipation of signatories, of the completion of stage 2 of the Centre as an essential part of Belconnen's community and culture.

The petitioners have requested the ACT Government commit to a timeline and funding for the completion of Stage 2 of the Belconnen Arts Centre by 2021.

In accordance with Standing Order 100 I provide you with the following response to the petition for presentation to the Assembly:

The Belconnen Arts Centre is an important element of both the arts and community landscape in the ACT and a key contributor to the vibrancy of Emu Bank and the broader Belconnen Town Centre.

The ACT Government has committed to constructing Stage 2 of the Belconnen Arts Centre, to allow a wider range of uses by community, artistic and performance groups and is currently developing a timeline for this work.

The community support for Stage 2 of Belconnen Arts Centre is apparent and will be an important continuing component of its development.

Thank you for bringing this petition to the attention of the ACT Government.

## **Paper Assistant Speakers—appointment**

**MADAM SPEAKER:** For the information of members and pursuant to standing order 8, I nominate Ms Cody, Ms Lee and Mr Steel as Assistant Speakers and present the warrant of nomination.

## **Administration and Procedure—Standing Committee Report 1**

**MADAM SPEAKER:** I present the following report:

Administration and Procedure—Standing Committee—Report 1—*Review of standing orders for the Ninth Assembly*, dated 5 December 2016, together with a copy of the extracts of the relevant minutes of proceedings.

**MS CHEYNE** (Ginninderra) (10.04): I move:

That the report be adopted.

This is a brief report that the Standing Committee on Administration and Procedure has concluded on amendments to the standing orders. The committee has met twice, largely to review matters raised by the previous Speaker in a discussion paper which are of significance to the smooth running of this Assembly in the context of its expansion. The recommendations are straightforward. The committee has agreed on this report, and I commend it to the Assembly.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

## Leave of absence

Motion (by **Mr Coe**) agreed to:

That leave of absence be granted to Mrs Dunne, Ms Lawder and Mr Wall for this sitting week to attend the CPA annual conference.

## Administration and Procedure—Standing Committee Membership

Motion (by **Mr Coe**) agreed to:

That, notwithstanding the provisions of standing order 16, Mr Wall be discharged from the Standing Committee on Administration and Procedure for today and that Mr Coe be appointed in his place.

## Inaugural speeches

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Before I call Mr Parton, I remind members that it is traditional that inaugural speeches be heard in silence.

**MR PARTON** (Brindabella) (10.05), by leave: My name is Mark Parton, and I am so proud and I am humbled to be here. Today is the culmination of a dream that I had as a 12-year-old boy. My initials are “MP”. So from a very young age my brother Dean and I used to joke that they were the perfect initials for an elected representative, and I dreamt that one day I could be elected to represent the people. I have to pinch myself today to believe that it is real, but it looks as though it is.

I have been 50 years on this earth. I was born in 1966, the second son of a struggling country grocer by the name of Tom Parton and his wife Jacqui, who I think are watching online. My parents were living in a small country town in Western Australia called York. York is 100 kilometres this side of Perth. It is very similar to Braidwood: three pubs, supermarket, corner store, hospital, primary school, high school up to year 10, and lots and lots of farmers with flannelette shirts ripped at the sleeves.

It was wheat and sheep primarily when I was growing up there. There has been some diversification since then. My parents moved to York from Narrogin, which is another country town, as my father chased his dream to build a career in retail. My father came from a very poor family. His father had been a railway worker. He was one of seven children. They did it tough. My father’s brother, my Uncle George, still lives in the house that they all grew up in. It is a small and very modest house in Narrogin and I am astounded that they all fitted in. I am blown if I know where they all slept.

My father was not a scholar. He had some major health issues at 13 which robbed him of a full year of schooling. He left school at 15 to work in retail. Some years later, the particular business he was working for opened up a store in York, which was 100 kilometres north, and sent my father, who at that stage was in his 20s, to run it. It did not work. It closed soon after and my father decided to have a go himself. He went to various banks to borrow money so he could start his own business.



The banks all knocked him back. As he was close to giving up, he stumbled across a private lender who agreed to lend him the money, and my father became a small business owner. I was born in those early years when he and my mother were running the business. We lived in a very modest bonded asbestos house on the poor side of town. This was government housing. It was all that my parents could afford.

My father worked. He worked from dawn until dusk. I grew up in the store of his supermarket and I watched my father and the way that he operated. I listened in on the conversations that he had with customers, with wholesalers, and in those young, formative years my father's work ethic entered my little body and it has never left.

My father was the best small-town supermarket operator that ever was. He metaphorically owned that little town. He was a gun. He built that business up so fast, and eventually we moved out of the little house on Grey Street to a much bigger house. Eventually my father sold up to a bigger supermarket and became their manager, before starting again in business for a second shot at it seven years later, and he smashed it a second time round. He worked his guts out for his family, and he made it work. My father retired at 50 because he could. He and my mother had earned enough money to fund their retirement for the rest of their lives and they still live very happily in York.

I am a Liberal because my father showed me that with hard work anyone can get ahead, irrespective of where they have come from. This is a great country that we live in, in that it allows individuals to prosper in the way that my father did. I think that our elected representatives at all levels should do whatever they can to allow initiative and hard work to be rewarded.

I had a ball growing up in York. There is something special about living in a place where you know everybody and everybody knows you. I played hockey very badly; I did not often wear shoes; and I rode my yellow Malvern Star bike—yes, it did have a sissy bar—all over town. I excelled early on at school, but not so much in later years, because other things grabbed my attention. I became a published journalist as a 13 year old when I started writing a fortnightly column in my local newspaper, the *Beverly York Express*. It was around that time that I developed a love for harness and thoroughbred racing. I fancied myself as a race caller and I set about learning that craft.

I am supremely colourblind. I am as colourblind as a human can get; so I was told by many that it was physically impossible for me to call the races. The calling of thoroughbred races in particular is done almost exclusively by colour; so I was told it just would not be possible for me to pursue this. I ignored the naysayers and set about proving them wrong, and prove them wrong I did.

At 14 I became the on-course broadcaster for the northern harness racing trials, and at age 16 I secured the job as the official on-course broadcaster for the Trayning Harness Racing Club and the Merredin Harness Racing Club, both in regional Western Australia. At those venues, I created the bizarre scenario whereby the official on-course race caller was not legally allowed to bet on the races.

Soon after this, I secured my first radio job as a 16-year-old announcer at Radio 6AM Northam. Upon completing my year 12 studies, I began working full time at 6AM before securing a job at 6PR in Perth. In the following 30-odd years I journeyed around the nation working in every state and territory except Queensland and the Northern Territory. I have worked in Sale, Victoria; in Wangaratta, Victoria; I have worked in Launceston, before a longer stint in Adelaide; then Murray Bridge, Coffs Harbour and Newcastle before coming here. I came to Canberra in 1999.

At the time I moved to Canberra I did not really want to come here, I have to tell you. I had been squeezed out by a staff reshuffle in Newcastle. There was not much else on offer. So I grudgingly agreed to come to Canberra on what I believed would be a temporary posting. I intended to be here for no more than six months until something better came along, because I thought I would hate the place. I was wrong. I love this town. I love the people in it. It has been a great pleasure of mine to be a part of this community for nearly 20 years.

I presented the breakfast program at Mix 106.3 here in Canberra; that was from late 1999 through to 2008. I set out to win the breakfast slot at Mix, but I was told by my program director that this would not be possible. "Mix has never won breakfast here," he told me, "and, demographically, it is not really possible for you to achieve a breakfast figure any higher than 17 or 18 per cent." I took those words as a challenge. With Lisa Ridgley as my co-host, we did win breakfast at Mix, with an audience share of well over 20 per cent. To this day we remain as the only breakfast team ever to win a Canberra breakfast survey at Mix.

After an unsuccessful attempt to win my way into this place as an independent in 2008, I found myself back on the radio doing breakfast at 2CC. From the Mitchell studios of 2CC, I managed to win not one, but five Australian commercial radio awards as best talk announcer and best current affairs presenter over a number of years. In more recent years, I have run my own communications and marketing business. PartonMe was on a staggering trajectory upwards and my accountant will not take my calls. He still believes that I am crazy for abandoning it to become an MLA.

I am here because I love this town, because I want to help Canberra to become the best it can be. I am here because life is so desperately short, and when you have the ability to make a positive impact on your community—on those around you—I think you should take that chance.

I want to make reference to one of my radio mentors, a gentleman by the name of Vincent Smith. I produced Vinnie's morning program at 5AA in Adelaide in the late '80s and early '90s. He was a cranky old bloke with reams of experience across all the mainstream mediums. He had produced John Laws. He had been an international correspondent for Fairfax. He had presented national television programs.

When we came together, I was 19, and I had virtually no experience in talk radio. He took me under his wing and he showed me how to make talk radio. Certainly, so much of what I did at 2CC was inspired by Vincent Smith. These were the good old

days of talk radio. Whenever I hear the sound of a clacking typewriter I think of this man.

Vinnie was a passionate man. He was passionate about most things. I can remember so many long lunches that were ended by them kicking us out of whatever restaurant we were in because we were too rowdy. Vincent was diagnosed with inoperable lung cancer in the early '90s, and he quickly—very quickly—declined. He continued working right to the end, but he was as sick as a dog. I helped in whatever way I could as his producer. I still vividly recall those final months and, in particular, I recall one conversation that the two of us had very close to the end.

He was most unwell, was Vin. We had just finished a morning program. He had made the long walk from the studio to our office. He was exhausted. He slumped down in his chair, and he said these words to me: “Mark, the people in this place, they say hello and they smile at me, but I can see they feel very sorry for me. They feel sorry for me because they think I’m dying. In reality,” he said, “I am the luckiest man in the building.” “How do you figure that?” I asked him. “Well,” he said, “I am the only one here who knows what each day is worth. I am the only one here who knows what every moment is worth, and nobody else has got a bloody clue.”

I remember those words as though they were spoken yesterday. I have to tell you that they have influenced the way that I have gone about so many things since that day, because our time is so short. Vinnie was right. We take life for granted. We all seem to march on as though this thing called life is infinite, and it is not. We are all born with a terminal disease called life. None of us is going to make it out of here alive, and Vinnie taught me that we should all embrace each day. Our time is not a finite resource. One of the reasons that I am here is to leave as positive a footprint as I possibly can on this city, on this country and on this planet.

As I look around this place today, I see, well, not quite 24 other members, who I believe are also here on a selfless journey to make a positive impact in the city that we all share. I commend each and every one of you for having the courage to stand up for what you believe in and for taking this journey with me.

I understand that we are not always going to agree on everything. I look forward to the battle of ideas. I look forward to the conflict. I look forward to the toing and froing, but, above all else, I look forward to the times when we actually all come together and fix things, when we come together on important matters, because the people elected us to make the right decisions for them.

I had my official photographs for this place taken several weeks ago. I was wearing a green tie on the day the photo was taken. Some Liberal Party people suggested to me that that was the wrong choice. I responded to them by saying that I am colourblind in many more ways than one, and I am proud of that.

I am here for people of every race and religion. We are blessed to live in a wonderfully diverse multicultural society. I would like to embrace that as much as I possibly can. My wife Luisa is Colombian-born. As such, mine is a bilingual household. *Estoy aprendiendo espanol, pero mi espanol es basura.* I am learning

Spanish but my Spanish is rubbish. It is not good at all. I do have some strong links to the Latin American community in Canberra. I would like to further enhance those links and to reach out to others.

With Luisa I have attended a number of Catholic churches in the Tuggeranong Valley, but I am here for the followers of all religions. I am here for followers of the Muslim faith in Canberra. I supported them during my time on the radio and I will continue to support them from here. I have attended open days at the Islamic Centre in Monash and I look forward to spending more time there.

I am here for those Canberrans who are struggling to keep a roof over their heads, those who are experiencing housing stress or who find themselves homeless in our capital city. The level of housing unaffordability in this city should shame us all, particularly those on the other side who have had many opportunities to address this problem but have been found wanting. Housing affordability is the biggest single failure from the four terms of Labor government here. I hope that we can work together to make it easier for every Canberran to comfortably have a roof over their head.

I am here for the hard-working small construction firms who are brave enough not to sign enterprise bargaining agreements with certain unions. The last time I looked, this was a free country and I am appalled at the bullying and thuggery that some in our Canberra construction industry must face for simply exercising their rights. I am not anti-union. Unions have helped this country to become great and their input into our nation can never ever be underestimated. I am not anti-union, but I am anti-corrupt union. I am anti any institution—government or otherwise—that deters the aspirations of small business owners and their ability to operate and prosper because small business plays such a big role in turning the wheels of this city.

We must recognise that it is the business community that ensures the employment prospects of thousands in our town and ensures that our kids have a fair chance of a viable future. Of course, we must also recognise our government sectors, both federal and territory, for their massive role in our Canberra community.

I am here for the participants and the followers of the sport of greyhound racing. The greyhound racing industry has been absolutely and fully compliant with all animal welfare requirements for their 37-year history. I think they have every right to question the dismissal of their sport in this city. They do not understand, and neither do I, the basis upon which they are being banished by this Labor-Greens government. To some extent, the appalling lack of consultation does not surprise me because I am sure that if those from the other side ever bothered to join me at the greyhounds one Sunday night, they would be staggered by how many former Labor voters they would encounter. Please join me.

I am here for the LGBTI community in the ACT. For the most part, I do not think it is a concentrated community at all. It is just a bunch of people who are scattered across all parts of the city whose sexuality happens to be different from mine. I am not an advocate for same-sex marriage. What I am is just sick to death of talking about it. It

is inevitable that this country will legalise same-sex marriage and I wish we would just get on with it.

I am here for the people of Tuggeranong, the people who have been left behind and forgotten by this government. I am here for the families whose margins have been squeezed by the ever-increasing cost of everyday life in this great city; the people who dread their next rates announcement, their next motor registration renewal; the people who will never, ever buy a ticket on any white elephant tram.

I am truly honoured to say that I was elected to this place in October. Those of us who had run unsuccessful campaigns in the past learn many things and luckily I was able to put that knowledge as well as the support of the Canberra Liberals team and some wonderful supporters into a winning formula in October. I made many promises during my 10-week campaign and I am keen to keep all that I can from the opposition benches.

Thanks to everyone who helped me get here. Thanks to my wife Luisa and all of the family. Luisa is the rock at the centre of my life. I am so thankful that we found each other. When Brindabella elected me to this place they effectively elected Luisa as well. She will continue to be my guiding light in many ways.

During my journey many things have changed me. Becoming a father was one of them. Before having children of my own I had always believed that a father's role was to teach his children about life. Harry, Brydie and Delaney have taught me that the opposite is the case. From the day each of them was born they have taught me much about myself and about life in general—more than I believe I have taught them. They continue to teach me every day. I love the three of them immensely and I thank them for bringing light into my life. And I thank my stepchildren, Atilla, Angela and Anna, for accepting me in their lives and allowing me to play such a big role in what they do day to day.

From the campaign perspective, I must say thanks to Rob and George and Rowan and the whole campaign team. Thanks to Jason and Dennis and Peter; to Graham and Peter and Rosa. Thanks to Jeremy Hanson for believing in me. Thanks to Alistair Coe for all of your help and advice. Thanks so much to Ed Cocks for campaigning hard enough in Brindabella that the door was opened wide enough to get three of us elected. Rob Lovett and Brad Clarke have joined me as staff members and they have been awesome. They have carried me for the first four weeks. I can see that they will continue to shoulder a big load and I am very proud to count them as close friends of mine.

But more than anything else, thanks to every single person who voted one, two or even three for me. I will be forever grateful. I will repay you for supporting me. I know a lot of you but many of you I have not met. I aim to change that. I want to get out and meet all. I will repay you by representing you truly in this place. I will repay you by holding the government to account. I will repay you by putting bright ideas on the table. I will repay you by listening to your grievances and doing whatever I can to address them and I will repay you by helping this city to reach its full potential. Thank you so much for indulging me.

**MRS KIKKERT** (Ginninderra) (10.26), by leave: It is a great privilege and honour for me to stand before you this day. I am deeply grateful to the residents of the Ginninderra electorate who put their trust in me and gave me the opportunity to serve as their member in the Legislative Assembly. This is a responsibility that I take extremely seriously and, as I embark on this journey, I am focused on giving to and serving the people of Ginninderra, as well as the people of Canberra.

My journey to this office has not been entirely straightforward or easy. I arrived in this country at the age of eight knowing only two words of English: yes and no. The confusion of attending classes that I could not understand was further complicated by frequent beatings, both before and after school, and by the fact that food money was often taken to be spent on alcohol instead. This situation eventually changed, but that change meant that the rest of my growing-up years were spent in a broken home headed by a single mother. I decided as a youth, however, that I would not let any negative experiences rob me of my personal dignity or hold me back from anything good. I also made the unshakable determination that the next generation in my family would be protected from such things.

I would not wish to repeat many of these experiences, but I am fully aware of, and feel the importance of, such trials in my life. Without these life-learning experiences, I would not be who I am today.

I would therefore like to thank some of the people that have come into my life and who have made it possible for me to develop and grow and mature. My husband, Sean, has been my rock and inspiration. I thank my children for their loyalty, cooperation, hard work and trust. I am grateful to my parents, particularly my mother, for her strength, for her devotion and for being a compassionate woman. I am also grateful for my dear friends, who have carried some of my burdens and supported me during the events in my life. I also wish to thank all those who contributed to my campaign in any way, volunteering everything from time to resources.

I have grown to love the people of Canberra, and the love that I feel for them inspires me to serve them with all the strength that I have. As a local member, I am determined to act as a voice for the people of Ginninderra. I am in partnership with them to build a better Ginninderra and a better Canberra. I believe that all members of the public should be treated as full partners and full participants in our quest for a better Canberra. They need to know that their input is valued. We want to involve, listen to and support people. Many have expertise and experiences that we can humbly learn from. As we strive for a better Canberra as a whole, we must always remember to love and care for the people we serve as individuals. Each person is important to me, and I want no-one to feel as if they are forgotten by the government.

This desire is evident in my personal life. When my eldest daughter was born 14 years ago, my husband Sean and I named her Utopia. We named her Utopia because we believed in actively participating to create a better society to live in. We loved how Sir Thomas More, the author of *Utopia*, had a vision for a better society, and we also believed that we can all work together to create a better world if we are united in respect and care for each other. As much as my husband and I have actively

participated and volunteered within our community to build a better society, we also fully recognised our duty to teach these same principles to our children. I believe that investing in our children and our youth is one of the most important investments that we can make.

As a mother, I wear many different hats and have many different roles. Motherhood is truly a challenging, demanding and selfless occupation, one that requires a myriad of skills and abilities. While effective motherhood is a skilled occupation that requires the very best of us, I have learnt that great things can be accomplished by ordinary mothers who have the compassion, and the passion, the love and the dedication to make a difference. I have been proud to teach my children by example that nothing about effective work in a family or in society is particularly complicated. It is all based on the timeless principles of faith, which is a belief in things that are hoped for but not seen; affection; patience; hope; kindness; humility; and diligence. Mix those principles with planning, hard work and organisation, and as families, individuals and society we will be able to accomplish anything we can imagine. There really is strength in unity.

Women are the masterpieces of society. I believe that children are the most precious and the most valuable thing in all of the world, and as women, we have been entrusted to bear and give birth to our children and then raise, nurture, train and teach them to be good citizens and our future leaders. I believe that we need more mothers in politics, for the same principles that build strong families will also build a stronger society. As a mother of five children, I am well aware of many issues that are important to families in the Australian Capital Territory. As a dedicated, hardworking mother, I have developed the attributes and qualifications that will allow me to work towards a better Canberra as a member of the Legislative Assembly.

Participation in the Assembly is both a privilege and a responsibility. As a member of the Liberal Party, I feel personally accountable to lift burdens from the shoulders of my leader and my MLA colleagues. I will diligently prepare for and participate in meetings and discussions so that we, as Canberra Liberals, can be the best we can be. As a shadow minister, I feel the need not just to know policy but to engage with the people who, day in and day out, are affected by policy decisions and learn from their expertise and experiences. As concerns and issues arise, I am obligated to sincerely question the government and work with them towards resolving these issues.

As I hold a position of leadership, I will be required to give an account for what I did with the position that I hold. I understand that leadership is a sacred trust. I am dedicated to investing my energy in solving or preventing problems and to strategically planning for the future.

Through many years of community work, I have been able to address fragmentation and work towards achieving cooperation and unity among diverse groups within our communities. As a result of rendering significant service in Canberra, I have come to the conclusion that it is only when we give of ourselves to others that we find true happiness. By giving ourselves to others in service, we can put our differences behind us.

When I turned 30, I wanted to celebrate my birthday in a different way. Instead of focusing on receiving gifts, I wanted my birthday to be about giving to others. And so I performed 30 random acts of kindness around Canberra. I visited the hospital, the emergency department, schools, car parks, the Belconnen bus interchange, the library, shopping centres and an embassy and did small acts of kindness to Canberrans in those places. I visited a stranger in hospital who had not been visited by anyone for six weeks and gave her flowers. It was such a highlight to see how overjoyed she was when I visited her. Every year since then, I have continued this tradition of doing random acts of kindness according to the age I turn. This year, I used my reverse birthday activity to raise awareness for mental health. I wanted people to be able to see the person rather than the illness. I believe we need to extend our kindness to everyone. When we extend kindness to people, we restore their faith in humanity.

Serving others allows me to focus on them as people. I see the one and not just a mass of humanity. I see the individual pieces of detail as well as the broad brushstrokes of the big picture. For all of us, there is a gap between where performance is now and where it could be in the future, and we can all help each other reach our full potential. I have a clear vision about what causes I need to champion and what I need to help people do and become.

