



# Debates

WEEKLY HANSARD

Legislative Assembly for the ACT

**NINTH ASSEMBLY**

**24 OCTOBER 2017**

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**Tuesday, 24 October 2017**

**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 petition was lodged for presentation:*

#### **ACTION bus service—Deakin, Kingston and Manuka—petition 22-17**

*By Ms Lee, from 438 residents:*

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

This petition of certain residents of the Australian Capital Territory draws to the attention of the Assembly the need for an ACTION bus service to directly link Deakin and Kingston via Manuka.

Your Petitioners therefore request the Assembly to call upon the Territory Government to establish an ACTION bus service to directly link Deakin, Kingston and Manuka.

*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.*

### **Petition—ministerial response**

The following response to petitions has been lodged:

#### **Community facilities—Farrer—petitions 13-17 and 16-17**

By **Ms Fitzharris**, Minister for Transport and City Services, dated 5 October 2017, in response to petitions lodged by Mr Steel on 1 August 2017 concerning the development and implementation of a strategic plan for integrated, appropriate and environmentally sensitive community facilities in Farrer.

*The response read as follows:*

Dear Mr Duncan

I refer to your letter of 1 August 2017 regarding petition No 13-17 and 16-17, lodged by Mr Chris Steel MLA regarding Farrer - development and implementation of a strategic plan for integrated, appropriate and environmentally sensitive community facilities.

The interest of local communities and businesses is a key ingredient to the success and vitality of public places, such as the Farrer shopping centre. The Farrer Rejuvenation Community Concept has captured many ideas and demonstrates a strong sense of community interest.

There are many matters that arise when considering the suggested projects in the petitions. These include the various environmental impacts, the nature and condition of existing facilities located in the suburb, urban density, land use and alternate community requirements and developments across the greater Woden Valley region.

Suburban development, including the provision of urban open space and facilities is determined by the regional Plan of Management in accordance with the *Planning and Development Act 2007* and Transport Canberra and City Services (TCCS) Urban Design Guidelines. The parkland adjoining the Farrer shopping precinct is categorised as a Neighbourhood Park in accordance with the regional Plan of Management for the Woden and Weston Creek's Urban Parks and Sportsgrounds. This Plan can be found at <http://www.legislation.act.gov.au/a/2007-24/di.asp>. Neighbourhood parks are generally characterised by a small-scale landscape setting available for general community use and typical park infrastructure in such spaces may include play facilities and seating. The provision of major park infrastructure such as that suggested by the petitioners is generally provided at high use district parks.

The ACT Government has over the past decade invested substantial funds into the upgrade of local shopping centres to improve safety and amenity. The priorities for upgrade works are based on assessment and analysis of a range of data including the role, importance and viability of each centre, current and future demographics and asset condition and compliance to current standards. I am advised that the Farrer shopping centre was upgraded in 2013 with improvements to landscaping, access and lighting.

Public toilets are generally only provided in high use town, district and group centres and town and district parks. Many of the toilets at older centres, such as Chifley shops/oval, are a legacy from the original development. In new developments or refurbishment of shopping centres, it is a requirement that toilet facilities are provided by the developer within the shopping complex.

The ACT Government has also been upgrading public playgrounds and establishing natural play spaces across the ACT. Natural play spaces have recently been installed in Telopea Park, Tuggeranong Town Park and O'Connor parkland. The ACT Government manages over 500 playgrounds, including four local playgrounds in Farrer. One of these is located very close to the local shopping centre. Playgrounds are prioritised for upgrade based on recommendations from annual safety audits along with current demographic,

spatial and social information. This process ensures that safety standards are maintained and public investments are suitably targeted.

Should a playground in Farrer be upgraded in the future, the community will be consulted on the upgrade, including on the location of the playground and type of equipment to be provided. This may include skate items and a basketball half court for older children.

In regard to the proposed wetland for Farrer, under the ACT Healthy Waterways project up to 25 projects have been identified to improve long-term water quality in the ACT and downstream river system. It involves the construction of a range of infrastructure, including ponds, wetlands, rain gardens and swales as well as creek restoration and channel reconnection, which are designed to reduce the amount of nutrients, sediment and pollutants entering our waterways. The sites have been selected in order to maximise water quality outcomes and Farrer was not identified in the list of priority sites. Further information can be found on the Environment website [www.environment.act.gov.au/water/ACT-Healthy-Waterways/healthy-waterways/act-healthy-waterways-project](http://www.environment.act.gov.au/water/ACT-Healthy-Waterways/healthy-waterways/act-healthy-waterways-project).

While I note the suggestion of a Farrer Community Strategic Plan, I can advise that strategic plans are developed for regional areas and town centres to ensure facilities and resources are allocated across a broader area rather than for each individual suburb level.

I understand the significant value in community-led proposals for suburban improvements. I have referred the petition to TCCS to review it in context of developing the Territory-wide program for playground upgrades and public realm improvements.

In the interim, if the Farrer community is interested in forming a community group of volunteers to empower them to improve their public park, they can contact City Presentation's Community Volunteer Group Coordinator on (02) 6205 2044 or email at: [TCCS CP UrbanPrograms@act.gov.au](mailto:TCCS CP UrbanPrograms@act.gov.au).

Thank you for raising these matters. I trust the information provided is of assistance.

## **Petition**

### **ACTION bus service—Deakin, Kingston and Manuka—petition 22-17**

**MS LEE** (Kurrajong) (10.02), by leave: I make this brief statement in relation to the petition that has been lodged. When I was approached by Mr Tony Eastaway, a Deakin resident, earlier this year, expressing his concern about the difficulty in getting to Manuka on public transport, it sounded familiar to me. In the lead-up to the election last year, and at my mobile offices since I have been a member for Kurrajong, this issue has appeared perhaps not necessarily incessantly but certainly as a regular and consistent issue, and it has become clear that something needs to be done.

Although Mr Eastaway's primary concern was the lack of a public bus service between his retirement village in Deakin and the Manuka shopping precinct, as I reached out to residents in these areas it became clear that a service that previously existed and had been taken away in 2008 was still a concern for many.

Manuka is, in essence, the default capital of the inner south. It is the only place in the inner south where you can go to the cinema or have access to a full-line supermarket, currently, and the only place in the inner south where you can visit a branch of each of the four major banks. These services, stores and vital entertainment facilities are for all Canberrans. Although Mr Eastaway is able to currently drive, many of his neighbours in Deakin are no longer able to do so and find themselves isolated or with a heavy reliance on kind-hearted and time-rich friends to take them to Manuka. Mr Eastaway acknowledges that, in time, he may also find himself in that position.