The family is the important unit of society, and it creates and fosters the values on which a unified society is built. I will work towards strengthening families so that family members are supported and equipped with the tools to help them identify and reach their aspirations. Our children and youth need models to imitate, knowledge to acquire and things to do in order to learn and to grow. Inasmuch as I am a partner with the people of Ginninderra to represent them in the Assembly, I need to hand much responsibility back to the people. I can help them to their feet by respecting their individual dignity and supporting the development of a robust, stable economy.

An important ingredient for a thriving society is to have people occupied with their work rather than sitting around aimlessly. A person's freedom is the basis of her or his dignity. For families or individuals, work is very important as it will create a greater sense of personal dignity for having done all they could do for themselves. We need to make sure that those who consume shall be among those who produce. I will constantly talk to experts and ordinary people and will enlarge my vision of what is possible. A true leader is one who serves, and I see my role as a servant of the people. And all these are the values that, since its establishment, have been the driving force of the Liberal Party.

Canberra has a destiny to fulfil. What we need to achieve this destiny is not just young people with training and skills; rather, we will need a generation of great leaders. We need those who have learned discipline, who are able to not only organise a thriving community but also build hope in people. We need people to sustain the weak and faltering and to defend the defenceless. And I, as your servant member of the ACT Legislative Assembly, am committed and grateful to do this work.

**MS CHEYNE** (Ginninderra) (10.40), by leave: I start by acknowledging the traditional custodians of the land on which we meet, the Ngunnawal people, and to



pay my respects to the elders past and present and to those present today. I acknowledge their continuing contribution.

First, I would like to offer thanks to all of my colleagues, many new themselves, for the warm welcome to the Assembly, and especially to the Assembly staff who have had no small task in literally accommodating us all.

I am proud to be joined by so many women on all sides of the chamber in making up the first majority female parliament in Australia. But let me put on the record how frustrated I am that it has not happened any sooner in any parliament.

To my staff, Josh, Minuri, Jemma and Jordan, thank you for your support in helping me start this new chapter of my journey. I also want to thank my partner, Hamish, for his support and love. It is a lot of fun to go through this life with you—and our dogs—and you have witnessed and been there through all the good times and all the tough times that have led to this point. You know better than anyone what it takes.

Madam Speaker, I was born an only child to small business owners in Cairns in north Queensland. My mother, Deb, and my father, Pete, ran a successful restaurant in the 1980s. By the end of that decade they upended their lives, and we moved to Toowoomba. It is no secret that as well as being my biggest supporter, my mother is my inspiration. Through her example, I have never known anything else other than “women can do anything”.

As I entered grade 1, my mother, who had left school at 15, started university as a mature aged student while my father drove a taxi. In the mid 1990s we moved to mining town Moura in central Queensland, followed by Dysart and Blackwater. As I grew up, my mother went from strength to strength, holding numerous significant leadership roles in a tough, male-dominated industry.

I have unashamedly copied her in many areas. If she had not done it before me, I expect I may not ever have even thought of going to university, getting an MBA, and even learning shorthand. One of our shared qualities is our determination, and that will come as no surprise to anyone who saw her camped out at the Belconnen pre poll every single day for three weeks of voting this year.

For much of the time that my mother worked, my father was a stay-at-home dad. This was especially unusual in a mining town, even in the 1990s, but it was brilliant. He remains the cleverest person I have ever known. There was nothing he could not do with his brain or his hands. He created a voracious reader in me, and we would go to the local library together twice a week. As an only child, he was often my only company, and he was the best company. Throughout his life, he was a great contributor to and volunteer in his communities, and he was the biggest fan of the two ambitious women in his life. I am deeply sad that my father was not able to be part of the journey over the last year.

I grew up quickly in a Rockhampton boarding school, where I made lasting friendships and was challenged by teachers who saw the potential in me and made it

attractive to want to do my very best. A lot of people laugh at the cliché that school years are the best years of your life, but mine were fantastic.

It was at university in Brisbane that two very, very important things happened. On my very first day I met my best friend, Jane Symonds. We are now separated by distance, but she continues to be one of the single greatest influences in my life because of her friendship, intelligence and for simply being a remarkable human being. And she is a great writer. The second is that I joined the Labor Party. I did not necessarily come from a Labor family, but I was drawn to the values of justice, fairness and opportunity. And in the year I joined, Labor was returned to power federally and Anna Bligh became the first female Premier in Queensland.

It was a big deal for me to accept a graduate job in Canberra in the commonwealth public service and move here on 17 January 2008. With no friends and no family south of the Queensland border, I knew no-one, and I had actually never stepped foot in Canberra before I moved here. I got over some of my initial nerves by convincing myself it was not permanent and that I would last about four years, the average time I had spent living in every other place. As you have heard, this story is familiar to other members too.

In the Attorney-General's Department I was lucky to have a varied career and was privileged to be mentored by some incredible individuals as well as to serve as a manager and a mentor myself. I would like to make special mention of Rachael Jackson, who is here today, and Matt Hall, whose trust in me opened door after door for me, as well as David Fredericks and Robyn Kruk, two extraordinary leaders who instilled in me compassion and pragmatism.

Of the many jobs I had, none left a more lasting impression on me than my work in the defence abuse response task force. This important task force was established in November 2012 to assist complainants who had suffered sexual abuse, physical abuse, sexual harassment, workplace harassment and bullying in defence. It was an honour and a privilege to undertake this meaningful work, the lessons of which will stay with me for the rest of my life.

But while I led a fulfilling public service career with some amazing individuals, something else was happening to me. My friends said I was acting peculiarly. Having moved around so much growing up, I had never really felt like I had a home town, but moving to Belconnen had changed that. I finally felt like I belonged. I did not just like where I lived; I loved it.

When you love something, you want the very best for it, and you want to share that love with others. Moving here, starting life here from somewhere else, is a story shared by many Canberrans, and I was happy to share my story and show people why I fell in love with my home. I created a blog called "In the Territory", a portmanteau of my name and "territory". The blog serves as a record of the fun I have had in the capital, but I know it has inspired others to get to know their city better. I am proud and humbled by its reach and its influence.

From there I joined the Belconnen Community Council and the Belconnen Arts Centre board, organisations that are committed to people. One of my proudest achievements as part of these organisations was encouraging as many people as possible to have their say on the Belconnen town centre master plan so that it best reflected community needs and desires.

But having achieved numerous community ambitions, I knew I wanted to and could do more for the city that had become my home. I knew the best way to make the biggest difference was by being here in the Assembly. I knew that in addition to caring deeply about the electorate, members should be energetic and hard working. That is the kind of member I want to be, and I knew I had those qualities to help me contribute in my own way to developing a positive vision for this city as part of a progressive Barr government.

Madam Speaker, I was also and still am inspired by those who sit beside me and those who came before me, but none more so than former MLA for Ginninderra Mary Porter. Mary set the standard for being an effective member, and I was determined that if I was lucky enough to be preselected as a candidate by my party I would attempt to do her enormous legacy justice.

I am indebted to the Belconnen Labor members, many who are here today, who put their trust in me to be an effective candidate for the Labor Party. I committed to each of them that I would work my hardest to ensure that Labor would retain three seats in Ginninderra, and I am pleased to have done that. I offer them my sincere thanks, and am grateful for their ongoing support and their friendship.

My campaign was powered by people, ideas and conversations. This is significant because I ran my campaign in the way I wish to be an MLA: I surrounded myself with a fantastic team. I would not be here if not for all the people who believed in me, who gave up their time to support and campaign with me, people who joined me before preselection as well as those who literally joined me on the final day. I regret that I cannot mention all the volunteers but I would like to make particular mention of Nicholas Argy; Damien Haas, who is here today; Mark Nelson, Hamish; Greg Lloyd; Kim Angove and Deb. Each of these persons gave me their unconditional support. I also want to thank Elizabeth, Michael, Eleanor and Mary Porter for going on the record with their support.

My campaign and Labor's campaign was marked by positive vision, and I am proud to continue that in the Assembly. From innovative health services to an integrated world-class public transport system, there was and is an awful lot to talk about. But the people of Ginninderra had taught me local matters too. It is why I campaigned so hard for things like a bulky waste kerbside pick-up service and green bins to households, policies which are not terribly sexy but which will make a real difference to everyday Canberrans. I am proud these are Labor government commitments.

We are also a growing population and an ageing population. As in the campaign, I look forward to participating in ideas debates to ensure we continue to invest in the

right infrastructure to support us to ensure that we remain and grow as a community that is connected both physically and socially.

The completion of the Belconnen Arts Centre and the implementation of the Belconnen town centre master plan policies, as well as developments like those at the University of Canberra and the west Belconnen site of Ginninderry are just a few examples of local opportunities to achieve this.

The most important part of my campaign—and now as an MLA—is the conversations. Over the past year I have had thousands of positive conversations. In the dead dark of winter I stood at Jamison shops. On days of wind and rain I knocked on doors. These were tough points throughout the campaign, but I would always ask myself, “What would Mary Porter do?” And the answer was always clear: get out there and keep talking to people, no matter what. I have the same attitude as an MLA. I have held five shopping centre stalls since my election and met with over a dozen local businesses, and I am only just getting started, I can promise you that.

I have always believed that we get the best outcomes for our community when our community’s voice is heard, and I will be that voice. I am committed to being an MLA who is present, available and accessible. You can never over-explain something, especially when you have 54,000 people to reach. In my role here I promise I will be curious and seek to understand before making myself understood. Much has been made of my social media presence, and I can confirm that presence will continue. It is our job as representatives to employ as many channels as possible to have as many conversations with as many people as possible.

Before I conclude, Madam Speaker, I would like to acknowledge what a hardworking Labor team we have, and none more so than in the Ginninderra Labor team. I give special mention to my colleagues Minister Berry and Minister Ramsay, but also Kim Fischer and former MLA and minister Chris Bourke. Due to Hare-Clark and preference flows I have benefited from their hard work, and I promise I will not forget that over the next four years.

Politics is about people and I have mentioned a lot of people in this speech who have shaped who I am and have contributed to me being here. I would like to finish by thanking the people who have had the greatest hand in that, that is, the people of Ginninderra. Thank you for your trust in me, your support of me and for sharing your stories with me, now and in the future. Your stories have and will become part of me. Madam Speaker, by being elected I will be bringing their stories and their voice with me every day to this Assembly. It is an honour and a privilege to do that.

I am a long way from that daunting plane flight on 17 January 2008. It is enormously humbling to be a representative of the home I love so much in the city I love so much. Thank you.

**MR RAMSAY** (Ginninderra—Attorney-General, Minister for Regulatory Services, Minister for the Arts and Community Events and Minister for Veterans and Seniors) (10.55), by leave: Madam Speaker, as I commence in this place I am mindful of the heritage and history of this land and its people. I acknowledge the traditional owners

of this land, the Ngunnawal people, and I pay my respects to their elders past and present, and I acknowledge their care and the custodianship of this land for many millennia. I acknowledge and express my profound thanks for the way that they have built and nurtured community here. I acknowledge the presence of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in this place today, and personally I commit myself to ongoing acts of reconciliation with our nation's first peoples.

There is an ancient saying: "We see the world not as it is, but as we are." This wisdom encourages us, I believe, to reflect on and to own both who we are and how it is that we have come to see the world as we do. So just as I am very aware of the traditional owners of this land and the people who have gone before me in this place, I am also very mindful of and thankful for my own background.

I know that the family security and stability in which I was raised is itself a great privilege. My father was a pharmacist in the days when the local pharmacist was truly a key role in the local community. He was someone who knew and valued people and their lives, as well as their health concerns.

My mother was an economic statistician with the Reserve Bank in the days when a female could only be promoted beyond a particular position in the Reserve Bank if she could type at a particular speed. It did not matter that her position as an economic statistician did not actually require her to type at all. But her determination not to allow an archaic and discriminatory system to overcome her not only guaranteed her career but also it meant, when combined with the generosity and the dedication to her family that she brought, that those skills were regularly used for the benefit of her children's education. Both my parents died too young and we are all the worse off for their passing. I honour them.

I am also mindful of the circumstances in profession and vocation that have led me to this place. With the youthfulness of a number of the representatives that we have in this place, I am mindful of my position at the other end of the spectrum. I am just old enough to be at the tail end of the free tertiary education that was introduced by the Whitlam government. That education, after brief stints as an ugg boot salesman and as a market research interviewer, took me into my first career, as a solicitor in Sydney.

When I left that legal career for ordination in the Uniting Church, many in the profession did not quite understand what I was doing. In fact, when told that I was entering the ministry, one of the partners in the firm that I was working with asked, "Which one?" That step not only has given me the privilege over the past 23 years of hearing and engaging with the depths of people's lived experiences, but also it has opened and created a path for pursuing social justice, inclusion and welcome, and of paying most regard to those people who are our society's most vulnerable and most marginalised.

They are the values that have shaped me. They are the values that have formed my actions for decades. To the commentator who recently said of me that "as a person of faith and with his background we can assume he is conservative", I would simply point out that my track record of advocacy and action may well suggest otherwise. People of faith, whether Christian or one of the many other faiths in our community,

just like people who do not profess a faith, cannot be assumed all to think in one particular or uniform way. Assumptions that are made of people may well reveal more about the assumer than about the subject of the assumption, for, indeed, we see the world not as it is, but as we are.

My most recent change, moving from the past 20 years within the church and community organisations to a time of public service in this place, may not actually be a common move but nor is it unheard of. I pay my respects to and I note the precedent of former Deputy Prime Minister Brian Howe, with whom I share a common vocational background and whose work in the area of social reform and housing reform stands as a benchmark for our work here in the ACT. I would be very happy to make the transition from an ordained Uniting Church minister to a parliamentarian that Brian did.

I return to the ancient saying, that “we see the world not as it is, but as we are”. In that saying I not only sense a call to an awareness of myself but also an invitation to look differently. I sense in it a responsibility when it comes to considering the way that I exercise any power that I hold. I am very aware of the position and privilege that I have as one of the 25 people elected to this Ninth Assembly. I am aware of the position and privilege that I have as being only the 72nd person elected to this Assembly in the history of self-government, and I am very aware of the additional privilege and responsibility that comes with my appointment to the ministry.

Drawing on the wisdom of that ancient saying, I am aware that the perspectives, the stories and the lived experiences of people in this community are not the same as mine. I am aware from my previous work in the community in Belconnen, and particularly in west Belconnen, that there are too many here who do it tough. I remember when I arrived in Canberra in 1997 that a wise and experienced Canberran said to me, “You may have heard that Canberra doesn’t have poverty. The reality is that we do, but we hide it better than most places.” The unfortunate reality is that, rather than simply seeing the world as we are, all too often we do not see the world as it is at all.

I arrived in 1997 as Canberra hit one of the most difficult times in its history. There had been a change in federal government. There had been a significant rise in unemployment. There had been a fall in house prices. And there had been a very obvious flattening in the mood of the community. This was a deep and painful strike at the way in which the quality of life in this city was sustained. But this strike gave me the setting, the invitation and the responsibility to see the world not so much through my eyes but through the eyes of others amongst whom I lived and worked.

I have said before, and I continue to affirm, that I have been shaped and changed by the stories and by the lived experiences of the people who have shared their lives with me over the past 20 years. It is a perspective that I have sought hard to maintain. It is a perspective that has driven me towards seeking election to this Assembly. It is a perspective that I hold most strongly now that I have been given the honour of working for the people of Ginninderra in this place—an honour that I take profoundly seriously and am absolutely dedicated to living up to.

For the past 20 years I have had the privilege and the honour of working with some of Canberra's most courageous people. I still remember the young single mother who, around this time of year a few years ago, came to receive some assistance through a Christmas appeal. She apologised that she was a day late for her appointment and then indicated that the reason that she was a day late was because she had given birth the previous day. But she was still determined to receive the assistance that was being provided through that appointment because without it her family would not be celebrating Christmas at all.

I still remember the work around 10 years ago to establish a Muslim women's playgroup because they had been clearly identified as the most socially isolated group of people in our community, and it was our response—a privilege, an honour and a response that we needed to make—that ensured those who were most isolated were included.

I still remember the experiences of the young man, a single father, who, for several weeks, lived out of his car with his two young children because as he moved interstate to Canberra his promised employment had evaporated and he could not afford the rental bond on the property that he had arranged.

More broadly than with individual people, I value the privilege of having worked in the areas of advocacy, awareness and education, such as anti-poverty week, and of grounded policy reform in the community inclusion board, the targeted assistance strategy and the better services task force. And while I have learnt that we may each see the world differently, I have also become increasingly convinced that it is the responsibility of those of us who hold and exercise power in a civilised and compassionate society to ensure that we are seeing and hearing from the perspective of others in the community and not just from our own perspective.

Madam Speaker, I offer a third view on that saying—that “we see the world not as it is, but as we are”. It may well be that I cannot fully see the world in the way that others do, but here today I commit myself to continue to look, and to look harder. For I am convinced that it is our responsibility here to ensure that the perspectives of those who may not otherwise be seen are seen. It is our responsibility here to ensure that the wisdom of those who may not otherwise be heard is heard. And for however long I have the privilege of sitting in this Assembly, I will remain dedicated to that task.

I am deeply aware that I have not reached this point by my own efforts; so it is right that I express my gratitude to those who have helped me so fundamentally in reaching this point. I thank my encouragers and mentors, Jon Stanhope and Katy Gallagher, and Andrew Leigh, whom I acknowledge here today, for the nudges, cajoles and pushes, along with encouragement and support. I thank the Chief Minister, Andrew Barr, and the Deputy Chief Minister, Yvette Berry, and my many ACT Labor colleagues who have welcomed me and worked with me in our joint efforts to build a very strong, progressive team.

Extremely importantly, I thank the people of Kippax and the Belconnen community who have opened and shared their lives with me over the past 20 years. You have

helped make me who I am. I thank the team of 166 people from all ages and all walks of life who volunteered their time and their skills in a long, cold and all-too-wet campaign this year. I thank my campaign manager, chief of staff and friend, Brooke Thomas, for her regular and at times relentless efforts to keep me working, and working to task.

Of course, I thank my family—Lyndelle; Joel, who graduates this afternoon from the ANU; and Justine—whose support and encouragement have been the foundation for me throughout our wonderful years together, including this year, a year of profound and at times particularly difficult change for each of us individually and as a family. I have no doubt that in years to come we will look back and mention 2016 with a wry smile and a sigh.

Madam Speaker, as I close today, I recall that throughout this year and for years before then I have regularly repeated three simple ideas: we are a strong society when everyone belongs, when everyone is valued and when everyone participates. The degree to which I can assist us as a city in moving towards the full achievement of those ideals is the measure by which I hope to be judged. Thank you.

## Visitor

**MR ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Mr Steel):** I would like to acknowledge the presence of the member for Fenner, the Hon Dr Andrew Leigh MP.

## Committees—standing Establishment

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

That:

- (1) The following general purpose standing committees be established and each committee inquire into and report on matters referred to it by the Assembly or matters that are considered by the committee to be of concern to the community:
  - (a) a Standing Committee on Education, Employment and Youth Affairs to examine matters related to early childhood education and care, primary, secondary, post secondary and tertiary education, non-government education; industrial relations and work safety; and youth services;
  - (b) a Standing Committee on Health, Ageing and Community Services to examine matters related to hospitals, community and public health, mental health, health promotion and disease prevention, disability matters, drug and substance misuse, targeted health programs and community services, including services for older persons and women, families, housing, poverty, and multicultural and indigenous affairs;
  - (c) a Standing Committee on Environment and Transport and City Services to examine matters related to city and transport services, public infrastructure, heritage, and sport and recreation and matters related to all



aspects of climate change policy and programs, water and energy policy and programs, provision of water and energy services, conservation, environment and ecological sustainability;

(d) a Standing Committee on Justice and Community Safety to perform a legislative scrutiny role and examine matters related to community and individual rights, consumer rights, courts, police and emergency services, corrections including a prison, administrative law, civil liberties and human rights, censorship, company law, law and order, criminal law, consumer affairs and regulatory services;

(e) a Standing Committee on Public Accounts to:

(i) examine:

(A) the accounts of the receipts and expenditure of the Australian Capital Territory and its authorities; and

(B) all reports of the Auditor-General which have been presented to the Assembly;

(ii) report to the Assembly any items or matters in those accounts, statements and reports, or any circumstances connected with them, to which the Committee is of the opinion that the attention of the Assembly should be directed; and

(iii) inquire into any question in connection with the public accounts which is referred to it by the Assembly and to report to the Assembly on that question;

(f) a Standing Committee on Planning and Urban Renewal to examine matters relating to planning, land management, the planning process, amendments to the Territory Plan, consultation requirements, design and sustainability outcomes including energy performance and policy matters to support a range of housing options; and

(g) a Standing Committee on Economic Development and Tourism to examine matters relating to economic and business development, small business, tourism, market and regulatory reform, public sector management, taxation and revenue, procurement, regional development, international trade, skills development and employment creation, and technology, arts and culture.

(2) The Standing Committee on Justice and Community Safety when performing its legislative scrutiny role shall:

(a) consider whether any instrument of a legislative nature made under an Act which is subject to disallowance and/or disapproval by the Assembly (including a regulation, rule or by-law):

(i) is in accord with the general objects of the Act under which it is made;

(ii) unduly trespasses on rights previously established by law;

- (iii) makes rights, liberties and/or obligations unduly dependent upon non-reviewable decisions; or
    - (iv) contains matter which in the opinion of the Committee should properly be dealt with in an Act of the Legislative Assembly;
  - (b) consider whether any explanatory statement or explanatory memorandum associated with legislation and any regulatory impact statement meets the technical or stylistic standards expected by the Committee;
  - (c) consider whether the clauses of bills (and amendments proposed by the Government to its own bills) introduced into the Assembly:
    - (i) unduly trespass on personal rights and liberties;
    - (ii) make rights, liberties and/or obligations unduly dependent upon insufficiently defined administrative powers;
    - (iii) make rights, liberties and/or obligations unduly dependent upon non-reviewable decisions;
    - (iv) inappropriately delegate legislative powers; or
    - (v) insufficiently subject the exercise of legislative power to parliamentary scrutiny;
  - (d) report to the Legislative Assembly about human rights issues raised by bills presented to the Assembly pursuant to section 38 of the *Human Rights Act 2004*; and
  - (e) report to the Assembly on these or any related matter and if the Assembly is not sitting when the Committee is ready to report on bills and subordinate legislation, the Committee may send its report to the Speaker, or, in the absence of the Speaker, to the Deputy Speaker, who is authorised to give directions for its printing, publication and circulation.
- (3) If the Assembly is not sitting when the Standing Committee on Planning and Urban Renewal has completed consideration of a report on draft plan variations referred pursuant to section 73 of the *Planning and Development Act 2007* or draft plans of management referred pursuant to section 326 of the *Planning and Development Act 2007* the Committee may send its report to the Speaker, or, in the absence of the Speaker, to the Deputy Speaker, who is authorised to give directions for its printing, publication and circulation.
- (4) Each general purpose committee shall consist of the following number of members, composed as follows:
  - (a) the Standing Committee on Education, Employment and Youth Affairs:
    - (i) two members to be nominated by the Government;
    - (ii) two members to be nominated by the Opposition; and

- (iii) the Chair shall be a Government member;
- (b) the Standing Committee on Health, Ageing and Community Services:
  - (i) two members to be nominated by the Government;
  - (ii) two members to be nominated by the Opposition;
  - (iii) one member to be nominated by the Crossbench; and
  - (iv) the Chair shall be a Government member;
- (c) the Standing Committee on Environment and Transport and City Services:
  - (i) two members to be nominated by the Government;
  - (ii) two members to be nominated by the Opposition; and
  - (iii) the Chair shall be a Government member;
- (d) the Standing Committee on Justice and Community Safety:
  - (i) two members to be nominated by the Opposition;
  - (ii) two members to be nominated by the Government; and
  - (iii) the Chair shall be an Opposition member;
- (e) the Standing Committee on Public Accounts:
  - (i) two members to be nominated by the Opposition;
  - (ii) two members to be nominated by the Government; and
  - (iii) the Chair shall be an Opposition Member;
- (f) the Standing Committee on Economic Development and Tourism:
  - (i) two members to be nominated by the Opposition;
  - (ii) two members to be nominated by the Government; and
  - (iii) the Chair shall be an Opposition member; and
- (g) the Standing Committee on Planning and Urban Renewal:
  - (i) two members to be nominated by the Government;
  - (ii) two members to be nominated by the Opposition;
  - (iii) one member to be nominated by the Crossbench; and
  - (iv) the Chair shall be a Crossbench member.

- (5) In addition, the membership of the Standing Committee on Administration and Procedure, established under standing order 16, be composed of:
  - (a) the Speaker, as Chair;
  - (b) the Government whip;
  - (c) the Opposition whip; and
  - (d) a representative of the Crossbench (or if a single party, the whip of that party).
- (6) Each committee shall have power to consider and make use of the evidence and records of the relevant standing committee appointed during the previous Assembly.
- (7) Each committee be provided with necessary staff, facilities and resources.
- (8) The foregoing provisions of this resolution, so far as they are inconsistent with the standing orders, have effect notwithstanding anything contained in the standing orders.
- (9) Nominations for membership of these committees be notified in writing to the Speaker within two hours following conclusion of the debate on the matter.

**Sitting suspended from 11.11am to 2.30 pm.**

## **Ministerial arrangements**

**MR BARR:** Madam Speaker, I advise that the Attorney-General will be absent from question time today, attending the graduation of his son. I will take questions in the attorney's portfolios.

## **Standing orders**

### **Statement by Speaker**

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Before we go to questions, I would like to remind people that the standing orders this morning changed the number of questions to a substantive, a supp and a second supp, with a timing of two, two, two—just in case anyone missed reading that report.

## **Questions without notice**

### **Government—election promises**

**MR COE:** Madam Speaker, my question is to the Treasurer. Treasurer, has the government modelled the collective impact of Labor's and the Greens' election commitments on the budget? What will be the total impact on the rates, taxes and charges that Canberrans will be forced to pay?

**MR BARR:** The government has, through our diligent work in the lead-up to the election, sought to keep both election commitments and parliamentary agreement items largely within the provisions contained in the forward estimates, both in terms of the capital program and in terms of our recurrent spend. We maintain a desire over the economic cycle to see the territory budget in balance, and we will continue that approach in the coming 2017-18 budget.

The details of the costings of Labor election commitments were forwarded to Treasury during the election period and are available on the Treasury website. In some instances where the parliamentary agreement involves a combination of both a Labor and a Greens initiative, we will work through the detail of the implementation of that particular initiative, so it would be wise not to assume either the exact Labor costing or the exact Greens costing at this point, but I do note that the Greens party also participated in the election costing process, so the full cost of their commitments is available on the Treasury website as well.

**MR COE:** Treasurer, what is the total recurrent and capital cost of the Labor-Greens agreement, and what proportion is covered by the existing budgeted provisions?

**MR BARR:** There is a capital provision contained within the budget forward estimates that includes around \$100 million annually in new infrastructure projects, together with a capital upgrades program that is around the \$60 million mark annually. In relation to recurrent spending, the provisions that were outlined in the pre-election budget update indicate to the Leader of the Opposition provisions that were set aside for growth in health expenditure, as well as growth in other areas of the territory budget. We do, of course, project over the forward estimates a return to a modest surplus for the territory. But I do note that that is quite heavily impacted not only by decisions of the commonwealth but also by our allocation of the GST.

**Mr Coe:** A point of order.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** A point of order, Mr Coe.

**Mr Coe:** It is on relevance. The first part of the question was: what is the total recurrent and capital cost of the Labor-Greens agreement? I would ask that the Treasurer address that point.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** I think the Treasurer was referring to budget put-asides, so to speak, so there is no point of order. Have you finished, Treasurer?

**MR BARR:** I have.

**MRS JONES:** Has the signing of the Labor-Greens agreement pushed back the promised budget surplus and can you outline the exact total of current and capital cost of it?

**MR BARR:** The answer to the first part of the question is no, and I would refer Mrs Jones to my previous answers.

### **Land Development Agency**

**MS LE COUTEUR:** My question is to the Minister for Economic Development and relates to the Standing Committee on Planning, Environment and Territory and Municipal Services hearings in November 2015 and the subsequent Auditor-General's report on Certain Land Development Agency Acquisitions, report 7, in 2016. In these hearings, the Deputy Chief Financial Officer and CEO of the LDA said that every acquisition under \$5 million goes to the LDA board for approval, yet the Auditor-General's report found to the contrary. Minister, can you explain this discrepancy?

**MR BARR:** I would refer the member to the comments from both the LDA board chair and the chief executive of the LDA contained within the auditor's report.

**MS LE COUTEUR:** Minister, can you explain why only one formal valuation was obtained for the Glebe Park purchase?

**MR BARR:** Again, I would refer Ms Le Couteur to the detailed commentary contained within the Auditor-General's report, including comments from the CEO and board chair of the LDA.

**MR COE:** Chief Minister, what declarations of interest were declared or undeclared by members of the agency regarding these acquisitions?

**MR BARR:** I would need to check the public record in relation to that matter.

### **Economy—growth**

**MS CHEYNE:** My question is to the Treasurer. Can the Treasurer update the Assembly on recent economic data and what this indicates for the ongoing strength of the ACT economy?

**MR BARR:** I thank Ms Cheyne for the question. I am very pleased to be able to advise the Assembly of a very strong performance in the last 12 months here in the territory. Our gross state product increased by 3.4 per cent. This was the second strongest growth rate of any state or territory, just a fraction behind that achieved by New South Wales. On the measure of state final demand, we saw the strongest growth of any state or territory in Australia, at 6.4 per cent over the past year.

I am pleased to advise the Assembly that Canberra now has the lowest unemployment rate of any Australian state or territory, at 3.4 per cent. Employment grew by a healthy 4½ thousand, or 2.1 per cent, which was well above the national average of slightly less than one per cent. Many of these jobs were in the private sector, which is a testament to the strength and diversity of the ACT economy.

Another important indicator of economic health is retail trade. Our retail trade growth, at 8.3 per cent, was the highest in the country in the past 12 months. Residential building approvals are up 97 per cent over the past year, and our economy continues to diversify. Service exports increased by 13.1 per cent. That is stronger than the rest of the nation. Education exports are now worth over half a billion dollars annually to the territory economy. Technical, trade-related and other business services grew by a strong 40 per cent over the course of 2015-16. So it has been a very strong year for the territory economy, and we look forward to building on that in 2017.

**MS CHEYNE:** Can the Treasurer outline to the Assembly how that ongoing strength is assisted by the government's strategy to diversify the economy?

**MR BARR:** We will be continuing to focus on broadening the territory's economic base, focusing on our innovation and knowledge-based industries. This is paying huge dividends, as we have seen in the figures in the past 12 months. Canberra's connectivity internationally—now with the direct flights to Singapore and Wellington, and in the not too distant future to Doha—adds significantly to our trade capacity.

Domestically we are seeing additional routes established with low cost airlines entering into our market flying initially between Canberra and Melbourne, and we of course welcome the connection to Dubbo as part of our broader regional aviation network.

The establishment of the CBR Innovation Network is also paying dividends. We continue to support the growth of our service export sectors. This is fundamental to our city's future. No city of 400,000 people is going to grow rich by selling to ourselves. We must be more nationally and internationally focused, and the government continues to pursue this agenda rigorously.

**MR STEEL:** Treasurer, are there alternative courses of action the government could take?

**MR BARR:** Yes, the government could pursue a surplus fetish at all costs. We could seek to contract the ACT government's involvement in economic activity in the territory. We could.

**Mr Hanson:** Surpluses are to be avoided at all costs, aren't they, Mr Barr.

**MR BARR:** We have got a response from the former leader of the opposition. It is just the fact that we had an intervention like that that explains why he is a former Leader of the Opposition.

*Mr Hanson interjecting—*

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Mr Hanson, can you allow the Treasurer to answer.

**MR BARR:** It is good to see this—

*Mr Hanson interjecting—*

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Mr Hanson, can you—

*Mr Hanson interjecting—*

**MR BARR:** It is good to see—

*Mr Hanson interjecting—*

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Mr Hanson, I have asked you to refrain from interjecting.

**MR BARR:** It is good to see there is some fight left in you, Mr Hanson. I must say that I am already missing you sitting opposite me but long may you continue to be the chief interjector on behalf of the Canberra Liberals. It is a tradition you have formed in this place and we certainly look forward to your continuing it.

But we will remain focused on delivering for this community nation-leading tax reform, support for our exporters and a continuation of active government involvement in the economic diversification of the Australian Capital Territory. It is important work. It is already bearing fruit. We look forward to continuing that over the next four years.

### **Greyhound racing—regulation**

**MR PARTON:** Madam Speaker, my question is to the Chief Minister representing the Minister for Regulatory Services with regard to gaming and racing. Minister, what concerns do you have with the greyhound racing industry in the ACT?

**MR BARR:** I thank Mr Parton for the question and doing me the honour of directing his first question in this place to me. There were a range of concerns that were outlined both in terms of the report that the New South Wales government received as a result of their special commission of inquiry, but it would be fair to observe that before the New South Wales report was issued concerns were being raised not just here in the ACT but right across the nation. I think the *Four Corners* documentary on practices within that industry was pretty damning, and there has been—

**Mrs Jones:** On a point of order, Madam Speaker, the question was about the precise concerns with the ACT industry. The Chief Minister is referring to New South Wales and to broader concerns on national programs several years ago. The question is about what, in the ACT, is happening and can he answer that.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** I understand where you are going, Mrs Jones, and I think the Chief Minister was referring to concerns in the ACT and more broadly. So there is no point of order. Can you continue, minister.

**MR BARR:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I think the interjection highlights a major issue of concern in relation to the understanding on these questions, and that is that



this industry in the ACT is predominantly a New South Wales industry—New South Wales trainers, New South Wales dogs coming into Canberra to race.

*Mrs Jones interjecting—*

**MR BARR:** Fundamentally the decision that the government has taken is that we will no longer provide taxpayer subsidies, which are in the order of \$1 million a year, to provide prize money to New South Wales trainers to come in and win at the Canberra track. Fundamentally it is an economic question but I think it is also a moral question around animal welfare, and the concerns that have been raised locally by the RSPCA—

*Mrs Jones interjecting—*

**MR BARR:** nationally by a number of organisations and highlighted not just in the New South Wales commission of investigation but also by the ABC on the *Four Corners* programs, ought to be concerning to all members. So the interjections—the continued interjections—from Mrs Jones are very disappointing.

**MR PARTON:** You have mentioned concerns raised by the RSPCA. I want to know what evidence you have that demonstrates anything regarding these concerns in the ACT.

**MR BARR:** The RSPCA have raised numerous concerns, and, more importantly, what has happened in New South Wales—

*Opposition members interjecting—*

**MR BARR:** what was exposed on the *Four Corners* program, the live baiting, the poor treatment of animals within the industry, the overbreeding—

*Opposition members interjecting—*

**MR BARR:** the fact of wastage within the industry—they are all legitimate concerns—

*Opposition members interjecting—*

**MR BARR:** and the New South Wales government, in spite of their backdown under pressure from the *Daily Telegraph* and from Alan Jones—so we know who really loves the state of New South Wales. In spite of those backdowns, the New South Wales government is still very heavily involved in the regulation of this industry—

*Opposition members interjecting—*

**MR BARR:** and change is needed. We will no longer be providing taxpayer subsidies to greyhound racing in the ACT.

**Mr Gentleman:** Madam Speaker, the opposition continually interjected during the Chief Minister's response to the question. I ask that you bring them to order.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** I understand, as has happened in many a question time, that there is interjection, but I would have thought we could have got through the first week without the constant interjections. I ask members on both sides to ask with respect and to answer with relevance, for us all to get through question time. Chief Minister, do you want to continue?

**MR BARR:** I have concluded.

**MR COE:** Given that New South Wales has reversed their decision, in part due to pressure from the New South Wales Labor Party, what is the basis for the ACT continuing down this path despite a lack of evidence?

**MR BARR:** We maintain our concerns on animal welfare grounds, but we have also indicated we will no longer be providing taxpayer subsidies to this industry. So the million dollars a year that goes from the ACT budget to provide prize money, essentially, this government will no longer be providing. As the industry in New South Wales is dramatically scaled back and a much heavier-handed regulation comes into place, we will continue to work closely with the New South Wales government on those new arrangements. But I have said clearly, and I said it a dozen times during the campaign, the taxpayer subsidy to this industry ends. I made that election commitment prior to the election, and I will honour it now.

### **Schools—infrastructure**

**MR STEEL:** My question is to the Minister for Education and Early Childhood Development. Minister, can you outline the infrastructure investments that the ACT Labor government is making to support all children towards the best possible outcomes?

**MS BERRY:** I thank Mr Steel for his question. I am pleased to be able to talk about our commitment to school infrastructure, as I was throughout the election campaign. The ACT government understands that teachers and students need to be supported with the infrastructure that allows education to happen.

During the last term the government allocated more than \$70 million for investment in school infrastructure. A few examples among a long list of projects include upgrades at Curtin, Hughes and Yarralumla primary schools, the stage 1 master plan works at the Woden School, roof replacement work at Canberra and Melrose high schools, and expansions and replacements at Cranleigh School, Amaroo School and Ngunnawal Primary School.

Over the coming four years the government will be delivering a program of infrastructure investment so that ACT schools have quality, accessible and inclusive learning spaces to support learning. Our record commitment in capital funding for school infrastructure will ensure that this is so.

The government has committed \$85 million in capital upgrades to our public primary and high schools and colleges. This money will pay for heating and cooling upgrades, energy efficiency improvements, extensions to existing classrooms, new classrooms, refurbished toilets and change rooms, and other projects that will be identified in line with schools' needs.

In building new schools, we will focus on the needs of the growing communities in Molonglo and Gungahlin. Additional capacity will also be delivered to support growing demand at Gungahlin schools, building on funding in the 2016 budget. Every child and teacher deserves school facilities to support them to get the best start in life, and Labor is making these investments.

**MR STEEL:** Minister, how will the government's infrastructure investment be supported by policy settings for the future of education in the ACT?

**MS BERRY:** Alongside quality infrastructure, government policy that drives great education is perhaps equally important to ensuring great outcomes for students. We have a great education system in the ACT. It has given many Canberrans a good start in life. But, like anything, the ideas that underpin it need constant improvement. Its statutory frameworks are now over 10 years old. Labor sees this as an opportunity for our community to reflect and consider our current system, its strengths and areas where we can adapt, strengthen and improve how we provide education. That is why we have committed to progressing a discussion paper on the future of education in the ACT.

We will work closely with the community—teachers and school leaders, parents, students, unions, local communities—through a consultative process leading to an ACT-wide blueprint for education that will support the needs of the next generation of learners. Among other things, we will consider the role and relevance of data like PISA, TIMSS and NAPLAN that we have heard a lot about over the past fortnight, and how they can support improved student outcomes. We will consider approaches to teaching and how our teachers can be supported to grow their professional practice and deliver improved methods in the classroom. We will consider the diversity of the ACT community.

This should and will influence where we target our resources because all children, regardless of their social and economic backgrounds should have an equal opportunity to get the best outcome from their education. If ever we needed a reminder on how important it is to address inequality in education, recently the Mitchell Institute released a paper highlighting how socioeconomic status is correlated with early childhood development. Extensive policy and strategic development in both school and early childhood education will inform a range of initiatives in these areas.

**MR PETERSSON:** My question to the minister is: how will the government's infrastructure investment be supported by a workforce providing excellent teaching to ACT children?

**MS BERRY:** We have, as I said, a great education system in the ACT because we have great teachers. No amount of money and no policy setting can make up for the quality teaching that these dedicated professionals provide in our schools. Labor is committed to supporting ACT teachers. As part of looking at the future of education in the ACT, Labor will consider how we can increase support to teachers through mentoring, professional development and career pathways.

Our work here will build on the nation-leading professional learning focus of our Teacher Quality Institute. Recently I had the chance to present a number of ACT teachers with certificates acknowledging their attainment of high accomplished and lead level teacher certification. This is yet another area where our ACT school system leads Australia, with comparatively more of our teachers certified at these levels. Labor will directly invest in professional development for teachers by providing 100 scholarships—25 a year over four years—to enable our teachers to undertake postgraduate training in a STEM or language discipline, or alternatively enable experts in these fields to train as teachers.

More fundamentally, Labor knows how important it is that teachers have time to teach. So over the coming four years we will be securing ongoing employment for 66 support staff in schools, to enable teachers to focus on teaching and helping students.

We will continue to invest in our education system to make sure that there are enough teachers, and that teaching resources are allocated to reflect the diversity of need among students.

### **Transport—light rail**

**MR PETTERSSON:** My question is to the Minister for Transport and City Services. Minister, can you update the Assembly on progress towards delivering a city-wide light rail network.

**MS FITZHARRIS:** I thank Mr Pettersson very much for his second question in the Assembly. I am pleased to inform him and the Assembly today that we are getting on with the job that we were elected to do.

Construction of our city-wide light rail network is well underway right across all six construction precincts of the project from Gungahlin to Civic. This is part of an exciting new future of improved public transport for Canberra: integrated public transport no matter where you live in our city.

In Gungahlin, the construction office and compound are now complete and operational. Civil engineering design is nearing completion in the Gungahlin and Flemington Road area and construction of the Mitchell light rail depot is well underway. Canberra Metro is making good progress on public realm designs for Northbourne Avenue and Flemington Road. Stop designs for Northbourne and Alinga streets are under development and will be released in 2017.

All Canberrans who travel along the stage 1 route can see the increased level of activity behind safety fencing and bollards. Our current focus is on the relocation of utilities, which must be done before we can begin the work to lay the track.

Safety is our number one priority, so some of these works will require temporary lane closures in order to maintain the safety of light rail workers and the public. I regret the incident involving a light rail construction worker last week and look forward to the recommendations from WorkSafe so that we can make sure we learn from this serious incident.

Traffic management plans are being developed to minimise disruption, and comprehensive stakeholder engagement is underway to keep the community informed.

As members will be aware, to build light rail we will have to remove and replace trees along the light rail corridor. That important work began this week. Around 1,000 new trees will be planted as a result of the light rail project. Replacement trees have already arrived at the Yarralumla Nursery and are being monitored by horticultural experts to manage their growth. They are quite a spectacular site. We expect they will be ready to start planting in the late spring or early summer of 2017.

**MR PETTERSSON:** Minister, what opportunities are available for local businesses and workers to participate in the construction phase of stage 1 of light rail?

**MS FITZHARRIS:** I thank Mr Pettersson for his supplementary. This Labor government is delivering the biggest infrastructure project the territory has ever undertaken. After two election campaigns where light rail featured prominently we are getting on with the job that we were elected to do. Stage 1 of light rail is creating local jobs, with more than 250 people already employed in the project's design, planning and construction activities. During the construction phase, it is estimated that Canberra's light rail will generate over 3½ thousand direct and indirect jobs.

Canberra Metro brings to Canberra global expertise and opportunities for local employment and gives local industry a chance to connect with the global supply chain. The 20-year operations phase will bring opportunities for the people of Canberra in hospitality, technical and trades to learn from global industry leaders.

The light rail project team are collaborating with UNSW Canberra to create opportunities for students of the new civil engineering course and graduates over the longer term as part of the MOU signed between the territory and Department of Defence. It is estimated that the total footprint of around 50,000 jobs will remain long term along the corridor.