Deakin has a high proportion of older Canberrans, and the need to go to Manuka on a regular basis is there because of the availability of the services I mentioned earlier. Public transport is a key issue for older Canberrans who cannot drive and still need to be able to access those services.

For a government that boasts about its commitment to public transport, its refusal to acknowledge a direct service between Deakin and Manuka as necessary shows a lack of ignorance and consultation with the residents who need it most. As it stands, under the current bus network a resident of The Grange in Deakin would have to catch either the No 2 or 3 bus from Macgregor Street, alight at the Barton bus station, a nine to 10-minute almost four-kilometre journey, cross National Circuit on foot, and, as only the No 6 bus travels to Manuka from Barton bus station, would have to catch the No 6 bus back in the other direction, alight again at Captain Cook Crescent, an eight to 10-minute almost three-kilometre journey, and cross Captain Cook Crescent on foot to get to the Manuka shops.

This is a journey which could be as little as six minutes and 3.3 kilometres in distance but instead takes two buses between 20 and 25 minutes and is almost seven kilometres. That is twice as many buses, more than double the distance and four times as long in time. It is also possible for passengers to alight on National Circuit in Forrest, but there they are then met with a one-kilometre walk from their bus stop to the shops. This problem is magnified on their return trip from Manuka, most likely weighed down by their shopping, when they must wait for one of the significantly less frequent suburban buses to get home. For many residents this inconvenience impacts on their livelihood and ability to access essential services.

It is not just older Canberrans who would benefit from a direct bus service between Deakin and Manuka and Kingston. Younger Canberrans who cannot afford to drive or pay for parking, and even patrons of the Manuka night-life who want the freedom to have a few drinks, will all likely benefit from improved public bus interconnectivity in the inner south. The lack of these direct services, coupled with the recent changes to the timetable which saw Narrabundah residents lose out on the popular No 5 bus, sees many inner south residents having more and more services cut whilst their rates go up and up.

The government's steady decrease of bus connections in south Canberra is a disappointment for inner south residents. Whilst the petition is just shy of the 500 signatures required for the issue to be considered by an Assembly committee, I do hope that the minister nevertheless considers it a serious issue that is worthy of some

serious attention. I commend and thank Mr Eastaway for bringing this petition to the Assembly to raise an issue that impacts many residents in Canberra's inner south.

## **Justice and Community Safety—Standing Committee Scrutiny report 10**

**MRS JONES** (Murrumbidgee) (10.07): I present the following report:

Justice and Community Safety—Standing Committee (Legislative Scrutiny Role)—Scrutiny Report 10, dated 17 October 2017, together with the relevant minutes of proceedings.

I seek leave to make a brief statement.

Leave granted.

**MRS JONES:** Scrutiny report 10 contains the committee's comments on 10 bills, 30 pieces of subordinate legislation, one national law and two government responses. The report was circulated to members when the Assembly was not sitting. I commend the report to the Assembly.

## **Leave of absence**

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

That leave of absence be granted to Mr Milligan and Mr Pettersson for this sitting week to attend the CPA Regional Conference, and to Mrs Kikkert for today's sitting for family reasons.

## **Valedictory**

**MR DOSZPOT** (Kurrajong) (10.07), by leave: I rise today to deliver a speech I wish I did not have to give. It was obviously not part of my plans, but as one of my favourite singer-songwriters, John Lennon, wrote, life is what happens to you while you are busy making other plans.

I was privileged to be elected into this Assembly in 2008 and have very much enjoyed the honour of serving our community over the ensuing nine years. At the beginning of this year I informed the Assembly of my sudden change in health and indicated that I would have to monitor my capacity to do so. It is with great regret, therefore, that on the advice of my medical team I give notice to tender my resignation to the Speaker of this Assembly on 5 December—it will be effective on that date—as I have terminal liver cancer.

I thank my medical team, Associate Professor Simone Strasser, Dr Jenny Ross, Dr Michael Corbett and Jane Plaice, for their ongoing support, encouragement and medical care, which has greatly assisted my journey with my illness and faith while facing the reality of a grim prognosis with just a glimmer of hope. Around a month ago, Maureen, our children and I were left with just reality.

As I stand here before you this morning delivering my last speech to this Assembly as an MLA, I am also a petitioner advocating for yet another medical issue that requires more understanding, more awareness, more prioritisation and more funding for research and development. It is not for myself that I am asking—my cancer is inoperable. But in the course of my journey so far I have become very much aware of how early diagnosis of liver cancer could help save many lives.

I have received detailed information from Associate Professor Simone Strasser from Royal Prince Alfred Hospital that I would like to summarise and share with you in the hope that all of you here in the Assembly and our local media will carry the message to our community. I will also endeavour to keep up my advocacy for as long as I can, not only for the thousands of cancer sufferers in our community but also for their families who are so important as hardworking carers providing love, support and hope.

Primary liver cancer is the most rapidly rising cause of cancer death in Australia, with death rates almost doubling in the last two decades. There needs to be increased awareness of the causes of liver disease, the role of early intervention and the role of screening programs in at-risk individuals. Treatments for liver cancer are dependent on the stage of cancer at diagnosis. Early diagnosis can lead to curative treatment and improved survival rates, but current diagnostic tests are crude and there is an urgent need to develop new diagnostic tools to diagnose liver cancer earlier.

The proportion of people developing liver cancer from non-viral causes is increasing, with the commonest causes relating to lifestyle factors, including excessive alcohol consumption or the presence of fatty liver disease related to obesity or, as in my case, type 2 diabetes. In summary, research funding to identify the drivers of liver cancer to understand the biology and develop new diagnostic and treatment strategies is critical, and I appeal for the sake of our broad community that more attention is paid to it.

Before moving on to other matters I would like to thank *Canberra Times* journalist Kirsten Lawson for her insightful handling in February this year of my sudden challenges with cancer and how our family was trying to cope. Also, my sincere thanks to Ian Meikle and Chris Coleman, who conducted an extensive radio interview on 2CC that did not shy away from tough, direct questions but was handled with sensitivity and hopefully assisted some people trying to cope with similar situations.

I thank my fellow Liberal members of the ACT Legislative Assembly over the past nine years, in particular my colleagues from the class of 2008—Alistair Coe and Jeremy Hanson. Life in politics is competitive and often cruel but also exciting, and it is a privilege for all of us to serve our community. It is for all these reasons that I single out Alistair and Jeremy; each of us from different backgrounds, each of us competitive and ambitious, have worked together, along with our fellow colleagues, to serve the common purpose. I thank them all for their ongoing support and friendship as well as their outstanding contributions to Canberra. It has been a privilege to work with you both and the rest of my colleagues in the Assembly.

To our other colleagues—Vicki Dunne, Andrew Wall, Nicole Lawder, Giulia Jones, Elizabeth Lee, Mark Parton, James Milligan and Elizabeth Kikkert—my very grateful thanks and best wishes to all of you, and a fervent hope that the Canberra Liberals will



finally get to put their experience to good use in the next Liberal government in Canberra in, hopefully, 2020.

I give an extra special thanks to my staff—my senior adviser, Neil Hermes, and Jodi Bingley—for their ongoing help and commitment over the past 10 months through some very difficult times. Your support and understanding will not be forgotten. My thanks also to past staff members, in particular Kate Davis, Merlin Kong, Sue White and Paula Nash, who all made a valuable contribution over the years.

On the same note, I thank also my parliamentary colleagues in the opposition for their unwavering consideration and assistance at this time and, indeed, members of the ACT government for their understanding, especially ministers Meegan Fitzharris and Yvette Berry.

Since being elected to the Assembly I have represented the electorates of Brindabella, Molonglo and, in this term, Kurrajong. You can all rest easy now as I will not be making good on the comment I made before the last election that I looked forward to contesting the electorates of Murrumbidgee and Yerrabi in the future. I thank the constituents of the three electorates I have represented for their faith in me over the years, and I apologise that I cannot continue to fulfil my electoral obligations.

My sincere appreciation also goes to the amazing group of volunteers who supported me so selflessly on the campaign trail during five elections. From my first campaign in 2001 to the 2016 campaign, there have been so many I need to thank: George Lemon, Grant Eddington, Albert and Sandra Orszaczky, Heinz and Anna Assel, Poul Bergild, Coralie Wood, Stephen Pike, Peter and Cherry Dundas-Smith, Margaret and Allan Pearson, Geoff and Loretta Deacon, Peter and Christine Formosa.

I thank my wife, Maureen, and our children, Adam and Amy, and their families as well. I thank many Sydney-based friends, including my brothers and sisters, Anna Hollai, Gus and Marianne Doszpot—my brother who is here with his wife today—and their children, and my other brother, Bill Doszpot, and Jo Hamill and their children, for their contributions over the years in every one of the campaigns. I am grateful that they were also able to make it here today. Of course, my youngest sister, Mary Doszpot, was also part of all these campaigns, so it was quite a family affair from both a Sydney point of view and from Canberra.

Lastly, I thank my mother, Anna Doszpot, who in her 80s still took part in every campaign until her death in 2015. She insisted on helping on election day, and I have to confess that her instructions to potential voters in her thick Hungarian accent, “You have to vote for my son; he is a good boy,” did worry me, but luckily people seemed to like her and some even took her advice. Heartfelt thanks also to Tony Olivera, Sheryle Moon, John Bundock, Sally McDonald, Anne Prendergrast, Graeme Church, Bernadette Scargill, Keith and Yvonne Lee, Derek Robson and Gayle, Cliff and Di Smith, and Nick Tsoulis. I also thank and apologise to all the many others I could not name here today.

Electoral representation has some interesting sidelines, and I know I caused my party some consternation when pursuing the concerns of many in the community who their

traditional parties had at times turned their backs on. I grew up on the idealism of film director Frank Capra, and one of my early heroes was the character from his film *Mr Smith Goes to Washington*, for his desire to “work hardest for the lost causes”. I suspect some would no doubt liken my efforts at times to Don Quixote tilting at windmills. It often felt like that. There is some unfinished business left to complete in this Assembly and I certainly hope that sanity and compassion will prevail and a bipartisan solution can be found.

I thank my own family, first of all, my wife of 46 years, Maureen McCormack, who deserves all my thanks and gratitude for her love, companionship and belief in me that has enabled me to climb higher and achieve more than a mere refugee boy from the streets of revolution-torn Budapest had the right to aspire to, let alone come close to achieving. I had the privilege of being the shadow minister for education for eight years, and Maureen was an integral part of our achievements. Her experience of 40-plus years as a teacher and principal gave me a tremendous insight into both government and non-government schools. Our daughter, Amy, followed her mother into the education profession while our son, Adam, followed in my footsteps in ICT. And who knows? Maybe there is politics to come. There is a lead for you, Adam.

Maureen and I are very proud of both our children and their families. So to Maureen, Adam, Neti, Issy, Kasia, Andrew and Harry, Amy, Ed and Noah: thank you for your love and support over the years, for putting up with my many crazy schemes and for your practical support in many community related activities, including our popular annual charity fundraisers, which, over nine years, helped 10 charities and individuals to the tune of around \$230,000.

In my role as shadow minister for sport I was honoured to be patron of Eastlakes Cricket Club, Brindabella Blues Football Club, Woden Valley Football Club and Woden Weston Football Club. You might notice a slight leaning towards football, but that was not all of my choosing. I enjoyed all my shadow portfolios: education, urban services, sport and recreation, disability, seniors, multicultural affairs and ICT.

It was also a privilege to chair a number of standing committees over the first eight years: the standing committee on health and the Standing Committee on Justice and Community Safety as well as the JACS scrutiny committee, which is one of the hardest working committees in this Assembly. Mrs Jones has taken on my mantle there, and I wish them all the best in continuing the work the JACS committee has conducted.

Committee work was rewarding when attention was focused on real community issues and not party-political point scoring. I was particularly satisfied with the 2010 health committee report on disability titled *Love has its Limits—Respite Care Services in the ACT*. The original three-member committees were changed to four members, which has made it more difficult for the opposition to scrutinise the government. And to further frustrate the work of the opposition, the government now chairs a majority of the standing committees, as I understand.

It was also a pleasure to serve as an Assistant Speaker, and not just for giving Minister Barr a warning, the equivalent of a red card in football. Thanks also to

ACT Assembly Clerk Tom Duncan and Deputy Clerk Max Kiermaier and their staff in all the various areas, such as the secretariat, Hansard, Library, ICT, administration; personnel, education, and all the attendants. I thank them all for their support over the past nine years.