We are proud also to partner with the Canberra Business Chamber to spread the word on opportunities for local businesses and help build their capacity to become suppliers and subcontractors to the light rail project. On 24 August I launched 75 work packages in a local industry forum hosted by the Canberra Business Chamber light rail business link. This link is a specific support program for businesses along the corridor and across the territory that are affected by the project.

To date they have run a number of capacity building and business continuity programs in partnership with relevant peak bodies, including the Australian Hotels Association. The chamber held its final light rail industry forum last week and local small and medium businesses were clearly voting with their feet. Over 100 local businesses attended this forum to hear more about the exciting opportunities light rail is generating for our city.

**MS ORR:** Minister, could you update the Assembly on the next steps being taken by the government to deliver Labor's mandate to extend light rail to Woden?

**MS FITZHARRIS:** I thank Ms Orr for her question in the chamber today. With stage 1 well underway we are excited to continue the important work of delivering a city-wide light rail network. Stage 2 will link the city to Woden and builds on the Barr Labor government's commitment to deliver a world-class public transport system with light rail at the heart of the network. This is a city-shaping project.

Following the community's clear endorsement of our government's plan to deliver a city-wide light rail project, tenders opened on 25 November to get stage 2 planning underway. We know that, like all major infrastructure projects, light rail stage 2 will require skills input from professionals in a range of areas to advise the ACT government on the technical, commercial and planning opportunities and challenges.

The light rail stage 2 project team requires a range of commercial, technical and other advisers to help in establishing the detailed approach to the delivery of the project. We need expert partners who understand and can work through the complex engineering, commercial and community aspects of this project.

As with stage 1, by opening tenders for the provision of advisory services, the ACT government is demonstrating its commitment to moving ahead with this project as a priority for our city. Our government has committed to signing contracts for the light rail stage 2 extension to Woden during this term.

As a first step, Transport Canberra and its advisers will consider project details such as the exact light rail alignment, number of stops and locations, connectivity with other forms of transport, procurement processes and the delivery model to be adopted, just like stage 1. We are seeking a range of skills, including technical, commercial and cost estimation, to help lay the foundation for stage 2 of light rail for Canberra. More than 65 people attended a stage 2 tender briefing last week, and tender documents can be found, of course, on the Tenders ACT website.

Stage 2 of light rail is proposed to run from the city to Woden, with the new route connecting residents, businesses and government with the city, parliamentary triangle and southern Canberra, forming an important north-south spine, a 23-kilometre light rail line, as part of an integrated transport network for all of Canberra. Light rail will deliver significant renewal opportunities, especially in the Woden town centre, and will form part of Canberra's vital infrastructure, facilitating growth for decades to come.

### **Land Development Agency—Westside village**

**MR HANSON:** My question is to the Minister for Planning and Land Management and Minister for Urban Renewal. Minister, what were the success criteria in the LDA's business case for the acquisition of the Westside container village?

**MR GENTLEMAN:** I thank Mr Hanson for his question. It is an exciting time, as we move forward, for urban renewal in the ACT. Of course, some of the proposals and developments that we see coming forward will help to move the ACT into that urban renewal place.

In regard to the specific question on Westside, the government applied in August 2016 for a 2.5 year extension, to April 2019. The NCA announced its decision via media release on 17 November this year. The LDA was not advised of the decision prior to that public announcement, therefore it had not engaged with those stakeholders at that time. We know that the vendors are disappointed and frustrated, but we will look to see how we can progress that opportunity for Westside.

**MR HANSON:** Minister, have compensation, rent reductions or other incentives been paid to tenants because the Westside container village has not met expectations?

**MR GENTLEMAN:** Currently the agreements are in place until 1 January next year, and I do not have any detail about any discussions on compensation at this stage.

**MR DOSZPOT:** Minister, was expenditure on the Westside container village approved by the board of the LDA or by the CEO of the Land Development Agency?

**MR GENTLEMAN:** I do not have that detail in front of me. I am happy to take that on notice and come back to the Assembly.

### **Community Services Directorate—disability services providers**

**MS LEE:** My question is to the minister for disability. Minister, has there been a decline in the number of experienced practitioners in specialist disability and therapy services with the withdrawal of the Community Services Directorate from the sector as a service provider?

**MS STEPHEN-SMITH:** I thank Ms Lee for her question and for her genuine interest in disability matters. I do not have with me the exact numbers of service providers under the NDIS or previously. What I can tell you is that the number of disability service providers has increased as a result of the rollout of the NDIS. The territory, of course, is the first jurisdiction to be rolling out the NDIS in full. This is a learning experience. The market in the ACT for disability service providers has grown. The ACT government and the directorate have been supporting disability service providers to transition to service provision under the NDIS.

**MS LEE:** Minister, were specialised staff from the Community Services Directorate retained within the ACT government in other roles?

**MS STEPHEN-SMITH:** I thank Ms Lee for her supplementary question. Some specialist staff in the ACT government have been retained under the child development service and others have left the employment of the ACT government and have either set up in private practice or have done other things with their lives. Again, I cannot give you exact numbers at this point. I am happy to take that on notice if you would like.

**MRS KIKKERT:** Minister, are there currently enough sufficiently experienced disability and therapy service providers in the ACT?

**MS STEPHEN-SMITH:** I thank Mrs Kikkert for her supplementary question. The government understands that workforce issues are an ongoing challenge in the disability sector and in the therapy sector and allied health across the board. One of the things we are focused on in the rest of the rollout of the NDIS is workforce development. If you just give me one second, I might even have some detail on that.

A wide variety of resources have been made available to support disability service providers to transition to the NDIS, as I said earlier, and the government has worked with a number of individual therapists as they have transitioned out of Therapy ACT and Disability ACT to become service providers in the sector.

### **ACT Emergency Services Agency—funding**

**MS ORR:** My question is to the Minister for Police and Emergency Services. Minister, what measures is the government taking to keep our community safe and to respond effectively to emergencies?

**MR GENTLEMAN:** I thank Ms Orr for her question and her new role in the Assembly. The government is committed to keeping our community safe. As a government, we are committed to ensuring that Canberrans are safe. They want to feel safe, of course, and know that if the worse should happen, then help will arrive.

One of the best ways to do this is to support our hard-working emergency services personnel, from police officers to paramedics, to firefighters, to our volunteers in the Rural Fire Service and State Emergency Service. By ensuring that our personnel have the training, equipment and support they need, this government is ensuring the safety of our community.

That is why the government has committed to a significant program of measures through our election commitments and parliamentary agreement items. In the coming months and years this government will be putting more firefighters and more state-of-the-art firefighting appliances on the road. We will be putting more paramedics on the road.

We will be supporting our police. In particular, we will be ensuring that police can effectively combat outlaw motorcycle gangs and we will be ensuring that police can contribute to a society-wide effort to prevent and respond to family violence.



During our coming four years I will champion our emergency services personnel and our police, ensuring that they have the support they need to continue doing the great work they do each and every day in our community.

**MS ORR:** Minister, how will the government's policies and priorities boost the safety of the local community?

**MR GENTLEMAN:** Ensuring the safety of our community is one of this government's highest priorities. To do this we will be putting more police on the beat to help combat alcohol-related violence to ensure that everyone who wants to head out on the town can do so in safety.

In relation to family violence, we will be ensuring that police have the resources and the backing they need. In particular, police will be working closely with other key agencies, within and outside government, to ensure an effective and collaborative approach. By giving police the backing and the resources to respond to family violence, we are ensuring that victims of family violence get the support they need and can feel safe in their own homes. And we are ensuring that perpetrators are brought to justice and given the appropriate support to overcome this problem.

As I have just noted, the government will be employing more paramedics and firefighters. Most of us will hope never to need the services of a firey or ambo, but I am sure all Canberrans want the reassurance that comes from knowing that the Ambulance Service and Fire & Rescue service have the right people and equipment to respond to emergencies across our community.

**MS CODY:** My supplementary question to the minister is: how do the government's policies and priorities support emergency services personnel and police officers?

**MR GENTLEMAN:** I thank Ms Cody for her first supplementary question. Emergency services workers and police have some of the toughest jobs in our society. When everyone else is heading for safety, these are the people who head towards the danger to protect life and property. So it is vital that the government provide the right services and support to our firefighters, paramedics and police officers.

This government is committed to providing the right facilities and the appropriate support. As I have noted, the government will be rolling out a series of measures to support these personnel, including new and upgraded stations and enhanced mental health services. Not only will this help them to respond to emergencies; it will help them to deal with the demands of their jobs, giving them the appropriate support.

### **Canberra Hospital—staffing**

**MR DOSZPOT:** My question is to the Minister for Health. Minister, I refer to a report in the *Canberra Times* of 3 December 2016 about demand for action on a hospital crisis, entitled *Nurses at breaking point*, raising concerns about staff shortages at the Canberra Hospital. What is the relationship between staff shortages at the Canberra hospital and workplace fatigue and dangers to patient care?

**MS FITZHARRIS:** I thank Mr Doszpot for his question. Certainly from the government's point of view, safety of staff and patients is of the utmost priority. We certainly know that that *Canberra Times* article was based on a discussion with the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Foundation. My office has had discussions with them. I have had discussions with them, and I will continue to do so.

The Labor government made a number of commitments throughout the election campaign to continue to support our nursing workforce. That was to increase nursing positions throughout our health system, whether it is at the hospital, in community-based settings or in our walk-in centres. We are determined to deliver on that commitment. We also made commitments to improve access to training and development, for example, to establish a new nurse practitioner course at the University of Canberra.

We also, throughout the parliamentary agreement process, have committed to a nurse safety strategy. That strategy will certainly include the safety of nursing staff in the hospital and in other settings across the ACT health system. That will be a priority for me in 2017. Certainly I would encourage, as I did at the time that article appeared—

**Mr Coe:** On a point of order, Madam Speaker, on relevance, the specific question was:

What is the relationship between staff shortages at the Canberra Hospital and workplace fatigue and dangers to patient care?

It is not a question about Labor policies. It is particularly about, in effect, whether there is any empirical evidence or literature which suggests that those issues are linked.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Thank you Mr Coe. May I remind the minister of standing order 118 about being concise. But I do understand that you were talking about broader safety and nursing development, which will cover the point of safety, I believe.

**MS FITZHARRIS:** Thank you Madam Speaker. There are no staff shortages and there is no connection with staff safety. As I have said, it is a priority for me to undertake the nurse safety strategy.

**MR DOSZPOT:** Minister, how common is it for nurses at the Canberra Hospital to work double shifts due to staff shortages?

**Ms Fitzharris:** Sorry, I missed the first part of the question, Mr Doszpot.

**MR DOSZPOT:** Minister, how common is it for nurses at the Canberra Hospital to work double shifts due to staff shortages?

**MS FITZHARRIS:** Thank you, Mr Doszpot. I am advised that it is not common. What we do know is that Canberra Hospital has seasonal fluctuations, particularly in

the winter period, and there is a specific staffing strategy in place to deal with that. We did see a significant flu season this year, which not only affected Canberra Hospital presentations in the broader community as a whole but, inevitably, also affected our workforce. Again, I would just reiterate that over the past two years there have been 236 more nursing and midwifery staff added to the ACT Health workforce. I will continue to monitor this closely and I will continue to focus on this as a priority in 2017.

**MR PARTON:** Can the minister please tell us how common it is for patients to be discharged from the hospital before it is appropriate to do so because of staff or bed shortages?

**MS FITZHARRIS:** I can assure you, Mr Parton, that patients are not discharged from Canberra hospitals unless it is safe to do so, and that will be done on the clinical advice of the doctors and nurses caring for patients in our hospitals.

### **Bushfires—preparation**

**MRS JONES:** My question is to the Minister for Emergency Services. Minister, given the extensive rain the ACT has enjoyed through the spring and the late start to the official bushfire season this year, there is a large level of grass and green growth across Canberra leading to potentially high fuel loads as we move into this bushfire season. What actions are being taken to ensure that the ACT is bushfire ready?

**MR GENTLEMAN:** I thank Mrs Jones for her question. There have been a number of actions: 25 strategic burns over the season for the bushfire area and some 5,000 hectares of strategic grazing and some 6,000 hectares of strategic slashing as well across the territory. But, as Mrs Jones has outlined, the fuel growth has risen, and last Friday we did a public awareness campaign to try to drive Canberrans to look at the opportunities for cleaning up their yards. Particular points went to rural community landholders in relation to bushfire loads and areas.

We have asked them to look at the bushfire opportunities in their areas to ensure that they can be as safe as possible and prepare for the bushfire season. That involves some strategic grading along roads either side of their properties to ensure that fuel loads are down. They are responding. They have been grazing in the areas as well. They have prepared on many occasions opportunities for water storage to fight bushfires should they occur. But also we have moved on a front to ensure our RAFT operators are fully trained. We have helicopters ready to go to fight during the bushfire season, and we have trained officers ready and trained volunteers as well to prepare for this bushfire season.

**MRS JONES:** Minister, what additional resources are being deployed in preparation for this year's bushfire season? Additionally, what actions are you undertaking to make sure that if a fire were to approach Canberra, ACT Fire & Rescue could attack it in the BAZ, the bushfire abatement zone?

**MR GENTLEMAN:** I thank Mrs Jones for her supplementary. As I said, there are a number of works in progress. Those works continue: the slashing, the grazing and

strategic burns continue, and also the rollout of appropriate machinery to fight bushfires and the strategic placement of our volunteer Rural Fire Service personnel, in fact over last weekend, to keep an active watch for bushfires. They take place in the bushfire towers around the ACT to spot bushfires straightaway, and we have teams ready to deploy should those bushfires begin in those areas.

So quite a deal of effort has gone forward. But, as I said earlier on, we are aware of the fuel load. There is some more rain due to come—

**Mrs Jones:** Point of order.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Mrs Jones on a point of order.

**Mrs Jones:** Part of the question was about what the government is doing to address Fire & Rescue from the ACT being able to go into the BAZ. I just wonder if the minister is able to answer that before the end.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Minister, can you provide Mrs Jones with any information about preparedness in the bushfire abatement zones.

**MR GENTLEMAN:** Certainly, Madam Speaker. In those zones, we have bushfire preparedness. We have operators trained to enter those zones and of course we keep the float roads clear to ensure that we can, if needed, float in graders to operate in those areas. Our key targets are, of course, the spot fires that occur in those zones, and that is why our RAFT volunteers are prepared and our helicopters are ready to drop them into those areas should a bushfire start to occur.

**MR MILLIGAN:** How can the community be guaranteed that suitable preparation has taken place?

**MR GENTLEMAN:** Of course, bushfires do occur in the ACT. It is renowned. We had some very difficult occurrences in the past. Everybody is aware of the 2003 fires. We have learnt quite a good deal from that. The bushfire operational plans that we have in place are good plans. They are strengthened by our operational people on the ground and, of course, the equipment that we have invested in across the ACT.

I think that shows the amount of work for preparedness. Of course, there are also the information and awareness campaigns that we are doing for the community right across the ACT.

### **Chief Minister's inclusion awards**

**MS CODY:** My question is to the Minister for Disability, Children and Youth. Minister, you recently announced the winners of the Chief Minister's inclusion awards. Why are these awards so important?

**MS STEPHEN-SMITH:** I thank Ms Cody for her question and acknowledge her longstanding interest in and commitment to the inclusion of people with disability in our community.

Evidence and experience show that removing barriers to inclusion empowers people with disability and allows them to participate fully in our community, which benefits all of us. The Chief Minister's inclusion awards exemplify this and reflect the ACT government's commitment to social inclusion for everyone. These awards recognise the outstanding achievements of people with and without disabilities, and organisations and businesses in our community that demonstrate a commitment to creating a more inclusive Canberra.

As you would be aware, Madam Speaker, this year's awards were held on 1 December at the National Museum. It was a fantastic event, and I am sure the Chief Minister was sorry that he missed it. I was proud to represent him; it was my finest day. There were over 52 nominations across 11 categories, including individuals, schools, small businesses, large employers and community organisations.

I was particularly pleased to present the emerging young leaders award to Grace West. Grace's advice for young people is: "If you can imagine it, you can do it." It is this wisdom, combined with her zest to overcome obstacles, that sets her apart. She is Canberra's youth ambassador for the Royal Society for the Blind and campaigns for people with vision impairment. Grace is currently planning a career working with children, while simultaneously having her eyes set on becoming a Paralympian in rowing. Grace is a true leader and an example for all young people.

The ACT Chief Minister's award for excellence was awarded to David Williams. David has volunteered for over two decades mentoring young people with Down syndrome and intellectual disability to help them find their voice through public speaking.

All award winners stood out for their leadership and innovative approach to including people with disability in our community, and for showing us that small changes can make a big difference.

**MS CODY:** Minister, in your speech at the inclusion awards you formally launched the Office for Disability. What will the office do?

**MS STEPHEN-SMITH:** I thank Ms Cody for her supplementary question. As I mentioned earlier, the ACT has led the way in the transition to the national disability insurance scheme as the first jurisdiction to sign up. We will be the first jurisdiction in Australia to see all eligible residents accepted into the scheme.

With the completion of the NDIS trial in the ACT, people with disabilities now have greater choice and control over what services they can access to support them in their daily lives. The full rollout of the NDIS in the ACT will be completed in the first half of 2017. But the NDIS does not answer every question for people with disability in our community.

That is why the ACT government is staying in the business of supporting people with disability and making sure they are included and engaged in every aspect of life in our city. That is why we have established the Office for Disability, which I launched at

the inclusion awards. The office will provide a focal point for our ongoing work. This includes meeting our commitments under the national disability strategy through the involve initiative.

The office will also oversee a new grants program that Labor announced during the election campaign, which will support community organisations to include people with disability in their activities. It will work with advocacy groups and the new disability reference group to take forward key government priorities such as the disability justice strategy.

The Office for Disability will also complement the Office of Mental Health, which is the responsibility of my colleague Minister Rattenbury. The two offices will work together to ensure that people with psychosocial disability are supported across the human services system.

I recently also attended a number of events to celebrate International Day of People with a Disability, or IDay. I was pleased that the ACT government—and this will be a role for the Office for Disability—provided IDay grants of more than \$24,000 to support events and activities that focused on inclusion around Canberra.

**MS CHEYNE:** Minister, what else is the ACT government doing to support people with disability in our community?

**MS STEPHEN-SMITH:** I thank Ms Cheyne for her supplementary question. The ACT government is supporting people with disability in our community in many ways. For example, the government is committed to increasing opportunities for people with disability to be engaged in meaningful employment. The government recently supported an employment roundtable that explored ways of improving employment opportunities for people with disability. The government also introduced an inclusion traineeship program. Positions in this program are specifically for people with disability and have attracted an overwhelming number of applicants.

The ACT government will continue to explore other ways to improve employment opportunities for people with disability, such as hosting a providers expo linking people with disability to disability employment agencies and employers, increasing awareness of school-based apprenticeships, working with the Canberra Business Chamber to provide advice on employing people with disability, and a work experience program designed to help Canberrans with a disability to enter the ACT public service by providing an opportunity to improve skills and confidence.

Another way in which the ACT government is supporting people with disability is through the Involve initiative which I mentioned earlier. Involve is a social movement where organisations or individuals can pledge to support inclusion in our community and can undertake a community ambition. An example of Involve is the Engage sports initiative run by students aged 12 to 15 at Marist College. It provides students with disability across Canberra's south with an enjoyable experience of sport while also interacting and learning with other student volunteers.

The government also supports the Connect and Participate Expo, or the CAP expo, a free community event showcasing a range of opportunities available for Canberrans of all abilities and ages to join groups and build social connections around common interests. This is an opportunity for people with and without disability to come together to try activities they may enjoy.

### **Gungahlin—sporting facilities**

**MR MILLIGAN:** My question is to the Minister for Sport and Recreation. In light of the widespread community support for the building of an indoor sports centre for Gungahlin, I am aware that the government previously committed to undertake a feasibility study into the construction of an indoor sports centre in Gungahlin. Minister, can you please advise me when the feasibility study will be undertaken?

**MS BERRY:** I thank Mr Milligan for his question. The feasibility study is being conducted in both Gungahlin and Woden, to check to see what indoor facilities are available in those areas. The study is underway. I will let you know as soon as we have a completion date for that study.

In the meantime it is important to check the work that Education has been doing around the availability of using education spaces for sporting and community clubs, as well as community and multicultural groups. In Education we have been looking at school facilities that are not used during school hours and at how sporting clubs might be able to access them. An example of where that has been successful is, for a very small amount of money, changing the access pin to a sporting centre at Alfred Deakin school, when Woden Dodgers basketball club were displaced. They now have a space for their home clubhouse at Alfred Deakin school. We will have a look at all the other schools. There is a working group set up with sport and rec, Education, and the Community Services Directorate to see where the gaps are and how we can facilitate turning our education facilities into sporting and community hubs.

**MR MILLIGAN:** Will there be community consultations, and if so, has a time frame been set for the establishment of an indoor sporting centre for Gungahlin?

**MS BERRY:** Yes. We are scoping the feasibility study at the moment, and of course there will be community consultation starting in the new year.

**MR COE:** Minister, what will be the components of the feasibility study?

**MS BERRY:** I refer the member to my previous answer.

### **Canberra Hospital—bed occupancy rates**

**MRS KIKKERT:** My question is to the Minister for Health. Minister, an article titled “Hospital bed occupancy: more than queuing for a bed”, published in 2010 by the *Medical Journal of Australia*, says:

Clinical observational data have suggested that bed occupancies above 85% could adversely affect safe, effective hospital function.

Minister, has the Canberra Hospital been operating at or above 85 per cent, and if so, for how long?

**MS FITZHARRIS:** I thank Mrs Kikkert for her question. I will take that on notice. I am not familiar with the 2010 report, but I can tell Mrs Kikkert that the hospital, as I mentioned earlier, undergoes seasonal changes and, in particular over the winter period, it does often operate at its capacity. That would fluctuate over time throughout the course of the year depending on the season.

One of the other things I can inform the Assembly of is that although our hospital is not one of the largest in Australia or one of the busiest, our emergency department is one of the largest and one of the busiest emergency departments in Australia because it caters not only for our own city but for the region as a whole.

I can inform the Assembly that bed occupancy rates are closely monitored, and the safety, wellbeing and good health of the patients and the staff within our system, particularly at Canberra Hospital, are of the utmost importance.

**MRS KIKKERT:** Minister, what is the hospital management doing to ensure OHS for staff, particularly relating to fatigue, when the hospital is operating above the benchmark capacity?

**MS FITZHARRIS:** I thank Mrs Kikkert for her supplementary. The safety of staff, as I mentioned in my previous answer and in answers to the previous question, is very important. It is closely monitored throughout the course of the day. I can take that question on notice about specific elements within the hospital's work processes. What I can inform the Assembly is that across every department in Canberra Hospital there are multiple meetings on a daily basis to monitor capacity within the hospital, work flow within the hospital and the safety and wellbeing of staff and patients.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** A supplementary question, Mrs Lee—Ms Lee.

**MS LEE:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. You almost got me married then! Minister, on how many occasions since you became Minister for Health has the hospital been operating at or above 100 per cent?

**MS FITZHARRIS:** I am not aware of any, but I will take that question on notice.

**Mr Barr:** I ask that all further questions be placed on the notice paper.

### **Supplementary answer to question without notice Land Development Agency**

**MR BARR** I believe it was Mr Coe who asked me at the commencement of question time whether any conflicts of interest have been reported in relation to the purchase of three sites that were subject to the Auditor-General's report. The advice I have is that



there were no conflicts of interest.

## **Questions on notice Statement by Speaker**

**MADAM SPEAKER:** I wish to inform members of new arrangements that are in place for the lodgement and publication of questions on notice in the Ninth Assembly.

In previous Assemblies, questions on notice lodged with the Clerk by noon were published on the next notice paper. While this worked perfectly well on most sitting days, it often meant that questions lodged on the Thursday of a sitting week did not appear on the notice paper until weeks, sometimes months, later. To address this, the Chamber Support Office will now produce a separate questions on notice paper on the Friday of a sitting week containing all of the questions on notice that have been lodged that week. Members will have until 5 o'clock on Thursday to lodge questions for inclusion on the questions on notice paper, although members are encouraged to lodge them earlier in the week. They are also encouraged to lodge them electronically and in paper form.

Notice papers produced on sitting days will contain a list of all unanswered questions.

## **Death of Hon Teatao Teannaki, Speaker of Parliament of Kiribati Statement by Speaker**

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Members will be aware of the close relationship this Assembly has with the Parliament of Kiribati under the CPA twinning arrangements. It is with sadness that I inform members of the death in October this year of the Speaker of the Parliament of Kiribati, the Hon Teatao Teannaki.

Mr Teannaki was a long-term servant of the people of Kiribati. Upon the granting of self-government in 1979, he was the first deputy president of that nation, serving in the position until 1991, when he became President of Kiribati. He was president from 1991 until 1994. Following the general elections in 2015, Mr Teannaki was elected Speaker of the parliament in February this year.

I am sure all members will join me in extending our condolences to Mr Teannaki's family and the Parliament of Kiribati.

I table the following paper, a copy of the letter from Mrs Dunne to the Kiribati parliament:

Death of the Hon Teatao Teannaki, Speaker of the Parliament of Kiribati—Copy of letter from the Speaker to the Clerk of the Kiribati Parliament, dated 14 October 2016.

## Papers

**Madam Speaker** presented the following papers:

Auditor-General Act, pursuant to subsection 17(5)—Auditor-General’s Reports Nos—

9/2016—Commissioner for International Engagement—position creation and appointment process, dated 30 November 2016.

10/2016—2015-16 Financial Audits—Audit Reports, dated 7 December 2016.

Climate Change and Greenhouse Gas Reduction Act, pursuant to subsection 19(4)—Annual report 2015-16—ACT Climate Change Council, dated September 2016, together with a statement from the Minister for the Environment and Climate Change responding to the advice/recommendations made in the Report.

Government Agencies (Campaign Advertising) Act, pursuant to subsection 20(2)—Independent Reviewer—Reports prepared by Professor Dennis Pearce for the periods—

1 January to 30 June 2016, dated 28 September 2016.

1 July to 8 September 2016, dated 28 September 2016.

Water Resources Act, pursuant to subsection 67D(4)—Annual report 2015-16—ACT and Region Catchment Management Coordination Group.

Ethics and Integrity Adviser for Members of the Legislative Assembly for the Australian Capital Territory, pursuant to Continuing Resolution 6A of the Assembly of 10 April 2008, as amended 21 August 2008—Report for the period 1 July 2015 to 30 June 2016, dated 3 September 2016.

Annual Reports (Government Agencies) Act, pursuant to section 15—Annual reports 2015-2016 for the following:

ACT Auditor-General—Report No 8/2016, dated 5 October 2016

ACT Electoral Commission, dated 12 September 2016.

ACT Ombudsman, dated 4 October 2016.

Office of the Legislative Assembly, dated October 2016.

Estimates 2016-2017—Select Committee—Copy of letter from the Chief Minister to Mr Hanson, dated 5 September 2016, concerning a possible board of inquiry into the Mr Fluffy insulation program in response to a question raised during the 2016-2017 Estimates hearings.

**Mr Barr** presented the following papers:

Special Gazette No S5, Tuesday, 1 November, 2016, incorporating:

Administrative Arrangements 2016 (No 4)—Notifiable Instrument NI2016-608, dated 1 November 2016.

Australian Capital Territory (Self-Government) Ministerial Appointment 2016 (No 3)—Notifiable Instrument NI2016-609, dated 1 November 2016.

Parliamentary Agreement for the 9th Legislative Assembly for the Australian Capital Territory—Agreement between Mr Andrew Barr MLA, Leader of the

Australian Labor Party, ACT Branch, Mr Shane Rattenbury MLA, ACT Greens Member for Kurrajong, and Ms Caroline Le Couteur MLA, ACT Greens Member for Murrumbidgee.

Annual Reports (Government Agencies) Act, pursuant to section 13—Annual Reports 2015-2016—

Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate (4 volumes), dated 30 September 2016.

ACT Public Service—State of the Service Report (incorporating the Commissioner for Public Administration, ACT Public Service Workforce profile and ACT Public Sector profile).

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

Long-term contracts:

Brendan McAvoy, dated 27 July and 3 August 2016.

Denise Lamb, dated 19 July 2016.

Mary Toohey, dated 18 August 2016.

Stephen Bygrave, dated 3 August 2016.

Stephen Sancbergs, dated 9 August 2016.

Short-term contracts:

Andrew Pederson, dated 8 and 9 August 2016.

Catherina O’Leary, dated 7 and 11 August 2016.

Cheryl Harkins, dated 22 and 23 August 2016.

Chris Bone, dated 15 and 18 August 2016.

Daren Smith, dated 26 and 30 August 2016.

David Pryce, dated 3 and 4 August 2016.

Dominic Lane, dated 2 and 3 August 2016.

Ian Hill, dated 1 and 3 August 2016.

Jarrad Nuss, dated 22 and 23 August 2016.

Julie Nolan, dated 9 August 2016.

Luke Jansen, dated 2 and 3 August 2016.

Mark Brown, dated 2 and 3 August 2016.

Nic Manikis, dated 3 and 9 August 2016.

Philip Canham, dated 2 and 3 August 2016.

Simon Tennent, dated 15 and 18 August 2016.

Stephen Edwards, dated 25 and 26 August 2016.

Trevor Vivian, dated 29 July and 3 August 2016.

Vanessa Brady, dated 15 and 18 August 2016.

Yu-Lan Chan, dated 28 July and 3 August 2016.

Contract variations:

Anne Glover, dated 9 August 2016.  
Bernadette Mitcherson, dated 5 and 9 August 2016.  
David Matthews, dated 28 and 30 August 2016.  
David Pryce, dated 12 August 2016.  
Dominic Lane, dated 12 and 15 August 2016.  
Dominic Lane, dated 15 and 18 August 2016.  
Donald Taylor, dated 26 and 30 August 2016.  
Geoffrey Rutledge, dated 12 and 15 August 2016.  
Grant Kennealy, dated 5 and 9 August 2016.  
Karen Wilden, dated 18 and 23 August 2016.  
Kathleen Goth, dated 4 and 9 August 2016.  
Louise Gilding, dated 8 and 9 August 2016.  
Margaret Lee, dated 12 and 15 August 2016.  
Mark Brown, dated 11 August 2016.  
Mark Brown, dated 15 and 18 August 2016.  
Michelle Wicks, dated 29 July and 3 August 2016.  
Nic Manikis, dated 22 and 23 August 2016.  
Nicole Masters, dated 27 July and 3 August 2016.  
Nicole Moore, dated 5 and 9 August 2016.  
Nicole Moore, dated 22 and 23 August 2016.  
Paul Rushton, dated 26 and 30 August 2016.  
Philip Canham, dated 11 August 2016.  
Philip Canham, dated 15 and 18 August 2016.  
Samuel Engele, dated 2 and 3 August 2016.  
Tracey Allen, dated 2 and 3 August 2016.  
Tracey Stewart, dated 28 July and 3 August 2016.

Public Accounts—Standing Committee—Eighth Assembly—Report 33—*Review of Selected Auditor-General's Reports*—Government response.

Annual Reports (Government Agencies) Act, pursuant to section 13—Annual Reports 2015-2016—

Australian Capital Territory Insurance Authority, dated 6 October 2016.

Icon Water Limited, dated 7 September 2016.

Independent Competition and Regulatory Commission—Report 6 of 2016, dated 4 October 2016, including corrigendum, dated 25 October 2016.

Financial Management Act, pursuant to—

Section 25—Consolidated Annual Financial Statements, including audit opinion—2015-2016 financial year, dated 29 September 2016.

Section 26—Consolidated Financial Report—Financial quarter ending 30 September 2016, including financial instruments signed during the quarter.

Auditor-General's Act, pursuant to subsection 21(2)—Auditor-General's Report—No 6/2016—Management and administration of credit cards by ACT Government entities—Government response.

Public Accounts—Standing Committee—Eighth Assembly—Report 32—*Review of Auditor-General's Report No 6 of 2015: Bulk Water Alliance*—Government response.

Territory-owned Corporations Act, pursuant to subsection 9(2)—Notification of voting shareholders—Icon Water Limited, dated 1 December 2016.

**Ms Berry** presented the following papers:

Annual Reports (Government Agencies) Act, pursuant to section 13—Annual Reports 2015-2016—Education Directorate, dated 4 October 2016.

Annual Reports (Government Agencies) Act, pursuant to section 13—Annual Reports 2015-2016—

Community Services Directorate, dated 21 September 2016.

Land Development Agency, dated 23 September 2016.

Official Visitor Act, pursuant to section 17—Annual report 2015-16—Official Visitor (Homelessness Services).

**Mr Gentleman** presented the following papers:

Annual Reports (Government Agencies) Act, pursuant to section 13—Annual Report 2015-2016—ACT Policing, dated 6 October 2016, in accordance with the Policing Arrangement between the Commonwealth and the Australian Capital Territory Governments.

Crime (Controlled Operations) Act, pursuant to subsection 28(9)—Annual Report 2015-2016—ACT Policing Controlled Operations, dated 6 October 2016.

Crimes (Surveillance Devices) Act, pursuant to subsection 38(4)—Annual Report 2015-2016—ACT Policing Surveillance Devices, dated 6 October 2016.

Auditor-General's Act, pursuant to subsection 21(2)—Auditor-General's Report—No 3/2016—ACT Policing Arrangement—Government response.

**Ms Fitzharris** presented the following papers:

Annual Reports (Government Agencies) Act, pursuant to section 13—Annual Report 2015-2016—Health Directorate, dated 5 October 2016.

Health (National Health Funding Pool and Administration) Act, pursuant to subsection 25(4)—Administrator of the National Health Funding Pool—Annual report 2015-2016, dated 19 October 2016.

National Health Funding Body—Annual report 2015-2016, dated 19 October 2016.

National Health Practitioner Ombudsman and Privacy Commissioner—Annual report 2015-16.

Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency—Annual report 2015/16.

Annual Reports (Government Agencies) Act, pursuant to section 13—Annual Reports 2015-2016—

Capital Metro Agency, dated 6 October 2016.

Territory and Municipal Services Directorate (2 volumes), including the ACT Public Cemeteries Authority, dated 6 October 2016.

Auditor-General Act, pursuant to subsection 21(2)—Auditor-General's Report No 5/2016—Initiation of the Light Rail Project—Government response.

Annual Reports (Government Agencies) Act, pursuant to section 13—Annual Report 2015-2016—ACT Building and Construction Industry Training Fund Authority, dated 15 September 2016.

**Mr Gentleman** presented the following papers:

Annual Reports (Government Agencies) Act, pursuant to section 13—Annual Report 2015-2016—Environment and Planning Directorate, dated 13 September 2016.

National Environment Protection Council Act, pursuant to subsection 23(3)—National Environment Protection Council—Annual report 2014-2015.

## **Public Accounts—Standing Committee Paper and statement by minister**

**MR GENTLEMAN** (Brindabella—Minister for Police and Emergency Services, Minister for the Environment and Heritage, Minister for Planning and Land Management and Minister for Urban Renewal) (3.45): For the information of members, I present the following paper:

Public Accounts—Standing Committee—Eighth Assembly—Report 31—*Review of Auditor-General's Report No. 3 of 2015: Restoration of the lower Cotter catchment*—Government response.

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

Leave granted.

**MR GENTLEMAN:** I am pleased to present the government response to the Standing Committee on Public Accounts Report 31 titled the *Auditor-General's Report No 3 of 2015: Restoration of the lower Cotter catchment*, which reviewed the effectiveness of management strategies employed by the ACT government and Icon Water to the lower Cotter catchment. The Auditor-General's audit report into the

lower Cotter catchment focused our attention on the importance of delivering effective and integrated land management for this unique water catchment area.

I say “unique” for two reasons: firstly, this part of the Cotter catchment has assumed heightened importance since the completion of the enlarged Cotter Dam. The enlarged dam has activated almost 20,000 hectares of land as water catchment, and the new dam impoundment now accounts for 25 per cent of the territory’s storage capacity. Secondly, the area of the Cotter catchment we describe as the lower Cotter catchment is made up of 6,350 hectares of recovering landscape. Previously under the pine plantation, the 2003 fires razed the area to the ground, and recovery has been slower than that seen in the other high country water catchments made up predominantly of native vegetation, which, of course, recovers more rapidly after fire.

It is a matter of public record that government has accepted every one of the Auditor-General’s twelve recommendations. Turning to the committee report, I note it acknowledges that good cooperation across government agencies has seen the delivery or part delivery of a number of important management objectives for the lower Cotter catchment. Furthermore, the committee report notes the significant government commitment to resourcing management efforts in the lower Cotter catchment through the significant appropriation made in the 2015-16 budget, which total \$7.8 million over four years.

This new money has already commenced to make a real difference to the condition of the lower Cotter catchment, with work completed on closing down redundant management trails and also improving the condition of other trails to provide strategic firefighting advantage. Failing sediment control structures have been mapped and prioritised for repair, and pine wildlings have begun to be removed from areas in and around the Blue Range section of the catchment.

I am also pleased the committee report credits the creation of a single conservation agency within the Environment, Planning, and Sustainable Development Directorate as serving to improve the management focus on the lower Cotter catchment by bringing together policy, planning, and operational capacity within one agency. But much more needs to be done to secure the ongoing stability of the lower Cotter catchment as a source of reliable, quality water for all Canberrans.

Under the oversight of the director-general’s water group, the management agencies in EPSDD, the Emergency Services Agency, and Icon Water have established a lower Cotter catchment working group which has been rolling out the operational response to the Auditor-General’s report. I will be providing a detailed update for the Assembly of the work achieved to date in the lower Cotter catchment in early 2017.

Turning to the committee report recommendations, of which there are seven, I can report that government agrees with five recommendations, partly agrees with one, and notes one other recommendation. Government notes the committee report’s first recommendation which calls on government to implement a sustainable funding model for the management of the lower Cotter catchment and that this should be outlined in the plan of management for the lower Cotter catchment of which, I might add, a draft version will be soon publicly available for comment.

Plans of management focus on providing the management framework within which protected areas are to be managed. They provide policy direction on appropriate management strategies that may be adopted by the land management agency. Plans of management have traditionally not attempted to commit government funding, with the land manager instead pursuing funding initiatives through participation in the yearly Treasury-led budget bid process.

Decisions on funding are best made in a holistic context and in response to prioritised needs which, of course, may change over time. This government prefers to fund the management of the lower Cotter catchment using an adaptive management model. That is to say that the land manager applies and learns from the applications of on ground works and strategies, and budget bids are generated to support new initiatives and priorities that are considered for funding by budget cabinet on their merits and with the whole-of-government perspective Treasury is able to bring.

Recommendation 6 calls on government to prioritise the finalisation of a recreation strategy for the lower Cotter catchment, and this is agreed in part. As I have mentioned earlier, EPSDD is currently finalising the development of a statutory draft management plan for the lower Cotter catchment. Recreation policy is incorporated within the plan as it is important to consider strategic recreation issues within the broader context of overall management of the area. It is my intention to ensure that the intent of the committee's recommendation—that is to ensure appropriate controls on recreational activity and the need to lift awareness of the lower Cotter catchment's values—is addressed in the recreation chapter of the management plan.

The government agrees with the remaining five recommendations outlined in the committee report—namely: rec 2, to improve transparency with regard to budget inflow and outflow related to management works in the lower Cotter catchment; rec 3, that the government report to the Assembly on progress in implementation of all the recommendations of the audit report by March next year; rec 4, that I provide an update on progress of the Commissioner for Sustainability and Environment's evaluation of the restoration works in the lower Cotter catchment by March 2017; recommendation 5, that government update the Assembly on progress on pine wildling removal trials in the Blue Range area by the last sitting day of 2016; and rec 7, that the government consider extending the program of native planting and habitat restoration for the lower Cotter catchment.

I would now like to update the Assembly in some detail on the Blue Range wildlings trial, as recommendation 5 of the report proposed the government should do. Recommendation 5 stated that government should:

Inform the ACT Legislative Assembly by the last sitting date in 2016 as to the progress on the pine wildling removal trials within the Blue Range area. This should include detail on (i) key milestones; (ii) trial outcomes concerning identification of removal methods that best align with the preservation of water; and (iii) a proposed timeline for implementation of pine wildling removal within the lower Cotter catchment.



By way of background, the Blue Range section of the lower Cotter catchment carries a large concentration of self-sown pine trees, or wildlings, growing in steep terrain. Due to the difficulty and expense associated with removing these pines, no work has been undertaken to manage this substantial fuel load since the 2003 fires. The Auditor-General noted the need for a plan to manage the Blue Range pines if the fire risk to the lower Cotter catchment was to be adequately mitigated.

After the appropriation of funding by this government in 2015-16, the land manager determined that a trial of removal methods would equip it with valuable information on the relative suitability and cost-effectiveness of possible methods available to remove pines from the Blue Range area.

I can report to the Assembly that the following key milestones have been met by the land manager: an area of 106 hectares of pine wildlings just outside the lower Cotter catchment, but similar in slope and concentration of pine wildlings to that inside the catchment was selected as the trial site in February this year.

A water quality monitoring framework was developed and applied to ensure that the trial removal works could be monitored for their effects on water quality run-off from the work site. This framework was developed with the assistance of Icon Water and completed in February 2016 with monitoring equipment installed on the site in March 2016.

Work commenced on trialling three methods of mechanical removal of pine wildlings in May 2016 and was completed in August this year. An evaluation of methods and costs was completed in October this year, yielding two methods as the most suitable means to remove the pine wildlings. All planning and approvals for works to commence within the lower Cotter catchment in 2016-17 will be completed by this month.

The pine wildling removal trials are now substantially complete and they have identified that two main methods will be able to be practically applied whilst providing value for money and minimising water quality impacts. Operating on steeper slopes presents challenges to the land manager as machinery stability during operation is the utmost concern. A “trittering machine”, which can be described as an adapted excavator with a mulching attachment, operates by pulping the standing pines into chips, creating a bed of readily compostable material in situ. It is particularly effective and safer to operate on steeper slopes.

The resulting mulched material produced by this machine delivers the added benefit of presenting a shield to rainfall on the ground, thus allowing the gradual seepage of moisture through to the soil layer and minimising the chance of damaging erosion. On gentler slopes, a bulldozer will push over the pines into windrows arranged along the contours for later burning when conditions will allow.

It should be noted that during the four months of the trial over 100 millimetres of rainfall was received by the trial area, and monitoring equipment recorded a negligible increase in the turbidity of run-off into the tributaries feeding the Cotter Dam. More

time is needed to evaluate the regeneration response of native vegetation in areas treated with the machinery I have described, but encouraging signs have already been recorded with bracken fern already coming through in large numbers.

Building on the learnings from the trial, I can report that the land manager has outlined a time line for the removal of all existing pine wildlings from the Blue Range area within the lower Cotter catchment—namely: in 2016-17 approximately 68.7 hectares of wildlings are planned for removal at an estimated cost of \$442,000; in 2017-18 a further 87.1 hectares of wildlings will be removed at an estimated cost of \$479,000; and in 2018-19 the remaining 70.5 hectares of wildlings will be removed at an estimated cost of \$417,000.

I should add that all costs associated with these wildling removal works are budgeted as part of the reducing the ACT's vulnerability to bushfire initiative appropriated in the 2015-16 ACT budget. Finally, the Assembly should note that wildling pines are likely to continue to appear in the Blue Range area after these removal works are completed. The land manager will monitor the scope of natural regeneration which should serve to out-compete emerging pine wildlings. Any pines that do appear will be managed as part of the yearly weed control program identified for the lower Cotter catchment, thus avoiding a return to the undesirable large-scale monoculture of pines that we have here today.