My father was always reminding me as a young man that I as the eldest child would need to somehow thank Australia for the generosity shown to our family of refugees 60 years ago. My father passed away 16 years prior to my election to this Assembly, but I have always remembered his words. One of my remaining tasks is to thank our Prime Minister, on behalf of our family, and there are hundreds of thousands of other families like ours. I am not saying we are special, but we certainly want to thank the government for accepting us as refugees.

Our refugee family arrived in Australia in 1957: Istvan Doszpot; his wife, Anna; his mother in law, Borbala Cziegler; and his then three children, me, Anna and Gustav, with two more siblings, William and Mary, born in Australia. We found peace, freedom and acceptance in Australia. But my father, in his country of birth, Hungary, then a communist regime, was imprisoned for two years for daring to question the government when they were persecuting the church and impinging upon people's fundamental freedoms.

Many of us here today and in our wider Canberra community share a common bond of having been migrants or refugees. We also share the gratitude of being able to live in a nation where we are able to be members of the political party of our choosing, to join or not join a union, to worship as we see fit and, with limited exceptions, to say what we like. My parents' direct contribution in return for this opportunity was their energy, work ethic, family values and traditions, which they passed on to my siblings and me.

Madam Speaker, we are entering troubled times, where the freedoms we so value are slowly being eroded, where political correctness or downright bullying discourages many in our community from voicing an opinion unless it reflects the populist view of the day. My parents escaped from communism to give their children the right to free speech and the right and freedom to practise a religion. I think we owe our children the same right today—the right to be able to stand up and the right to voice their opinion before these values are completely eroded.

In closing, I simply wish to share with members of this Assembly and our Canberra community a personal philosophy that has helped me through some tough times. I commend these words to you, attributed to St Francis of Assisi:

Make us an instrument of Your peace. Where there is hatred, let us sow love; where there is injury, pardon; where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light; where there is sadness, joy.

Grant that we may not so much seek to be consoled as to console; to be understood as to understand; to be loved as to love. For it is in giving that we receive; it is in pardoning that we are pardoned; and it is in dying that we are born again to eternal life.

Thanks to all of you for your friendship. I am going to miss you all.

**MR BARR** (Kurrajong—Chief Minister, Treasurer, Minister for Economic Development and Minister for Tourism and Major Events) (10.27), by leave: Today is no doubt the end of an era in this place. We have just heard a very eloquent and dignified speech from Mr Doszpot outlining why he became involved in politics and what has motivated him in his time in this place as a member of many electorates, representing many diverse Canberra communities. Over the time that Mr Doszpot has been a member of this place we have been fellow members for Molonglo and fellow members for Kurrajong, but I have not quite had the same journey as Mr Doszpot in representing other parts of the city. This morning I would like to add my voice, and the government's, in tribute to Mr Doszpot.

Steve's story of moving from Hungary with his parents at the age of nine is indeed well known. From living in a refugee camp, his family was one of the lucky ones, making the move to a safer land at a time of significant upheaval in his home country. After completing his secondary education in Sydney, Mr Doszpot forged a career and a life here in Canberra.

Just like our city now in the 21st century, Canberra in the 1970s and 1980s was at the heart of the technological revolution. Mr Doszpot's talents at the centre of a burgeoning IT sector, taking up senior roles with Wang Australia, Digital Equipment Corporation, CSIRO ICT Centre and later with Canon Australia, demonstrated not only his passion for the IT sector but his tremendous capacity in those roles.

Over perhaps seven of the last nine years Mr Doszpot and I held a joint passion for the sport portfolio. Mr Doszpot was a diligent shadow minister for sport, shadowing every element of my role as sports minister. We did not agree on everything, but I think one of the most significant and important bipartisan agreements in this place was a commitment to support the arrival of the Giants in Canberra. And that bipartisan commitment and the motion that was moved in this place and supported by the opposition I think was pivotal in ensuring the success of that new sporting team in Canberra.

Of course, AFL is not Mr Doszpot's chosen sport, not necessarily his favourite, as we have heard. The other football, soccer, has brought him many memorable highlights and career opportunities and there is no doubt that Steve's role as part of the Sydney Olympic Games Organising Committee, with responsibility for the Olympic infrastructure in Canberra and particularly the improvements to Canberra stadium, are a significant legacy for this city.

He helped showcase Canberra as a fantastic and welcoming place for world-class sport, and that is something that this government and, I am sure, future governments will continue to work on. But through sport and other organisations Mr Doszpot has been a champion of local participation, particularly using sport as a way for Canberrans to form long-lasting, standing bonds and relationships locally, nationally and internationally.

A mark of any good representative is the ability to listen more than speak. My observation of Mr Doszpot over nine years in this place is that he has shown, perhaps more than many, an ability to do just that. His engagement in the Assembly has been extensive. His work for older Canberrans, often in conjunction with Mary Porter, was amongst the great achievements of this place in the last two parliamentary terms.

Ms Doszpot's consistent advocacy for Canberrans, particularly those in the inner south, is indeed very well known. As we have heard, through his annual charity trivia nights he has raised thousands of dollars for many charities across the city, and I note that there was particular sadness when it was announced that the 2017 event would be the last.

Even though there have been many issues on which we have disagreed, Steve, I want to thank you for your undoubted commitment to making Canberra a better place, for keeping me accountable every day in all those portfolios in which you have shadowed me formally in this place, informally in car parks, in various locations around the city, on the weekends, when you least expect it. We have always been able to have frank conversations outside the intense political activities.

You are right to observe that this can be a harsh environment at times in which to work but where it has been possible to reach bipartisan agreement and where we have been able to sort things out outside the day-to-day confrontation we certainly have. I thank you for the grace and dignity with which you have held yourself in this place, including that last speech, which was a fantastic contribution. I want to assure you that I will continue to forge ahead on the work that you have undertaken in the areas that we have collaboratively worked on, and I am sure you will continue to hold me to account.

Thank you and all the best. Spend some quality time with your family and friends. It is terrific to see so many people here today to acknowledge your significant contribution to the Assembly. Other colleagues will speak further, but thank you on behalf of the government.

**MR COE** (Yerrabi—Leader of the Opposition) (10.34), by leave: I too rise today to pay tribute to Steve Doszpot and to thank him for his service in the ACT Legislative Assembly. He is a gentleman. He is passionate. He is a fearless advocate. He is a colleague and he is a friend.

I first met Steve about 20 years ago through soccer. Steve, of course, has a great love for the world game. Not only has soccer left its mark on Steve but Steve has certainly left his mark on soccer, be it through local soccer clubs, the local soccer federation, the National Soccer League or the Sydney Olympics. However, he has had mixed success with one of his local campaigns and that is for all of us to call it football. I am afraid that for many of us it will always be soccer, but he has been fearless in advocating for it to be called football over the years.

I had the pleasure of working on Steve's 2001 campaign in Brindabella. It was a great campaign and I note that there are numerous people in the gallery who also worked on

that campaign. I enjoyed the campaign thoroughly and learnt a great deal. We travelled around the electorate on a very large Murrays bus, dropping by local shops, handing out dozens of balloons and then moving on to the next centre. Steve runs professional campaigns and he always had a huge team of supporters.

Of course, one of Steve's strengths is that he knows everyone in Canberra. Rarely a meeting goes by where a name is mentioned in passing and of course it turns out that Steve either used to work with them in IT, played soccer with them or against them or was a family friend. Steve has an extraordinary network of friends and supporters.

Steve has been a warrior for so many honourable causes and he has had great success in the Assembly. Life in opposition is tough. Being part of a party in a unicameral parliament when you have fewer than half the number of seats makes things pretty daunting at times. However, this has not deterred Steve. He has taken up the fight and has had many victories. As has been mentioned, he has represented a fair chunk of Canberra. He has been the local member in Tuggeranong, in Weston Creek, in Woden, the inner south, the inner north and Gungahlin. There are very few people that can say that.

However, today Steve's modesty was on full display. He did not talk about his achievements but chose to raise awareness for cancer sufferers and their families. He chose to use this time to thank people rather than talk about the goals that he has kicked. I do want to put on the record some of the times that Steve has slogged the ball into the top right corner.

Steve has fought for many causes as part of his advocacy for education. He stood up for the Shepherd Centre and Noah's Ark when their future was uncertain. He fought to have a greater presence for nurses in Canberra's special schools. He was vocal in expressing his shock and disappointment at the school cage incident. He fought for legislative reform to empower school principals to have greater autonomy about how they manage their schools. He fought for support for ESL teachers and was critical of the proposed UC-CIT merger. He was vocal in his view that the Shaddock review must include the non-government sector and he also stood up for victims of bullying at the CIT.

He has fought for many local initiatives like the park and ride in Calwell. He has been active in the community in demanding better planning, especially around Manuka Oval, Yarralumla shops and at the brickworks. He fought to make Green Square green again and he has been a tireless advocate for Oaks Estate residents. He has made hundreds of representations for constituents about footpaths, streetlights, grass mowing and so many other essential urban services.

In recent times Steve has championed the need for tougher laws to support victims of dog attacks and he is actively working on legislation to address this issue. He has been a patron of numerous sporting clubs and has supported making community sport accessible through lowering the cost of sportsground hire fees. He has also been persistent in arguing against the use of diesel line markings. Regardless of whether they are high-profile issues or simply issues raised by a single household, Steve has always been compassionate and diligent in prosecuting his case.

From a party perspective Steve made the high-risk and selfless decision to move to Molonglo for the 2012 election. This move allowed for other electoral manoeuvres to take place and contributed to the Liberals receiving the largest share of the vote in 2012. The fact that Steve put his own re-election on the line for the team shows the calibre of the man.

However, it has got to be said that, since shifting to Molonglo and now Kurrajong and moving down the road to Yarralumla, you would think he would be on time for party room meetings. It is amazing how many traffic jams there are on Alexandrina Drive. In fact, I am surprised that we have not announced a duplication plan for that road on the back of this. Yet!

Whilst politics can define some people, what defines Steve is his family and his faith. Steve and Maureen are a great duo and of course he is also so proud of Adam, Amy and their families.

It was 61 years ago yesterday, 23 October 1956, that brave Hungarians, including Steve's parents, rose up against Soviet rule. Whilst Hungary's freedom would be short-lived, it remains an inspiring moment in post-World War II history. Steve's parents' involvement in standing up for faith, democracy and freedom has obviously played a significant role in influencing Steve's values. As we heard in Steve's speech, he is very proud of the sacrifices his parents made in order to give him, his siblings and future generations an opportunity to live in Australia. The Doszspots' family story is a great Australian story. It is one of working hard, taking opportunities and creating better lives for future generations.

Steve and Maureen are proud and devout Catholics. Whilst in today's world faith is not necessarily in vogue in some circles, Steve has always stood up for his religion and defended the rights of others to practise their faith. Steve's approach over the last 12 months has been an inspiration to many. His conviction and determination are admired by all. In fact, his selflessness was on full display when he went public with his health issues back in February. In that story he said:

... hopefully if there are other people ... maybe I can help them in some way by understanding what they are going through a little bit more if I am going through it too.

So even in the midst of a tough battle with cancer he was still thinking of others. In fact, every time we have chatted in recent months, every time without fail, Steve unnecessarily apologised for not being able to do more. Steve is a heavy lifter; he is a team player.

There is no better example of Steve's generosity than his annual trivia nights. Steve would call in favours, work the phones, negotiate good deals and even convince Labor and Green MLAs to attend as well—some of them in quite a memorable fashion. Through these amazing nights Steve raised hundreds of thousands of dollars for worthy causes. It is also worth noting, as Steve did, that the quiz nights were very much family affairs, with the entire Doszpot clan contributing to the success of the evenings.

I also want to put on the record the thanks of James Milligan and Elizabeth Kikkert, who are unable to be here today. I know they both very much appreciate the contribution that Steve has made over the last year especially in mentoring them. Elizabeth Kikkert passed on that she has always admired Steve Doszpot's commitment to our community:

His tireless dedication to his work has been of great significance, earning the trust and admiration of so many people in his electorate and across the territory, including me.

As a newly elected MLA, I found Steve to be very warm and welcoming. He has a kind and generous heart and has been willing to offer advice, encouragement and assistance freely.

Steve, thank you for your service to the Assembly, thank you for your service to the Canberra Liberals and thank you for your service to the city. Our city is a better place because of your service. It has been an honour to have served alongside you and I am so grateful for your loyalty, your friendship and all that you have taught me. Steve, on behalf of the Canberra Liberals, thank you.

**MS LE COUTEUR** (Murrumbidgee) (10.45), by leave: On behalf of the ACT Greens, I join my Assembly colleagues in thanking Mr Doszpot for his contributions during nine years of the ACT Legislative Assembly. As a fellow member of the class of 2008, I thank you and I will miss your contributions.