In closing, I thank the standing committee chaired by Ms Nicole Lawder and previously by Mr Brendan Smyth for their review and consideration of this important Auditor-General's report. Much has been achieved in stabilising the lower Cotter catchment since the 2003 fires. In a productive thirteen-year partnership between government agencies and the community, the lower Cotter catchment is well on its way to recovery. In tabling this government's response to the committee report, I stand confident that this government has a plan to ensure the lower Cotter catchment will be able to yield the quantity and quality of water Canberra needs.

## Papers

**Mr Gentleman** presented the following papers:

Loose Fill Asbestos Insulation Eradication Scheme—Update on the ACT Government response—Quarterly reports—

1 April to 30 June 2016.

1 July to 30 September 2016.

Planning and Development Act, pursuant to subsection 242(2)—Schedule of Leases Granted—1 June to 30 September 2016.

Public Accounts—Standing Committee—Eighth Assembly—Report 33—*Review of Selected Auditor-General's Reports*—Update on action under Recommendation 5.

**Ms Stephen-Smith** presented the following papers:

Official Visitor Act, pursuant to section 17—Annual report 2015-16—Official Visitor (Children and Young People).

Annual Reports (Government Agencies) Act, pursuant to section 13—Annual Report 2015-2016—Long Service Leave Authority, dated 14 September 2016.

**Mr Gentleman** presented the following papers:

Annual Reports (Government Agencies) Act, pursuant to section 13—Annual Reports 2015-2016—

ACT Gambling and Racing Commission, dated 20 September 2016.

Cultural Facilities Corporation, dated 4 October 2016.

Director of Public Prosecutions, dated 6 October 2016.

Justice and Community Safety Directorate, dated 6 October 2016.

Legal Aid Commission (ACT), dated 15 September 2016.

Public Trustee and Guardian, dated 1 August 2016.

Crimes (Assumed Identities) Act, pursuant to subsection 38(4)—Assumed Identities Annual Report 2015-16, dated 29 September 2016.

Civil Law (Wrongs) Act, pursuant to subsection 4.56(3), Schedule 4—Professional Standards Councils—Annual report 2015-16.

ACT Criminal Justice—Statistical Profile 2016—September quarter.

Gaming Machine Act, pursuant to section 168—Community contributions made by gaming machine licensees—Report by the ACT Gambling and Racing Commission—1 July 2015 to 30 June 2016, dated 24 October 2016.

Annual Reports (Government Agencies) Act, pursuant to section 13—Annual Reports 2015-2016—

ACT Human Rights Commission, dated 31 October 2016.

Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment, dated 23 August 2016.

Public Advocate of the ACT.

Victim Support ACT, dated 20 September and 28 November 2016.

Climate Change and Greenhouse Gas Reduction Act, pursuant to subsection 15(3)—Minister's annual report 2015-16.

Office of the National Rail Safety Regulator—Annual report 2015-2016.

**Subordinate legislation (including explanatory statements unless otherwise stated)**

Legislation Act, pursuant to section 64—

Court Procedures Act—Court Procedures Amendment Rules 2016 (No 2)—Subordinate Law SL2016-31 (LR, 3 November 2016).

Freedom of Information Act—Freedom of Information Amendment Regulation 2016 (No 2)—Subordinate Law SL2016-32 (LR, 9 November 2016).

Legislative Assembly (Members' Staff) Act—

Legislative Assembly (Members' Staff) Members' Hiring Arrangements Approval 2016 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2016-275 (LR, 4 November 2016).

Legislative Assembly (Members' Staff) Members' Salary Cap Determination 2016 (No 2)—Disallowable Instrument DI2016-280 (LR, 21 November 2016).

Legislative Assembly (Members' Staff) Office-holders' Hiring Arrangements Approval 2016 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2016-274 (LR, 4 November 2016).

Legislative Assembly (Members' Staff) Variable Terms of Employment of Ministerial Staff Determination 2016 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2016-276 (LR, 4 November 2016).

Legislative Assembly (Members' Staff) Variable Terms of Employment of Office-holders' Staff Determination 2016 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2016-281 (LR, 21 November 2016).

Public Place Names Act—Public Place Names Public Place Names Act—Public Place Names (Gungahlin District) Amendment Determination 2016—Disallowable Instrument DI2016-269 (LR, 27 October 2016).

Road Transport (General) Act—

Road Transport (General) Application of Road Transport Legislation Declaration 2016 (No 10)—Disallowable Instrument DI2016-272 (LR, 3 November 2016).

Road Transport (General) Application of Road Transport Legislation Declaration 2016 (No 11)—Disallowable Instrument DI2016-273 (LR, 3 November 2016).

Road Transport (General) Application of Road Transport Legislation Declaration 2016 (No 12)—Disallowable Instrument DI2016-277 (LR, 16 November 2016).

Road Transport (Safety and Traffic Management) Regulation—Road Transport (Safety and Traffic Management) Parking Authority Declaration 2016 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2016-278 (LR, 17 November 2016).

Road Transport (Third-Party Insurance) Act—

Road Transport (Third-Party Insurance) Early Payment Guidelines 2016 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2016-279 (LR, 17 November 2016).

Road Transport (Third-Party Insurance) UVP Liability Contribution Guideline 2016 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2016-270 (LR, 27 October 2016).

Road Transport (Third-Party Insurance) Regulation—Road Transport (Third-Party Insurance) (Industry Deed) Approval 2016 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2016-271 (LR, 27 October 2016).

## **Committees—Standing Membership**

**MADAM ASSISTANT SPEAKER** (Ms Cody): Madam Speaker has been notified in writing of the following nominations for membership of the general purpose standing committees of the Ninth Assembly:

### **Economic Development and Tourism—Standing Committee**

Mr Hanson  
Ms Orr  
Mr Parton  
Mr Pettersson

### **Education, Employment and Youth Affairs—Standing Committee**

Mrs Kikkert  
Mr Pettersson  
Mr Steel  
Mr Wall

### **Environment and Transport and City Services—Standing Committee**

Ms Cheyne  
Mr Doszpot  
Ms Orr  
Mr Parton

### **Health, Ageing and Community Services—Standing Committee**

Mrs Dunne  
Mrs Kikkert  
Ms Le Couteur  
Mr Pettersson  
Mr Steel

### **Justice and Community Safety—Standing Committee**

Ms Cody  
Mrs Jones  
Ms Lee  
Mr Steel

### **Planning and Urban Renewal—Standing Committee**

Ms Cheyne  
Ms Lawder  
Ms Le Couteur  
Mr Milligan  
Ms Orr

### **Public Accounts—Standing Committee**

Ms Cody  
Mr Coe  
Mrs Dunne  
Mr Pettersson

Motion (by **Mr Gentleman**) agreed to:

That the Members so nominated be appointed as members of the general purpose standing committees of the Ninth Assembly.

## **Inaugural speeches**

**MS LEE** (Kurrajong) (4.04), by leave: Packing up your bags, holding the hands of two young daughters, leaving behind your family and friends to start a new life in a country halfway across the world—that is the journey that my parents took in 1986 when I was seven and my sister Rosa was five; because it is about courage, the courage to reach out beyond what you know for the chance to create something better.

My parents took great care in preparing us for the move to Australia. They decorated our bedroom with wallpaper containing the English alphabet. Each night my sister and I would hold hands and sing the alphabet song finishing off with “Mama good night” and “Papa good night.” We settled into a house with my uncle who is here today who had migrated to Australia many years ago. It was a little fibro place at the back of a main house in Merrylands, western Sydney. Australia was like another world.

My first year at school must have been daunting. But looking back now I do not remember the days of not understanding what the teacher was saying or not being able to communicate with my classmates, although there must have been many moments like these. What I do remember is the kindness of our neighbours, inviting us to celebrate our first summer Christmas by the pool, which was so unfamiliar to us; taking us on fishing trips to Wollongong; lending Rosa a dress for her Holy Communion because mum and dad had not understood the school newsletter.

My parents took some English lessons but because he had a family to feed, my father worked as an excavator in the construction industry very soon after we arrived in Australia. In his job as an excavator it did not matter that dad did not understand what his work colleagues were saying. He could do the job and he could do it well. Leaving behind your family and friends, not knowing the people, language or the culture in your new home, two young daughters to feed, starting a new life in a country where no-one else looks like you: that is the life that my parents started in 1986, because it is about courage, the courage to do what is right, not what is easy.

Madam Assistant Speaker, I was born in Kwang Ju, Korea. My parents chose to leave behind a comfortable life in Korea for a new start in Australia because they wanted better opportunities for us. Australia was where this opportunity lay, a country where everyone has access to health care and education, not just those who could afford it; a country where age, gender, race or sexual orientation are no barrier to achieving your goals if you just give it a go; a country where my youngest sister Sara was born; the country that my family calls home.

I moved to Canberra as an 18 year old and grew to love this great city. Canberra is where I became an ANU law student, a group fitness instructor, a lawyer, an academic. Canberra is where I became a parliamentarian and Canberra is where I became who I

am today because it is about connection, a connection of our heart to our community, our sense of place in this world.

Canberra has a very proud history. Madam Assistant Speaker, I acknowledge the traditional custodians and our Indigenous people who have a connection with our land: the Ngunnawal, the Ngambri, the Ngarigu, the Ngambri-Guumaal people. I acknowledge their elders, past and present, and any Indigenous Australians we have joining us today. I acknowledge your history, your culture, and I thank you for your continuing contribution to Canberra.

Canberra was, is and, I hope, will be a leader in many ways. I am very proud to be part of the first majority female parliament in Australia. But this first is one of many for our parliament. Our first chief minister under self-government was a woman, Rosemary Follett. The first female head of a conservative government in Australia was another woman, a great mentor and friend to me, Kate Carnell. We can also claim the first territory female presiding officer in Roberta McRae, whom I am lucky to count as a former work colleague.

In taking this step here today, I am humbled to be the first Korean-Australian elected member of an Australian parliament and the first Asian Australian elected member of the ACT Legislative Assembly. Being the first of anything, no matter how small, is the hardest step. It is not a role that I sought nor is it a role that drove me, but is a role that I take on with a lot of responsibility and pride.

Our parliament is only as strong as the members in it and the people who vote to give us that privilege. Our parliament should reflect a cross-section of our diverse community. For too long Australian parliaments have lacked the diversity of our society and if I can play any small part in creating a clearer reflection, then I stand ready to do so.

Because it is about connection; a connection of leaders to our community and those they represent. When people look at me, there is little doubt about my ethnic or cultural background. I come from a culture of respect for our elders, a culture of strong family relationships, a culture of tradition, custom and core community values.

But I also come from a culture of values fostered by my parents from when I was young, that we all have a positive contribution to make to our community and we do it in different ways; that we must respect everyone's views because we can never know what their journey was or is; that we take responsibility for our actions and our words because we are privileged to have the freedom to live the kind of life that others fight and die for, and we cannot take this for granted.

These values form an integral part of who I am and will shape the way in which I discharge my responsibilities as an elected representative for the people of Kurrajong and for the people of Canberra. Because it is about culture—a culture of freedom, responsibility and what we can contribute to our community.

I love Canberra. As the heart of our nation, it is fitting that Canberra is “the meeting place”, a city that was chosen to be the capital of Australia over 100 years ago; a

modern city that was planned by the creative minds of Walter Burley and Marion Mahony Griffin; the capital city that I now call home.

From the 21,000 year-old-history as the home of our Indigenous Canberrans to the beloved bush capital that it is today, I am a proud Canberran. Canberra has so much going for it. We have consistently been ranked as one of the most liveable cities in the world. Our socio-economic factors of income, education and access to recreational activities are generally higher than anywhere else in Australia. We educate some of the brightest minds in the world. I do not just say that as a proud ANU graduate or a former academic at ANU and UC. Our access to great natural resources in our parks and lakes is the envy of most and our standard of living is something that we really do not have much to complain about.

When I compare Canberra today to when I first moved here as a first year law student back in 1998, I have personally benefited from how Canberra has thrived in recent times. However, the Canberra that is not being celebrated in any international rankings is the one that seems to have been forgotten.

The rising costs of living, unaffordable housing, the lack of consultation in decisions that impact so many, the excuse that “in Canberra everyone knows everyone” as a justification for decisions that lack transparency; the decisions that seem small to those who make them but are big to those who are affected by them.

The Canberra that I want is a city where we look beyond our bubble of advantage; a city that is a leader not only in Australia but in the world; a cool little capital that punches above its weight; a city where our representatives reflect our community and know that our fundamental democratic system stems from a respect for the rule of law; a city where everyone’s contributions matter; a city where we support each other to be the shapers of our future.

Canberra is too small and too smart for its leaders to play politics for the sake of politics. Canberrans deserve more than leaders who will serve some and not all. Canberra needs leaders who will put above all else their service to the people of our great city. Because it is about conscience—the conscience to know that at the core of our community is humanity.

It is a given that I should and will give my voice to the most vulnerable in our community—our homeless, youth, elderly, people with a disability, victims of domestic abuse—those that our society has a moral duty to ensure we create an equal playing field for.

However, there are many Canberrans—hardworking everyday Canberrans like you and me—whose issues are forgotten because they are fortunate not to fall into these circumstances. Because it is about Mary of O’Connor who is on a pension and is being asked to pay almost 30 per cent of that on rates and worries about whether she can buy milk and eggs or just milk this week; or whether she will leave behind a debt to her children when she passes.



Because it is about Lisa of Narrabundah who wants to know what we can do to tackle the spiralling domestic violence we see every day, the scourge in our society that for too long has been kept hushed behind closed doors. Because it is about Geoff of Hackett who is concerned about the proposed development in Dickson and why the Canberrans who live so close are not consulted and how this will impact on his day-to-day life.

Because it is about Elizabeth of Griffith who worries about the future of her children's education with growing classroom numbers and reports of Australian schools going backward and what she can do to give them the best start in life. Because it is about Gay of Ainslie who stays awake at night wondering how her children will afford to buy their own home, whether their children will get the chance to run through a sprinkler in the backyard on a summer evening or know the joys of being mortgage free.

Madam Assistant Speaker, I do not profess to have the solutions to these concerns. I do, however, make mention of them because these are the concerns of our forgotten Canberrans, the Canberrans whose voices have not been heard in a long time. As Australian poet and politician Adam Lindsay Gordon once said:

Life is mostly froth and bubble,  
Two things stand like stone.  
Kindness in another's trouble,  
Courage in your own.

I may not have all the solutions to the issues facing our forgotten Canberrans but what I do have—what I am privileged to have—are the skills and experiences to give voice to these issues. More importantly, what I have is heart to realise that these issues matter. They matter to Mary, Lisa, Geoff, Elizabeth and Gay and they matter to the thousands of Canberrans like them who work hard and contribute to our great city. Because it is about Canberra.

The life that my parents started in 1986 has led me to where I am today. Going to law school, honing my skills as a lawyer in government, private practice and in academia, joining the Liberal Party and putting myself up for pre-selection, campaigning through three cold Canberra winters, facing heartbreak twice before being elected a member of the Ninth Legislative Assembly. That is the journey that I took and I now stand before you at the start of a new one.

Embarking on this new life is not something that can be done alone. It took the blood, sweat and tears of a lot of people. My ever hard-working campaign team, led by my campaign manager and senior adviser Paddy; you know Canberra better than anyone I know. Your never-ending energy and selfless willingness to give all not only to my campaign but to the entire party is extraordinary. Kacey, my co-campaign manager, has invested more than four years into making this day a reality.

To all the candidates who contested the ACT election but who are not sitting in this chamber today, I know the sacrifices that you have made and how hard you worked.

To all the campaign volunteers for every candidate, whether elected or not, for whichever party, thank you for your countless hours of volunteering, demonstrating that democracy is indeed thriving in Canberra. To everyone who is here today, thank you for sharing this occasion with me.

To my parliamentary office team of Josh, Sue, Dan, David and Anton, I am very fortunate to be able to work with such a great team. I look forward to this term working side by side with you. To every single one of my campaign team—you know who you are—I could not have done this without each and every one of you.

To the Liberal Party members and leaders, past and current, thank you for your belief in me, not once, not twice but three times, to be your public voice. Zed, thank you for introducing me to the party and for giving me a go back in 2012 when I was just a law lecturer with a big dream. Jeremy, thank you for being a strong leader and a great friend to me during this campaign. Alistair and Nicole, I am excited about this term and I look forward to working under your leadership.

To the Canberra Korean community led by its President Paul Park; the Canberra Korean elders, as I like to call them, Keith and Yvonne Lee, CJ Kim and DW Lee; to the Yang and Seol families; to the older sister I never had, Jamie; to the Korean friends of the Liberal Party who were behind me all the way; to their Excellencies, the Korean Ambassadors to Australia that I have had the great pleasure of getting to know: Ambassadors Hwang, Kim and Woo, thank you for your moral support and for everything you do for the strengthening of the relationship between Korea and Australia.

As a proud daughter of the Korean community, I am privileged to be able to be your first elected member of an Australian parliament. I will do my best to make you proud. My Uncle David, who is here today, and Aunt Kim, even before I knew I wanted to be a parliamentarian, have been my number-one supporters. Thank you for your leadership in migrating to Australia to give my father a chance to live the life that we lead now. Nathan, you challenge my assumptions, my certainties and my beliefs in ways that I know make me a better person. Thank you for your support, patience and love.

My sister Rosa, as the middle child, my dad nicknamed “the bridge”. Thank you for being the bridge that connects our family. Thank you for being the bridge that connects my sense of responsibility with my wildly idealistic ambitions. Sara, even though she is the youngest, is the strongest and toughest young woman I know. You show maturity beyond your years and I am in awe at how much I learn from you every day.

To my parents, my wonderful amazing parents, John and Cecilia, you sacrificed everything to give me the opportunity to stand here today. You went without necessities so that my sisters and I could have luxuries. Dad, you are still the most optimistic person I know. Your belief in me has never faltered and your dreams for me are bigger than my own. Mum, you are one of the most courageous women I know, taking a blind leap time and time again without question to support me in every path I have chosen in my life.

*Ms Lee then spoke in Korean.*

*Translation: Mum, dad, thank you for sacrificing everything for us. The best way we can repay you is to succeed. Dad, we did it. The time has arrived.*

To my parliamentary colleagues, congratulations on your election and re-election. Red, blue, green or whatever colour you associate with, I look forward to working with each and every one of you for the people of Canberra. This is only the beginning and I stand ready to serve because, Madam Assistant Speaker, it is about Canberra, our Canberra. Thank you.

## **Visitor**

**MADAM ASSISTANT SPEAKER** (Ms Lee): I would like to take a moment to recognise Senator Kim Carr, who has joined us in the gallery today, senator for Victoria.

## **Inaugural speeches**

**MS STEPHEN-SMITH** (Kurrajong—Minister for Community Services and Social Inclusion, Minister for Disability, Children and Youth, Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs, Minister for Multicultural Affairs and Minister for Workplace Safety and Industrial Relations) (4.23), by leave: Thank you Madam Assistant Speaker, and congratulations on your speech. It is an honour to rise in this place as a member for Kurrajong and a minister in the Barr Labor government. I acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land we meet on today, the Ngunnawal people, and pay my respects to their elders, past and present. I understand how privileged we are to leave our footprints on their land, our beautiful city, this national meeting place, Canberra. I also wish to recognise the continuing contribution the first people make to the life and culture of our city and region and their ongoing quest for justice and equality.

Madam Assistant Speaker, I have read a few inaugural speeches in preparing for this one and the one thing they have in common is a lot of thankyou. Mine will be no different. My first thankyou goes to the people of Kurrajong who elected me to represent them in this place. I am proud to live in and to represent the heart of Canberra and I will always listen to the people of my electorate. Indeed, I am keen to ensure that we find new ways for their voices to be heard on the range of issues that affect our community.

As I settle into this place, I am grateful for the support of my fellow ministers and MLAs, my staff and theirs and the Office of the Legislative Assembly. Of course I owe a huge debt of gratitude to my campaign team: Ruth, Mel, Jen, Richard, Jonny and Zach as well as Anthony, Tina and Jon who started out with us on this adventure but whose lives took them in another direction during the year.

To the more than 100 volunteers who worked on my campaign, some of whom are here today—letterboxing, knocking on doors, making phone calls, organising events,

and handing out on election day and during pre-poll—we could not have done it without you. I cannot name you all today. The list is far too long but that does not diminish the depth of my appreciation.

To the ACT Labor executive staff and wider membership, they deserve the thanks of all Labor MLAs and candidates. Led by Matt Byrne, the office ran an incredible campaign and provided moral as well as practical support to 25 Assembly candidates, campaign managers and their teams and somewhere in there they also supported a long federal campaign. Thank you to Matt, Megan, Sage, Sandra and Laura. And thank you to the ministers in the previous government and their staff who patiently answered my questions and responded to issues raised by electors.

Finally, on the campaign front, thank you to the unions who supported my campaign and that of the Labor Party. I would particularly like to acknowledge Lyndal Ryan of United Voice, Dean Hall from the CFMEU and Klaus Pinkas at the TWU as well as their officials, staff and delegates.

Moving away from the campaign I also have some personal and professional thank-yous. Some of my family and friends are here today and I will be thanking them later for their support over the past year.

But I want to take a moment now to thank the strong women who have come before me, who have motivated me, who have inspired me, who have reassured me and who have been there for me when I needed it. To senator and former Chief Minister Katy Gallagher who gets the credit/blame for my putting up my hand in the first place and has since become an important mentor; senators Claire Moore, Penny Wong and former senator Anne McEwen; to the other women in federal parliament and my fellow Labor staffers who supported and encouraged me—thank you all. I am so pleased that Senator Claire Moore is here today. I have learned a lot from her and am proud to count her as a friend. I would also like to thank Emily's List, particularly Carol Kee and Eleanor Bates; my EL mentor, Kirsten Livermore, who stepped in just when I needed it; and also Chloe Shorten for her support.