As noted by others, Mr Doszpot was, and I am sure still is, dedicated to representing his constituents, firstly in Brindabella, when he was first elected in 2008, then in Molonglo during the Eighth Assembly and now in Kurrajong. I am surprised that no-one has mentioned, as far as I know, that Mr Doszpot is the only MLA in this place who has ever represented three different electorates for three different Assemblies in a row. I suspect that this is an honour that will probably never be equalled in this Assembly.

Mr Doszpot's personal story and some of his passions are well known. They have been well spoken about today, so I will not go through all of those again, but I certainly do recall your maiden speech, Mr Doszpot, back in 2008. You told us the incredible story of your move to Australia from Hungary. My trip here was a lot easier.

Your love of football, or soccer, is also well known, as a player, as an avid supporter and through your involvement in the Olympic soccer tournament in the year 2000. Mr Doszpot's passion is not just for the elite game but for the grassroots. I know that Mr Doszpot over the years has been seen everywhere around Canberra regularly at a range of community and junior matches. He has been a spectator to satisfy his love of the game and to support players, the community and the game in all its forms.

Mr Doszpot brought that passion to the Assembly in many practical ways, doggedly chasing up the issue of field safety and expressing his concern about whether using diesel fuel for line markings was in fact the best option. Mr Rattenbury told me that,



when he was minister for sport, Mr Doszpot also raised this issue with him. They were soon out together on Dickson oval inspecting the work of sport and rec and discussing whether or not the standards were in fact good enough.

Mr Rattenbury had to leave this morning. Unfortunately he is attending a funeral, but of course as a fellow member of the class of 2008 he asked that I specifically acknowledge on his behalf the work that Mr Doszpot has undertaken in his time here. Mr Rattenbury and I were recently talking about how Canberra can be a small town at times. He told me the story of the first time he and his then new partner Louise ran into Mr Doszpot. Shane and Louise were having dinner in Manuka. They ran into Mr Doszpot on the street. Before Shane could even make an introduction, Mr Doszpot turned to Louise and said, "How are you?" It turned out they had worked together at an IT company in Canberra more than 20 years ago.

As Mr Coe said, Mr Doszpot really does in fact know everybody in Canberra and a small number of them have joined us here today. Thank you all very much for coming. It makes it such a great occasion and provides a clear connection with Mr Doszpot—and to a lesser extent the Assembly—and the community. Thank you all.

One of the things I relate to Steve about is being an ex-IT person. Prior to coming here I was also in IT. One of the other things about Canberra being a small town is that there are things that are not easily forgotten. One such thing is Mr Doszpot's campaign song as a candidate for Brindabella in the 2008 election campaign.

*Members interjecting—*

**MS LE COUTEUR:** I wonder if the laughter is nervous anticipation that I might be planning to sing it. I do remember Madam Speaker's views about props, because I thought about bringing in something to play it on, but I was not sure if that would qualify as parliamentary. In lieu of playing it, you will be happy to know that I am not going to attempt to sing it. However, I will quote a few of the lyrics. Imagine background music that sounds like a James Bond movie track:

Steve Doszpot  
Escaped from Budapest  
On a sleigh long ago  
They had to walk through the snow  
In Yugoslavia in refugee camps for many months  
Then Dad said "This is not good"  
Off to Australia we go

Was President of Soccer Canberra  
And that's not all  
He directed Olympic football

This is only a short part of it. I am happy to inform members that the file is available on the National Library's website. I am happy to forward the link to anyone that wants it. As far as I know, Mr Doszpot, as well as being the only Assembly member to have represented three electorates, is the only Assembly candidate who has ever put his resume in song before. Thank you, Steve, for that!

While I have been recalling some of the lighter sides of Mr Doszpot's time in this place, I also acknowledge that we do this today in the very sad context that he will soon be resigning from the Assembly. I wish to echo the comments of Mr Barr and Mr Coe about the incredible contribution that Steve has made to this Assembly and to Canberra as a whole. I acknowledge that this departure for Steve is not quite what he would have chosen for himself. The ACT Greens offer our support, thoughts and compassion to Mr Doszpot, his wife and his family and friends through the challenging and difficult time ahead.

## Visitors

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Before I call Ms Lawder, I want to recognise in the gallery Greg Cornwell, Lou Westende and Zed Seselja. Welcome back to your Assembly, former members.

## Valedictory

**MS LAWDER** (Brindabella) (10.52), by leave: It is a privilege to rise today to speak briefly about my colleague Steve Doszpot. I actually knew about Steve before I had met him, when I worked with his son, Adam. Then I had a little to do with him during the 2012 campaign here in the ACT. I recall doorknocking in Calwell one late afternoon, early evening. I knocked on a particular door. A very lovely lady opened the door. She was very friendly. She was obviously a Liberal voter. She said, "Come on in," and I did. It was Maureen. I had managed to doorknock the house of another Liberal candidate. The house was empty. They were moving to their new house in their new electorate.

Not only did I doorknock a fellow candidate and someone who was no longer registered in that electorate but also, of course, he was unlikely to vote 1 for me anyway because he would have put himself as number one. Anyway, it was a nice kind of interlude but a waste of my time as a doorknocker. But it did show that the selfless move to a different electorate that Steve undertook enabled the Liberals to win three seats in Brindabella in that election as part of the swap with Zed Seselja, who moved from Molonglo to Brindabella. Steve, as we have heard, is I think the only person who represented three different electorates in his time in the Assembly: Brindabella, Molonglo and Kurrajong. It is something that probably will not be repeated.

Early on, when I first joined the Assembly, I recall Steve's campaign about Green Square and the re-greening of Green Square. It was one of the first sort of concerted campaigns that I saw an MLA undertake. It provided me with a lot of valuable lessons that these quite local community issues can energise and activate so many people and produce a good result for the community.

A couple of others in the long list of achievements that Steve has been able to do, despite being in opposition, that really resonated with me include—in fact, I think this was before my time here—the Shepherd Centre. Having worked previously in the deafness sector, I understood how important lobbying and advocacy was. I was very

grateful for Steve's work in that area. The other one was the boy in the cage incident and the subsequent Shaddock review. I know many families with children who go to that particular school. It was a really important issue. I would like to thank Steve for his efforts in that particular area.