Madam Assistant Speaker, that brings me to my former employer, Senator Kim Carr, and his office. It is such an honour for me that Kim is here in the gallery. When I first told Kim I was thinking about running for pre-selection, I could see he was worried, not worried that he would lose me—as he always says, the graveyard is full of indispensable people—but worried that I might not win and that I would be hurt in the process. One of Kim's finest attributes is that he genuinely cares about his staff, and he backed me all the way, as did my friends in his office. To Emily, Chris, Thomas, Ellie, Ray and John, and also Fiona and Gia, thank you for your support and your faith in me.

I am glad Kim is here, not just to thank him for his personal support but also to acknowledge how much I have learned from him. As I am going about the business of setting up my own office, I recall a lot of lessons from our transition to government in 2007 when I was his chief of staff. I find myself experiencing many of the same frustrations as you did, Kim—through you, Madam Assistant Speaker—and I remember with some chagrin how unsympathetic I was at the time.

I think of myself as a social policy person. I always have. But the reality is that for the past 10 years my career has mainly been in innovation, industry, science and research policy. I recall in 2006 when Kim's beloved portfolio was returned to him in opposition how I tried to move with the housing and urban development portfolio I had become engrossed in. That did not work out and I stayed with Kim who reassured me, "Rachel, industry policy is social policy," for what can be more important to a person, apart from their family, than having a job, the dignity of work, the capacity to support one's self and one's family, a source of identity? A decent job offers all these things. The longer I worked in the portfolio, the more I came to see that this was true. It is why the labour movement fights to secure local jobs and jobs for the future underpinned by science and technology.

As anyone who followed my campaign would know, I grew up in O'Connor, walking and riding my bike to local public schools: O'Connor cooperative, Turner primary, Lyneham high, and Dickson College. I had an excellent public education and I believe that every child deserves the same opportunity I had.

But I was also conscious that I started life with some advantages that my classmates—not all my classmates shared. My parents were academics who had moved from the UK for better opportunities here. We were materially quite well off. Although we were pretty much the last household of my acquaintance to get colour television, that was not because we could not afford it. My parents just did not see the point.

But, more importantly, we were educationally advantaged. I am the fourth generation woman in my family to go to university. My great-grandmother studied medicine in order to become a psychoanalyst. Her daughter, my grandmother, was a doctor. On the other side of the family, my dad's mum also had a degree. It was just assumed and expected that my brother, stepsister and I would go to university. But we were raised to understand that good fortune brought with it responsibility, a kind of intellectual noblesse oblige. It was assumed we would use our university education to do something good for the world, not just to enrich ourselves.

This expectation was, if anything, reinforced by my understanding that one of my grandparents, my paternal grandfather, had quite a different story. Grandpa Ben was born in 1905 in Hackney, London. His earliest years are somewhat shrouded in mystery but we know he had an older sister, Lily, with whom he remained close throughout their whole lives. They appear to have been raised by their mother, Mary, without much help from their father, who appears in records variously as William or John.

When Ben was almost 10 years old, his mother became ill with TB and he was removed to a children's home, while Lilian was taken in by a neighbour. After his mother's death, Ben spent some years in a children's home before being discharged into service at age 14. At 16, Ben returned to Hackney to make his own way in the world. He took whatever work he could, but he often went hungry. It was becoming involved with the Communist Party and the broader socialist and labour movements that encouraged and enabled Ben to educate himself as well as to become an accomplished chess player.

Ben found work in a bank and became active in the union that represented its workers, most of whose members were actually employed in factories. As Ben became known and active in the union movement, he consistently sought out opportunities to be with the real workers, apparently even welcoming a call-up to work in the coal mines during the war. So it was something of an irony when he was appointed General Secretary of the Association of Scientific Workers, a union that represented almost exclusively university graduates, many of them with PhDs. My other grandfather was, in fact, a member of this union, and just recently my mum told me how much he had admired Grandpa Ben's leadership of the organisation and everything he had achieved for its members.

Shortly after the war Grandpa Ben joined the British Labour Party, and he remained active in it all his life. In 1976 he was awarded an Order of the British Empire, which he accepted on the grounds that he was the only one in his family without letters after his name, his three sons all having gone to university. This is a story I have known bits of since I was a child but which only recently has been recorded by my Uncle Chris, and I thank him for sending me this background.

There is no doubt my grandfather was an impressive man but his story is, in many ways, not so unusual. I tell it here as one example of the power of the labour movement to lift people up, to empower them, to inspire them and to enable them to reach for something more.

I am Labor because I believe in the power of solidarity, of standing together to change things for the better. I am Labor because I believe that the most valuable thing any person can offer other than love is their time. Time devoted to labour, building, making, or delivering a service, should be respected and fairly compensated and, of course, no worker's safety should be sacrificed for profit. I am Labor because I know that not everyone is as fortunate as I am but I believe everyone, no matter what their background, should have the opportunity to be the best they can be.

I am Labor because I know that strong public services, particularly education and health—what we used to call the social wage—are our best guarantee of universal access, and universal access is our best guarantee of equitable service provision, because everyone has a stake. As it turns out, universal public health systems are also more efficient and effective than the private sector—so go figure. I am Labor because I believe that everyone has the right to participate, to engage and to be respected in their community. One of my goals in this place is to do what I can to see Canberra become the most welcoming, inclusive, and accessible city for people with disabilities that it possibly can be.

I am Labor because I believe in government as a force for good; to quote a famous line from the *West Wing*, “A place where people come together, and where no-one gets left behind.” I am here in part because of my work with one of the poorest communities in Washington DC, a capital city divided by inequality. I came home because Canberra is home but also because I wanted to make a difference, and I felt I had more chance of doing that here. Those generations of African-American women who have been fighting for their community for decades taught me the power of belonging to a place.

I am here because I believe in equality and human rights. I joined the Labor Party in 2001, just after the Tampa election, when I was working at the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet on immigration policy. I did my job professionally and served the government of the day but, frankly, I was appalled by the idea that a government would use desperate people as a wedge to divide our community.

Governments, in my view, have a responsibility to the people they serve to promote harmony, not division; understanding, not fear; compassion, not blame. Governments and oppositions that seek to divide us for political gain—rich versus poor, home owners versus renters; new arrivals versus long-term citizens—do themselves no credit and our community no favours.

Finally, Madam Assistant Speaker, I am Labor because Labor is the party of the future; the party of progress and big ideas. In my own electorate, massive urban renewal is taking place. This is a once-in-a-generation opportunity. We have one chance to get it right. We must listen to the people we serve and we must seek out the voices of those who are otherwise unlikely to be heard. We must respect and preserve our heritage, we must pursue excellence in urban design and we must require developers to deliver high quality spaces where people want to spend time. It became something of a catchcry of mine during the campaign but I truly do believe that vibrant, sustainable, inclusive cities do not just happen. They are built by governments with a vision for a better future.

As I draw to a close, there is someone I must acknowledge, someone who should be here but is not. It is just over a year since my partner, Michael, took his own life. He was 44 years old, a highly intelligent person, who had lived through fascinating times and had big plans for the future.

I met Michael in Washington, and he moved with me to Canberra in 2014, but he struggled to find work. It was hard, not being a citizen, being someone with specialised expertise, and arriving at the tail end of a big federal government job cut where lots of people were looking for work.

In May 2015 Michael moved back to DC to what he thought would be a better job market, but by October he had been without a secure job for almost a year. He was doing contract work but he was conscious of the fact that without a permanent job he had no security, and in the US he had no health insurance. By his own choice, he was socially isolated; he had few friends in DC and no-one he could really confide in.

Then something happened that stripped him of hope and pushed him over the edge. Until that moment I was one of the fortunate people to whom nothing really bad had ever happened. Last November changed that, and it changed me—not in a big way, but in many small ways, one of which is that I cry even more easily than I used to.

Most importantly, the last year has given me an entirely new appreciation of what love and friendship really mean and what a powerful difference they make in the world. It has made me realise that my real good fortune is not in wealth or education or even intelligence or talent of any kind. My real good fortune lies in having grown

up in a safe, secure and loving home. It is having a family who will be there for me when things go horribly wrong, who will love me and be proud of me no matter what.

I would not be standing here today without the support of my family and friends. My father, Ben, who is here today, in particular has been a rock for my family in a very difficult time. I thank all of my family—Ben; my mum, Liz; my stepmother, Jane; my brother, Peat; and my stepsister, Eleanor; as well as Peat's and Elle's families—for the emotional and practical support they have given me throughout the campaign and over the last year. I thank my friends, including those who are here today. Words cannot express just how much your friendship and support have meant to me and continue to mean.

It is a devastating reality that too many children in our community do not have a safe, secure and loving home. Too many individuals, parents and families do not have anyone to call on when the going gets tough. I genuinely believe, as the old saying goes, that a society can be measured by how it supports its most vulnerable citizens. I am truly humbled to have a portfolio that embodies our collective responsibility to ensure every child has the chance to thrive and every person has the opportunity to engage in our community.

Madam Assistant Speaker, I wish every day that Michael was still here with us in this world. I have no doubt that if he were here today there would be plenty of gratuitous advice coming my way about what I did and did not say and the manner in which I said it. But I also know he would be proud of me. He so wanted me to give this politics thing a go, and I can assure you, Madam Assistant Speaker, I intend to give it my very best shot.

## **Visitor**

**MADAM ASSISTANT SPEAKER** (Ms Lee): Before we proceed, the Assembly acknowledges the presence of Senator Claire Moore, who is present with us today.

## **Inaugural speeches**

**MS CODY** (Murrumbidgee) (4.43), by leave: Today we meet on Aboriginal land. I acknowledge the traditional custodians, the Ngunnawal people. I pay my respects to elders past, present and emerging, and those here today. I know we are not finished with reconciliation, but I believe we will live to see a treaty.

I would like to congratulate all members of the new Assembly on their election, and thank my Labor colleagues for the opportunity to share government with them. I want to talk about me, but first I would like to talk about everyone else, because they are why I am here.

Being an elected representative for such an incredible community is a privilege, one which I could not have achieved on my own. For every member and candidate there is a group of supporters, believers. Without them, no politician could succeed. I would like to acknowledge not just the work of my supporters, but all those who gave up



their time, money and energy on all campaigns. Our supporters give us the opportunity to lead, but our detractors give us the inspiration to fight.

Whilst it would be impossible to acknowledge all my supporters right now, and naming my detractors would be bad form, there are some people I must thank. There is my family. My sons, Nathan and Mark: you are young men now, and I am prouder of you than anything I could possibly achieve in politics. There is my husband, Bruce. Thank you. Your help on the campaign trail, and at home, makes me a stronger person.

There are my mum and dad. I am sure there were many times you did not think I would make it to adulthood. Well, here I am. Sometimes it seems that my dad and I argue about everything. But that does not matter. What matters is that he was always there for me. He was there for me when I left school early to start my hairdressing apprenticeship. He has always stood with me on every decision I have made, even when he vehemently disagreed with it. My mum taught me the resilience to accept life's challenges and use them as fuel to achieve what I set out to do. I am so proud my mum was nominated as school leader of the year for 2016. Her tireless work over a quarter of a century to support children who have often been forgotten or need a little extra guidance is a lesson we should all learn. If our education system provides only a path for the smart kids or the kids from privileged backgrounds to succeed, it has failed. When the naughty kids, the uninterested kids and the poor kids are succeeding, that is when we have got our schools right.

I would also like to thank my sisters. I have one sister, Jerri, but there are so many more who have travelled the journey with me. I could name you, but I am sure that you know who you are and would prefer your anonymity.

To my campaign team—Daniel Gerrard, Dean Hall, Zach Smith, Toni Grant, Poppa, Peter, Gaargi, Brendan, Ian, Ann, Shane and every Labor supporter in Murrumbidgee—I hope I live up to your expectations. To the CFMEU, the TWU and all the union officials who worked so hard to put me here: you are the glue that holds our society together. Every day, Australians expect to go home with all their fingers, all their toes, and a fair day's wage. Without your work they would be robbed of their pay packets, and sometimes their lives. You keep workplaces fair, and I pledge to always defend you, promote your goals, and strive to deliver for your members.

When my journey to this place began I never realised how often I would be asked to tell my story. I have never felt that my story is more special than other people's. I have been called ordinary, and I wear it as a badge of honour.

In places like this, dominated by those whose schooling continued into undergraduate and often postgraduate study, the lives of people like me, who enter the workforce young, seem foreign. That lack of understanding often sounds like disrespect or arrogance, and sometimes it is. I believe in respecting people for who they are, not for the content of their bank accounts or the letters after their name.

I was brought to this great city as an infant over 40 years ago when my dad joined the ACT fire brigade. He was a proud firefighter for many years, and has remained a supporter to this day. ACT Fire & Rescue are at the forefront of protecting our

community. Every member of this Assembly has a duty to protect the protectors, be they fire, rescue or our other first responders.

I have always been a very active person. I remember my mum driving me from one sport to the next, getting changed in and out of uniforms in the back seat. Growing up in Kambah, I was the only girl who played soccer for Tuggeranong United FC. I played ice hockey at Phillip, in both the women's and the men's teams. I have found a new passion, competing in triathlons with the Vikings Triathlon Club. This club is not just about sport; it is an inclusive, supportive group, the sort of group that makes our community stronger.

I know that sport is not just about fun or for physical health. The payback comes in the form of improved mental health, a harmonious society, and respect for self and others. Canberra has some amazing local parks and sporting facilities. Murrumbidgee has some of the best, parks like the adventure playground in Kambah, enjoyed by families every day. When we decide on the budget for park maintenance, when we discuss city services, we are not just deciding on a bureaucratic instrument. No. In providing places for sport like the Stromlo Forest Park, in making them accessible and in maintaining them to a high standard, we are deciding on the health of our citizens and our community.

I grew up in this city. I grew up in my electorate. I rode horses through what was bushland in south Canberra. There was no Lake Tuggeranong. Wanniasa was the last suburb in the Tuggeranong valley. Gleneagles was where I kept my horses. I loved the bush. I loved the horses and the sense of community we had then.

My sons are now entering adulthood, and I know this is a very different Canberra from the one I grew up in. Canberra is a planned city, a city planned to be egalitarian. By maintaining and improving our green spaces, we continue the socialist vision of King O'Malley. Canberra was planned with every suburb including public housing, a place without slums or inclusive enclaves for the rich. Equality was set into the foundations of our city. As an advocate for the families of our new suburbs in the Molonglo Valley, I am listening closely to their concerns. I will be fighting hard to ensure they get the same opportunities as the families of Yarralumla and Gungahlin.

Some people campaigned against Canberra continuing to grow, as if, with federal control of immigration, an ACT government could shrink us into the country town of the past. We cannot rewind the clock and be a country town, but we can, and we will, be a great city. We have international flights, fantastic restaurants, and a wonderful multicultural community. Canberra, at the start of its second century, has grown from a town into a vibrant city, and it is time for infrastructure to catch up. We live in low-density suburbs built for cars. Our future has higher density and a light rail network stretching from the far north to the far south. It is going to take years to build, and I congratulate the visionaries who got this project underway.

This city was built by people who work with their hands. They keep the power on, the food prepared, the hair cut, the roads paved, the garbage collected and the dogs walked. It is them, not us, who make the modern world possible. The Labor Party was founded on the idea of shaping this nation into a workers' paradise. I intend to use

every opportunity I get in this place to deliver that for the people of Murrumbidgee and Canberra.

As an apprentice, as a hairdresser and then as a small business owner, I saw a lot of how our modern economy works. From across the lake, we often hear the nasty nonsense that workers' rights must be crushed to defend small business. On behalf of every small business that has ever tried to operate in a shopping mall, let me say that that is bull. The mall takes all the profit, and the small business gets all the risk. Like a worker given the options of taking a job that will destroy her health or feeding the kids, small business people are often caught between being a bad boss and going broke. Government must be a force for good, preventing the exploitation of the contractor and the small business owner as well as the employee. There is still work to be done here.

As a city, we also need to develop new sources of jobs. The federal government is turning out to be a bad boss for many. Enterprise agreements are being stripped of conditions, job security is being undermined and workers are finding themselves bullied and abused. Developing new industries with dependable jobs will buffer against the federal Liberal government sending our local economy into recession. As Canberra's leaders, we must stand up against those who would wreck our city and our community.

It is a great privilege to stand here today as one of the women whose election has made this Australia's first female-dominated parliament. I have never been sure if I am a good feminist. I may even be a bad feminist. I am torn between equality and liberation. There needs to be space in the conversation for a diversity of choice and valuing the critical social and economic roles women play. Some women choose to be executives. Some choose trade qualifications. Others choose to stay home and raise children, or choose lives of academia, adventure or art. But too many are robbed of that choice. Our grandmothers and our grandmothers' mothers fought hard to ensure that the women of today had choice. My choice was to leave school early and do an apprenticeship, and now to be a leader.

We should pause and use our privilege to reflect. We here have high incomes, we have staff and allowances, and we have the opportunities to be leaders. Being leaders gives us the chance to give guidance. Today in the ACT, there are young women not suited to school wanting to take on an apprenticeship. These women should be given the same opportunities as women who choose universities and bureaucratic careers. The women and men who go to university are not better people than those who choose an apprenticeship, but we are a worse community if we do not provide the opportunity for everyone to shine.

As we move into the next generation of feminism, we should celebrate the successes of the past, but also acknowledge our failures. The women of the one per cent have been liberated; now we need to liberate the rest.

Last month we heard Emma Husar give a moving speech about how her life was affected by domestic and family violence. For many women, this story is far too familiar. As at 8 December this year, there have been 70—that is 70—known deaths

from domestic and family violence in Australia alone. One in three women experience domestic violence. One in four children are exposed to it. Hearing the statistics in the media numbs many to the reality, but if we take a moment to look around us, there are women in this chamber right now who are experiencing or have experienced this brutality.

I have seen many extraordinary, courageous women tell their stories of their journey through domestic violence. I will not do the same. I am not a hero, and I know most survivors of domestic violence are not extraordinary. Our problem with domestic violence is not that it is extraordinary; our problem with domestic violence is that it is normal. It is normal men killing normal women, normal men terrorising normal women. It starts with normal men controlling normal women. I know. I was there. I do not want to be extraordinary. I want a new normal, and you are going to help me.

**MR STEEL** (Murrumbidgee) (5.00), by leave: I am incredibly proud to stand here as a member for Murrumbidgee. I would like to acknowledge the Ngunnawal people and their enduring connection with the land on which we meet today and that of my electorate, and pay my respects to their elders past and present.

I would also like to thank the people of Woden valley, Weston Creek, Kambah and Molonglo valley for putting their trust in me and the Australian Labor Party in government at the October 2016 election. It is an honour to represent the area that I grew up in, in the most livable city in the world.

I left the steel town of Newcastle during the late eighties, following my dad, a science teacher, moving around small towns in New South Wales, before we arrived in Queanbeyan and then very quickly moved across the border to the suburb of Torrens, here in Canberra. I spent my childhood playing on and running around Mount Taylor, and I met my lifelong friends at the local playgroup, Torrens preschool and primary school and Melrose High School.

The Steels always discussed politics and policy at the dinner table. While no-one was a party member, my parents were active union members, and my grandfather was assistant secretary of the Federated Iron Workers Union, which is now known as the Australian Workers Union. So it made sense to me to go on to study politics at Narrabundah College and then at the ANU, where I studied politics and law. In the year that John Howard introduced Work Choices, I joined the Labor Party to help to develop progressive policy for our city.

My parents instilled in me a sense of fairness and to value learning, education, knowledge and ideas. These values have carried through my work in the union movement, in government and in the community sector. And in this Assembly I will be a progressive voice for the south side.

As an almost lifelong Canberran I have seen our city change, and, particularly in the past five years, change for the better. Canberra has come into its own, with international flights, delivering cancer surgeries here and not in Sydney, making Canberra's energy 100 per cent renewable, and the urban renewal that is starting to take place in our city streets. That change has not happened by accident; it is because

of the work of a Labor government with a vision for Canberra's future. I fundamentally believe in the role of government in building our city, in partnership with business, civil society and the community.

If Canberra is the most livable city in the world then the south side is the most livable part of the most livable city in the world. Whilst I have seen the significant improvements to our city over the past five years, I can also see how much improvement there is still to make, particularly on the south side. We face significant challenges, with an ageing population, ageing infrastructure in our established suburbs and the challenges that come with population growth in our new suburbs. I will be focusing on how we support people in Canberra to age successfully, through improvements to health care and transport. And I will be supporting urban renewal in our existing suburbs and new infrastructure for our growing suburbs.

The overall theme from the election was that Canberra is growing. All the major policy debates were about managing growth: the demands on our health and hospital system, the congestion on our roads, planning and land development. In my electorate there are now 4,000 people living in Wright and Coombs. The first residents will move into Denman Prospect in January and there will be up to 50,000 people living there in the next two decades. This growth brings significant challenges but also new opportunities for our city.

These challenges mean that our city must continue to change. We cannot look back. The Prime Minister is a big fan of this quote from Giuseppe Tomasi di Lampedusa's *The Leopard*:

If we want things to stay as they are, things will have to change.

I say that if we want Canberra to remain livable then we have to change, and governments have to step up to meet the challenge with long-term reform.

If we do not want to live in a city that is congested then we need to deliver genuine public transport alternatives like light rail. Governments are often criticised for not thinking beyond the next election, and not planning ahead and putting in place long-term policies to address long-term challenges. There could not have been a greater symbol of this forward-looking, confident, progressive government than our policy to deliver light rail. It is vital infrastructure for our growing city and I am proud that Labor committed during the campaign to bring light rail from the city to Woden in my home electorate. It is a crucial link to be able to develop future stages of light rail, including to Tuggeranong.