I have always found Steve to be an absolute gentleman. I think that many people in this chamber have mistaken his passion for the issues and seen him perhaps as aggressive at times. But I think it very much demonstrates how deeply he feels about these issues and how willing he is to represent his constituents in the strongest possible way. That is a real plus and something that we can all take from his approach.

I especially appreciated his passion for education, sport and disability and, of course, those fabulous fundraising trivia nights which have raised so much money for important organisations in our community. When I first started in the Assembly, Steve invited me along to a whole lot of events with him. He was very inclusive, supportive and friendly. It got to the point at one stage where there were so many photos of us together that we started to joke that our respective spouses might get a bit jealous and think something was going on. Whilst we still kept going to a few events, we took fewer photos.

I have always found Steve to be generous, inclusive, supportive, compassionate and dignified. Steve, Maureen and your family, go well. Go well, Steve, and thank you for your service.

**MR WALL** (Brindabella) (10.56), by leave: In the cut and thrust of politics, seldom do we get to choose the time of our departure. Steve has done that but obviously not on the terms that he would have chosen had he been given the opportunity. I first joined the Liberal Party in 2008. That was shortly before Steve's election as the local member in Brindabella in 2008. In the preceding years I was chair of the southern electorate branch of the Canberra Liberals. I fielded at branch meetings quite an immense frustration from party members that Steve often did not turn up. It was not, I must confess, until I got here that I actually developed an understanding of and an appreciation for the work that Steve genuinely did.

The reason we very seldom saw him at party meetings was that he was so busy representing his electorate and, more importantly, the multicultural portfolio which he held during the Seventh Assembly. Night after night he was not at home on the couch like he often was accused of, but he was instead out at community events, away from his family, doing the work that the community ultimately expects their politicians to do.

As has been touched on, whilst I was chair of the electorate branch, Steve's move and swap with Zed Seselja, the Leader of the Opposition at the time, took place. It was a secret campaign move that was codenamed "silver ugg boot". Those that Zed and Steve knew well enough will be able to decipher how the codename came about, but I think it is safe after seven years to let the cat out of the bag. I can now reveal the secret of silver ugg boot.

Whilst Steve made a very selfless move for the party in moving electorates, I think it is often underestimated by those in the community what impact that does have. As members of electorates we become intertwined with the day-to-day occurrences that happen in the community. We develop great connections, not just with the people but also with the place. To move not just from the area you represent work-wise but also to uproot your family and make that change in the service of your community is certainly a great contribution that is regularly underestimated.

As was touched on by Mr Coe, while Steve for most of last term was the member closest to the Assembly, he was always the last member to arrive at a party room meeting. As the whip, at the tail end of last term and in this term, it had been a point of great frustration. But I am almost at the bottom of why he is often so late. I now believe it has something to do with the time zone between Australia and Europe—a day behind and Saturday afternoon football. Perhaps with a little more time we will get to the bottom of it.

It is often said that the Leader of the Opposition has the toughest job in politics. But from the opposition benches I dare say that I have had at times one of the toughest jobs, and that is following Steve Dospot in portfolios. I did it last term, with the disability portfolio, and this term I have taken on the mantle of education, following in Steve's footsteps.

I say it is tough because every stakeholder you meet with, every community group you engage with, everyone you speak to says, "How is Steve? He did such a great job. What is he doing now?" The first half hour of any meeting is talking about Steve's accomplishments, Steve's achievements and Steve's dedication to the work that he did.

Steve has touched on his ability always to fight for what would often be called the lost causes. In doing so Steve has always managed to find—I respect him for this—the human aspect in every issue that he takes on. In doing so, he often looks at things that many of us would think are not a politically opportune issues to take up. Steve not only takes up the issue but also manages to generate a significant amount of political mileage out of it, trying to get the outcome that is just and that is fair. Steve has also led the charge from the opposition benches on a myriad of issues. I will touch on some of the significant ones, such as bullying in CIT and fighting for the staff who were the victims of bullying to have their stories told and to have those that were the perpetrators of such a culture brought to justice.

The re-greening of the lawn at Green Square and improving the needs of special needs kids across schools in the ACT, regardless of which school they enrol in, are things that Steve has well and truly championed. I was happy to have worked with him for much of last term on making sure that there were nurses in our special schools, an issue that is a sensible one, something that you would expect to be commonplace and common practice. Nonetheless, it was an issue that arose. More recently, we saw Steve's dogged determination to see justice for victims of dog attacks, so to speak.

Madam Speaker, Steve has always tried to give back to the community. He touched on his reason for doing so in his speech—always wanting to thank this country for the opportunity it has offered his family, be it in the work he has done in this place, his work in supporting soccer or football across the territory and around the country, and his community fundraisers that have given so much back to those in this community who often make do with so little.

The one thing that is always centred at the heart of everything that Steve does—it is a lesson that I try to emulate—is that family comes first and is the most important thing in our lives. Often the first thing that you engage in a conversation with Steve on, fondly, is what one of his grandkids were up to over the weekend or one of the adventures he just had with the family. It really shows that often there are more important things than the cut and thrust of this place. I thank you, Steve, for those worldly lessons.

Steve spoke in his speech of his desire, on behalf of his family, to thank Australia for the opportunities that this country has afforded him and his family. But I think today, Steve, is the day that we as a community thank you for the great work and the dedication that you have shown this country and, most importantly, this city. We thank you for your years of service and the sacrifice that you and your family have made in your doing so. Thank you. You have been my local member of parliament, a friend and a colleague. I want to thank you very, very much.

**MRS DUNNE** (Ginninderra) (11.03), by leave: Steve Doszpot MLA is an exemplar of a good, strong and committed parliamentarian. Steve's back story—his history as a refugee from the 1956 Hungarian uprising and the subsequent Russian invasion—has contributed significantly to the man he was to become and the representative he is today, a man forged through adversity and committed to faith, family and fidelity to a cause.

As members know, I have been closely involved with the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, an organisation that promotes good governance and helps develop members of parliament into good, strong effective parliamentarians. Madam Speaker, if all newly minted parliamentarians came like Steve Doszpot, the CPA would be out of a job.

His fidelity to his constituents through his crusades—the Sheppard Centre, the greening of Green Square, Oaks Estate and MOCCA, just to name a few—show the character of the man. He has the ineffable ability to get under the skin of government ministers, many of whom were arrogant enough to think that they could not be bested. In succeeding for his constituents, he brought the arrogant down a peg or two. Steve's successes follow a familiar pattern: he raises an issue; a minister and/or a group of officials assure everyone, usually in a patronising tone, that he does not quite understand and that his solution is misguided. Eventually, Steve has prevailed but the patronising are never patronised in the process.