It will also be the catalyst for urban renewal in Woden town centre. The urban uplift and renewal benefits from light rail are proven. This is an opportunity to see more people living in Woden town centre, close to public transport and services, and providing demand for thriving businesses which benefit the whole community. More people living in our existing town centres is an opportunity for quality design and development to take place, and to keep the open spaces in our suburbs that make Canberra such a great place to live.

As a proud resident of Kambah I know that it is the hidden secret of Canberra, but it is in need of urban renewal. I am proud that after the campaign that I ran during the election Labor will deliver a \$2.3 million to upgrade Kambah village. This project, combined with private upgrades to the supermarket building, will significantly enhance this important community space and deliver on the Kambah village master plan. I want to assure Kambah residents that getting Kambah village upgraded is a priority for me.

I believe that Labor is best placed to manage our city's challenges, harness the opportunities and ensure that the most vulnerable and disadvantaged are included and not left behind by growth. I will be working in my new role to help drive Labor's social policy agenda, including in education. There could not be a more important opportunity for Canberra's future than education. We are a city that is built on the strength of our human capital—in our universities, our government departments, our businesses and community organisations. Advancing our human capital agenda here takes preparation and planning. Over the past decade I have worked as an advocate in the community sector and in government with a focus on improving access to a quality education for all children.

I am looking forward to contributing to improving our education system here in the ACT and to grow our human capital here. But for us as Labor members, education plays a far more important role than just economics. It is one of Piketty's "decisive forces" in building equality, giving people the opportunity to get ahead regardless of their background. We need to ensure that every child gets access to a quality education right through to university and TAFE. We know from research that the education gap—the visible emergence of inequality—actually starts to open at age three, before children even enter the classroom for the first time. Research shows that children in disadvantaged families hear 30 million fewer words, on average, and have less than half the vocabulary of upper income peers by age three. It is no wonder that these children reach school behind, and, by then, it is much harder to catch up.

For this reason early intervention is so important across so many areas, whether it is child protection, juvenile justice, disability and inclusion, and particularly in education. There could not be a more important task for any incoming member of the Assembly than ensuring that more young children have access to quality early learning in the home and in early childhood services. We know that children who attend early childhood education have amplified cognitive skills, and that vulnerable children benefit the most. Studies from the UK show that children who access a quality early childhood program for two to three years have much higher results in literacy and numeracy at the end of high school.

Early childhood education is at least as decisive in shaping a student's results at the end of high school as the whole of primary school. Yet in this country and in this territory we only provide universal access to one year of preschool education, with the exception of our fantastic Koori preschool program. It is of great concern to me that not all children are involved in quality early learning experiences younger than four years of age. Vulnerable children benefit the most from accessing quality early childhood education because they often do not have exposure to rich learning

experiences in the home. That is why I will continue to advocate to ensure that we improve access to quality preschool education from age three and earlier for vulnerable children, in line with other developed countries.

Improving access to quality early learning for all children is the most effective and efficient way for government to improve educational outcomes in later schooling. If we can improve access to quality early learning this will not only amplify children's development but also boost economic growth and reduce costly investment in later interventions in the health and welfare systems in the long term. It is critical for our future prosperity.

If we are going to harness the benefits of education for Canberra's future prosperity then we also need to ensure that every child gets the support they need when they transition to school. Canberra schools, both non-government and government, are great schools. But in our changing world there is more to do to ensure that our schools give students the best opportunities.

We have seen for some time in international testing, including in the last few weeks, that Australia's performance has been declining. The number of low performing students is increasing and the number of high performing students is decreasing in all states and territories, including the ACT. This continues to demonstrate the need for education reform. A priority must be supporting teachers to improve their skills and performance.

We also need to provide physical resources and build quality learning environments and infrastructure at our public schools, and ensuring that we have the best education management systems as well. Fundamentally, we know that we cannot harness the benefits of our education system without addressing the funding system that drives it. We know that because the Chairman of the ASX, Mr David Gonski, recommended in his review of school funding that reform was required to ensure our schools were funded based on need. This is a critical component of the work that we need to do to move students from the low performance group to the middle, and from the middle to the high performance group. I will be an advocate to make sure that students and teachers get the support they need.

It is an honour to serve amongst the existing Labor members in this place who, for such a long time, have been leading change in this country on so many issues. It is a particular honour to serve with the Chief Minister, Mr Andrew Barr, who has led reform both within my party and in the Assembly enacting marriage equality. Mr Barr was the first openly gay member of this place. I believe that I am only the second openly gay member of the Legislative Assembly. The fact that this is such a mundane achievement is because of the path that has been hard won by Mr Barr. He has made it easier for those who come after him and their families, and for that I thank him.

Of course, marriage equality will still be an important milestone for inclusion in the ACT if it is achieved again through a vote of the commonwealth parliament. But here in the ACT there is more work to do to tackle discrimination and to foster inclusion in the community. I am keen to be a champion of inclusion in the ACT.

I also want to mention former Deputy Chief Minister Simon Corbell, who I have notionally replaced in this chamber on his retirement at the election. Simon for so many years has been a giant of this place. As a new member in the Assembly, I feel the absolute responsibility of carrying on his leadership and legacy in relation to climate change and the environment. We must take responsible steps to manage climate change and the environment. Labor has led the nation in our approach to delivering 100 per cent renewable energy, and I look forward to continuing Simon's work and Labor's progressive approach on this profoundly important issue.

People here know that running for election is not an easy task. It is a long and tiring pursuit, and it cannot be done without the support of friends and family. It is now over two years ago that I took a run around Lake Burley Griffin with my brother Kurt—the famous bridge to bridge run. We slowed down as we reached the end at Federation Mall, talking about the upcoming preselection. I knew that in this seat of Murrumbidgee there were potentially over 10 people running for preselection, including Mr Corbell. It looked like an impossible task, and I was sceptical of my chances.

In his matter-of-fact way, Kurt looked at me seriously and said, “No, you go for it and you'll win.” It was the last time I saw Kurt before he left for South America, never to come back. But his determined advice was there throughout the next two years, at every hurdle, at every door. It was perhaps the best gift of advice that I could have been given, and, coming from Kurt, you knew it had authority. Today he is no doubt having a drink at the upstairs bar with my grandfather, Ted, with some satisfaction.

While Kurt was perhaps my first campaign manager, I could not have hoped to have had a better campaign team with me after him. Almost every weekend since January my campaign team doorknocked and called, doorknocked and called. They engaged with the community with me, genuinely and thoughtfully, and brought an enthusiasm that was unmatched by any campaign team.

I would like to thank my campaign manager, James Koval, and my core team: Tom McKernan, Monique Blasiak, Ethan Moody, Daniel Langton, Joshua Evans, Rosie McCrossin, Jacques Coia, Lorenzo McMiken, Desmond Ko, Aimee Kable, Jody Law, Bryce Logan, Daniel Hughes, my sister Yasmin Steel and my parents, Jayne Steel and Philip Steel.

I would also like to thank Peter Wagner, Lois and Sandi Logan, Ben Maxfield, Tim Watts, Vicky Darling, Sean Hill, Jen Light, Gai Brodtmann MP, the Hon Kate Ellis MP, Labor Secretary, Matt Byrne, Megan Lane and all other campaign volunteers, the centre coalition and branch members.

My last but most heartfelt thanks goes to my partner, Kurtis Osborne, who did not choose this life but who has been supportive throughout and has fed an army in the process.

I would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate all new and returning members of this place, and particularly the Labor caucus. I am looking forward to getting to work with you on delivering Labor's vision for our city. Thank you.



## **Schools for all**

### **Ministerial statement**

**MS BERRY** (Ginninderra—Deputy Chief Minister, Minister for Education and Early Childhood Development, Minister for Housing and Suburban Development, Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence, Minister for Women and Minister for Sport and Recreation) (5.17): Today I am happy to share with members progress being made to implement the recommendations of the expert panel on students with complex needs and challenging behaviour. As members are aware, the expert panel handed down a report on 23 November 2015. The report included 50 recommendations, all of which were accepted by the ACT government. The schools for all implementation program was formed to respond to the recommendations.

As Minister for Education and Early Childhood Development, I was pleased to recently receive the third quarter reports of the schools for all program endorsed by the independent oversight group. The third quarter report builds on the significant effort that has been made this year to understand deeply the intent and purpose of the expert panel report. The reports provide evidence that momentum is building across the ACT education system, with progress being made towards the student-centred and inclusive vision of the expert panel that every school in Canberra is able to cater to the diverse needs of each student in their local community. There is continued evidence of a shared commitment across public, Catholic and independent schools to ensure that our young people feel connected and respected, achieve success and are fully engaged in education.

All three school sectors have continued to collaborate by sharing resources and encouraging a thorough examination of the recommendations to achieve the best possible outcomes. At the end of September 2016 the Education Directorate had closed 15 recommendations of the 50; Catholic education has closed seven recommendations of the 26 that were directed to them in the report; the remainder of the recommendations are on track to be closed in a timely manner.

There is also a focus that goes beyond the recommendations. The education sector has shown a three-year commitment to achieving sustainable change to ensure that every school will be able to cater for the needs of every child in their community. As members would be aware, Labor committed to commission a future of education discussion paper to make Canberra's education system even better. The paper will outline how education will be delivered to meet the needs of the next generation of ACT students. The actions arising from the recommendations of the expert panel through the schools for all program will be one source to inform this important strategic direction-setting process.

Sustainable reform is important, and to that end, many activities are building on existing initiatives and being embedded within existing frameworks and practice. Over the reporting period, there has been a focus on wellbeing, professional learning and capacity building, parental engagement, student voice, and developing safe sensory learning environments.

Independent, Catholic, and public schools across Canberra have embraced KidsMatter and MindMatters as programs to support student wellbeing. These evidence-based mental health initiatives support students in primary and secondary schools. ACT has the highest uptake of KidsMatter and MindMatters in Australia.

In public schools, four additional senior psychologists and four additional social workers with case management capabilities have been recruited to strengthen the response to families and students through the networked student engagement teams. In addition, speech pathologists, occupational therapists and physiotherapists have been held to support students with learning difficulties and delays, respond to needs within specialist schools and support teachers in delivering the curriculum to all students.

The government made an election commitment to a further 20 new psychologists for public schools, five new professionals being introduced each year for four years. In addition, ACT Health will also collaborate across education sectors to implement a streamlined mental health and wellbeing referral process that can be used by all schools.

The ACT government acknowledges that student wellbeing is strongly linked to teacher wellbeing and has committed additional funds to increase support to teachers through more mentoring support and an examination of the professional development and career pathways under a long-term policy strategy for our school system. These commitments will be implemented in future reporting periods and will complement the work of the schools for all program.

Recommendations related to professional learning and capacity building are being addressed through a cross-sectoral professional learning working group. Public, Catholic, and independent schools are collaborating with Teacher Quality Institute, University of Canberra, and Australian Catholic University in this project.

The working group is reviewing and improving the teacher education units with respect to teaching students with complex needs and challenging behaviours, including disability. They are also working to accredit and to develop professional learning options relevant to teaching students with complex needs.

Each sector continues to communicate with parents and seek additional opportunities to engage parents meaningfully in their schools. In our public schools, the schools for all program team have continued to host quarterly parent forums, and every fortnight provides information to schools via the Canberra public schools bulletin.

Schools exist for children and young people and hearing the voice of students is important to understanding their experiences and perspectives. A cross-sector youth forum and review of best practice resources which will support schools to maximise the student voice are being developed.

In the third quarter there has been a strong focus on the capital upgrade program for safe sensory spaces in schools. A total of 35 projects with an estimated investment of \$2.22 million are being progressed for capital upgrades in Canberra public schools.

Safe and inviting school environments are critical to the wellbeing of students with complex needs and challenging behaviours. A great example of how these are being met is the commitment to safe sensory learning igloo spaces undertaken by our outstanding school leader of the year, principal of Theodore School, Mr Matthew Holdway. The igloo is a sensory space which is available for all students, in particular, students with complex needs. There is one in every of the 14 classrooms at the P-6 school. Catholic education has also made significant improvements to safe sensory spaces in their schools, with funding and professional learning for classroom teachers to enhance their learning spaces.

From these examples, members can see the significant progress that has been made to implement the schools for all recommendations; however, the work is ongoing and the schools for all program has progressed further with fourth quarter activities. Several of the recommendations in the expert panel report are longer term recommendations requiring significant consultation and collaboration across the education system, government and with the community sector. I look forward to presenting members with more information on these recommendations in the future.

The focus over the next report period will be on recommendations relating to building partnerships across government and taking a community-focused approach to meeting the needs of students and their families. Again, this is something I have a strong commitment to.

Given the comprehensive work being undertaken through the schools for all program, I have agreed that fourth quarter reporting should be considered by the oversight group in February to allow the full quarter of reporting to be finalised following the Christmas break. I will provide the Assembly with an update of the fourth quarter reports in March. In addition, a summary of the full-year reporting will be made available highlighting the significant work and outlining the next priorities of the program. I look forward to updating members on the next stage of the reporting in the new year.

I present a copy of the statement:

Schools for All—Implementation of the recommendations of the Expert Panel on Students with Complex Needs and Challenging Behaviour: 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarterly Report 2016—Ministerial statement, 13 December 2016.

I move:

That the Assembly take note of the paper.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

## **Adjournment**

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

That the Assembly do now adjourn.

## **Namadgi School Fete**

**MR STEEL** (Murrumbidgee) (5.26): I am pleased to speak today on the Namadgi School fete and to acknowledge and congratulate the Namadgi School community for organising such a fantastic event. On Friday, 18 November I had the great privilege of attending the Namadgi School fete. Namadgi P-10 school is only a fairly new school which opened in 2011, built by the ACT Labor government, and this was the school's first ever fete. I am glad to say the event was a huge success.

As a proud Kambah resident it was great to have the opportunity to attend the fete as my first ever community event in my home suburb, and I had the great privilege of drawing the raffle for the fete. Now, this was easily the largest and most impressive school fete I have ever attended, with entertainment, cake stalls, book stores, an impressive range of carnival rides and no fewer than three barbecues.

The event celebrated students' achievements with activities, an art display, and performances from the school's dance group, choir and band. This allowed the students to showcase what they have been learning in the school this year, and it was a great opportunity for Namadgi to showcase its innovative and broad curriculum to those in the community, as well as the fantastic facilities built by the government.

The fete is a sign that the Namadgi School is maturing, and it was great to see the active involvement of the wider Kambah community in the event. I would like to congratulate the principal of Namadgi School, Charlie Morrice, Rhodina Ellsion, who was the fundraising and fete committee coordinator, as well as the school P&C association, staff, students and all of the volunteers who were involved. Congratulations to Namadgi School, and I look forward to attending their future community events.

I also want to congratulate the Namadgi School on the graduates of the young doctors program that was recently featured in the *Canberra Times*. It was great to see the school being involved in such a great program, showcasing cultural activities of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities here in the ACT.

## **60th Anniversary of the Hungarian revolution Ms Liz Posmyk**

**MR DOSZPOT** (Kurrajong) (5.28): I rise this afternoon on our first sitting of the ninth ACT Legislative Assembly to mark somewhat belatedly the occasion of the 60th anniversary of the 23 October 1956 Hungarian revolution freedom fight. I think it is appropriate as we have listened to the inspiring inaugural speeches of many of our new MLAs. The Hungarian revolution of 1956 was a world event that can give context to why we are here and a chance to reflect on the role and impact of government in democracy and freedom, which many in our community take for granted.

The last week of October in 1956 in Hungary was one of the most dramatic in the second half of the 20th century. The events that unfolded almost exactly 60 years ago

had global ramifications for the future course of the cold war and the relationship between the two emerging superpowers. Although it was not apparent at the time, in a real sense, the Hungarian revolution was the catalyst for the eventual fall of the communist regimes of eastern Europe and the collapse of the USSR.

On 23 October 1956 tens of thousands of people poured onto the streets of Budapest, and their initial demonstration very quickly turned into something else altogether—a full-scale revolt against the communist regime and its Soviet masters. Twelve days later on 4 November 1956, the Soviet tanks rolled back into Budapest. The city endured days of heavy shelling and street battles, and Hungarians started to flee at the rate of thousands a day to neighbouring Austria.

Although the free world watched the Hungarian freedom fight, they never seriously considered providing military support, and no government seemed brave enough to even confront Nikita Khrushchev on the brutal actions of the Soviet Union. Over 2,500 Hungarians and 700 Soviet troops were killed in the conflict. Reprisals by a new puppet regime began in late November with mass arrests and deportations to Siberia and the Ukraine, and around 200,000 Hungarians became refugees. Some of these refugees eventually settled in a total of 37 different countries, including Australia where my parents and my brothers and sisters and I found refuge in September 1957.

The 60th anniversary of the Hungarian freedom fight also gives us an opportunity to reflect on the heroes of the 1956 revolution: the students, the workers, the dreamers, the brave. They did not die or suffer in vain as they demonstrated such incredible bravery, such strong yearning for freedom from the Russian occupiers that the whole global community was forced to recognise the true, brutal face of communism.

In 1989 Imre Nagy and the other brave souls who paid the ultimate sacrifice for freedom were finally given a public burial and recognition by their nation—recognition that was long overdue. The communist system finally disintegrated in Russia and in all the Soviet Bloc in central Europe after 1989. Soon thereafter the Warsaw pact dissolved and the last soldiers left Hungarian soil in June 1991.

Sixty years after that revolution we, the children of the revolution, still remember those brave souls. May they rest in peace. We also pay tribute to our parents who, through their refugee journey, gave up their today to give their children a better tomorrow.

In conjunction with commemorating the Hungarian revolution of 1956 I will also talk about a book that was written by one of the children of the revolution, a Canberra author, Liz Posmyk. I was proud to have played some part in the launch of her book called *The Barber from Budapest and Other Stories*. It is a deeply personal memoir in which Liz pays tribute to her forebears—and her father, Andras, who achieved recognition in Canberra as “the barber from Budapest”. The book is a powerful glimpse into her family’s lives as refugees and as a family at peace. Liz says, although quite personal, it is something she has long wanted to right. I will quote from the media release which captures elements of this book that I have been very impressed with:

Uniquely presented in three parts, *The Barber from Budapest & other stories* is a story of survival, hope and love. It follows the life of Andras, born in Hungary before the cataclysmic changes of World War II tore at the fabric and heart of his world.

The first part of the book is her father's narrative, spanning 1916 to 1957 in Hungary and Austria.

I recommend the book to anyone who would like to know a little bit more about the personal nature of the refugee journey of individuals.

### **Legislative Assembly—re-election**

**MS LE COUTEUR** (Murrumbidgee) (5.33): I would like to make some brief remarks upon returning to the Assembly. First, of course, I acknowledge the traditional owners of the lands upon which we meet, the Ngunnawal people, their elders past and present and acknowledge their continuing contribution to the country.

I stood for election again because I believe that in 2008-12 the four Greens made a big, positive contribution to the ACT. Passing the greenhouse gas legislation was a major achievement. I think Shane Rattenbury has done an excellent job over the past four years, but he cannot do it all by himself. I stood for two reasons: I want to see a more compassionate Canberra, and I want to see a Canberra that continues the job of tackling climate change. Over the course of the campaign it also became apparent to me there was another reason to stand because—well, there were lots of reasons to stand—a lot of members of the community felt they were not being listened to. That is why the Greens ended up with the slogan of “Community first”, to reflect what we had been hearing from so many people.

This, of course, is not just an ACT issue. If you look overseas at Brexit and President-elect Trump, what they have in common is that many people are disillusioned with the major parties and the establishment and, even worse than that, there seems to be an increasing lack of respect for facts in politics. It has got to the stage where people are talking about being in a post-truth stage in politics, which is utterly frightening and utterly scary. I feel really lucky to be living in Canberra at times like this.

But Canberrans impact the global environment more than most people on the earth. It is estimated that the average ACT resident has an ecological footprint of 8.9 global hectares. That was in 2011-12, and that is 3½ times higher than the world's average and it is the highest in Australia. As I said, climate change is the biggest issue for me, and given the current lack of leadership from our federal government, it is particularly important that jurisdictions like Canberra lead. It is particularly important for us because the ACT is expected to have longer, hotter summers and increased frequency and severity of storm events. We are expected to have more threat from bushfires, heat waves and violent storms, and threat to property, economic activity, natural environment, et cetera. By 2030 there will be twice as many fire ban days, and by 2050 it is projected the number of heat-related deaths will double.

Canberra is also a city with hidden poverty. It has the second highest rate of homelessness in the country. Approximately 2,000 people each night do not have a home, and there is an increasing gap between rich and poor. That is why I say that what I stood for was climate change and compassion, and that is why one of the things I want to really focus on in this Assembly is building our city and our environment for people, not for developers.

It means more affordable housing, housing design, better transport and better consultation so that people have a real say. And it means also supporting the proposed ICAC and the donations reforms so that it is clear to everybody that developers do not have undue influence.

Canberra is an amazing city. We are leading the way with greenhouse gas reductions, but there is a lot more to do over the next four years. I am really pleased that we have negotiated the parliamentary agreement with the Labor Party, which I think sets us up for a good four years of progressive government in the ACT. But I think it is really important to continue working with all of the Assembly and the Canberra community as a whole.

Of course, I must say I would not be here without the help of a lot of people. Firstly, of course, the people of Murrumbidgee—I was very fortunate that I got some of their votes; Shane and the great work he did over the past four years; the ACT Greens as a whole and in particular my fellow candidates and all the volunteers; my family and friends, particularly my husband, Guy, and my granddaughter Bella; and the Greens staff, particularly Indra Esguerra.

I look forward to a productive four years for the Assembly and Canberra as a whole.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

**The Assembly adjourned at 5.38 pm.**