For me, one of the highlights of Steve the parliamentarian was watching and listening to him at the Speaker's new citizenship evenings. Steve always liked to encourage

new citizens to aim high and to become politically engaged. He used his own experience as a refugee who had made it to the floor of an Australian parliament as a model for others. I have to confess that when Steve was not at these events I took up his narrative. I liked to retail his story as a way of encouraging our new citizens to be like Steve. Like Steve Doszpot, they too could become representatives of their community. They, like us, could follow Steve's example to be fierce and formidable crusaders for his constituents. I want to thank Steve and his family for their commitment to Canberra and to this parliament.

**MR HANSON** (Murrumbidgee) (11.06), by leave: There are a couple of people you never want to follow speaking: one is Brendan Nelson—if you have ever had the opportunity to listen to him speak he is Australia's best public speaker—and the other one is possibly Vicki Dunne, because she is likely to blubber over a well-written question in question time. But I think we can forgive Vicki today because it is a very poignant day. There have been some fantastic speeches from all members, but the speech you gave, Steve, for all of us here and for many people who have not come very often to this place—you are always welcome—it was a real insight into your humility, into your passion, into your commitment to your constituents, into your bravery and into your skills as an orator as well. It is in large part an example of why you are so well liked and why you are so well respected.

It is wonderful to see so many people here today, so many friends and former colleagues of Steve. It is difficult to fill this place, but when we were talking about this event in the party room the other day we knew that the gallery would be full because it was Steve Doszpot. It probably would not be so much for that way for other members of the Liberal Party, but for Steve it is definitely the case.

Steve, you have an extensive friendship network. We meet people in politics all the time, but people stick to you for the time you take to know them and the empathy you show them. Fleur and I went out for dinner a few weeks ago with Steve and Maureen and it was a classic Dozzie night where we go out and have a great time but Steve is never there; he is always off chatting to someone. Everyone wants to talk to Steve, and he takes the time with people. Poor old Maureen is sitting there, often by herself, left alone while Steve is networking and so on. But you do not get friends by accident; you do not get to be so well known by accident—you remember people and you take time with them.

As Andrew and others have said, Steve is a great family man. A number of us were lucky enough to share Steve's 69th birthday party which happened recently. We listened to some wonderful stories from people throughout his life and some great speeches put together by Amy and Adam and a number of his mates. What a rich life you have led, Steve, and what a wonderful family. On the way home Fleur and I were saying, "Man, I'd love to live a life like that." Who could ask for a better family and for better children? It is probably unparliamentary, but they are very good in taking the piss out of you, I would have to say. I know Steve is as good at giving it as taking it, so it is only fair.

Steve, it has been said, is a champion of lost causes, and that is very true. But you have won more than you have lost, there is no doubt about that, and the long list of

your achievements has been listed by Mr Coe and many others. It is very true that you have made a difference and it has not been about point scoring or about the theatre of this place. When you look at your accomplishments—certainly on the opposition benches, where it is tough—you have been the most effective politician I have met in terms of getting stuff done. That list is one that I, Mr Coe, Vicki Dunne and others would only dream of, to be frank.

I would say, though, that when it comes to this place you do get away with a lot. There has been many a question time where I have been admonished by Madam Speaker, and by Mrs Dunne when she was Speaker before, for your interjections. I would be sitting there not saying very much, but Steve would make some comment—his were normally witty and mine were normally crass—but I would get the blame; I would get chastised. That would annoy me, to be frank, but it would annoy Steve more because, “I’m interjecting. I’m having a go, but no-one gives me the credit for it.” I think the reality is that it was difficult for people to conceive that Steve would be doing that because he is too nice a bloke. “He’s too good a bloke; he wouldn’t be doing that. That must be Jeremy or Alistair or Zed or someone,” and we would get into trouble for the interjections Steve made and got away with. It is a rare thing where Speakers of both political persuasions would perceive you as such a good bloke—they did not accuse Mr Coe or me of that. It is a rare thing in politics to do what we do—to fight the good fight—but at the end of the day still be so liked and respected by people across the political divide.

You have had many achievements and those we have all made as part of the team together. But, as I said at your birthday party, one of the greatest regrets I have is not winning the last election and seeing you as education minister; you did a fantastic job. You have followed well in his footsteps, Andrew, rest assured, but you set the benchmark, Steve. Your ability to reach out as you did to the Education Union and work so effectively with them as well as visit every school in the ACT at least once was a real achievement. You would have been an outstanding education minister and it was our loss collectively that that did not happen.

I will pass on one anecdote because I do not want people to walk away thinking Steve is a soft touch. He did mention that when he was in the chair he booted the Chief Minister out, much to our delight and less so to Mr Barr’s. But Steve regales people with the story that later that evening he was at a charity function where he won the raffle and Mr Barr was the one that drew the raffle and had the indignity of then having to present Steve with the prize. Steve gave him a big hug, so he won that day. There are a few he has lost, but he certainly won that day.

There are so many stories about Steve, though. The unknown story about the three electorates—and it goes on a bit more more—is that Steve, when he came to this place in opposition, would say that you should only do two terms. This is something I think he got from Greg Cornwell. So when we came up to the last election, which was going to be Steve’s third term, we said, “Well, Steve, you said only two terms.” He said, “Oh, yes—in each electorate, that is.”

If you speak to Steve’s staffers and ex-staffers, many of them will regale you with stories, including about Steve’s hat. Remember that hat that that you thought was very

cool and that you would go campaigning in? Steve, if you ever could not find it, I think your staff used to hide it—they had very different opinions about your hat.

My own staff, Ian and Jess, have worked very closely with you, Steve, as well and asked me to pass on their regards. Ian the other day was talking about his experiences in the Assembly, and he has been here longer than any of us. He was working with you on the dogs bill and he said, “It’s the sort of work that Steve does that keeps me in this place.” That is probably a stronger statement than I could make—what you do keeps people here and keeps people in politics.

Fleur, who is here today, and my staff and I pass on our thanks for your service, for your friendship and for the battles you have fought for others. Now we wish you all the very best, mate, for the battle that you fight in the weeks, months and hopefully years ahead. I will miss you, mate.

**MRS JONES** (Murrumbidgee) (11.15), by leave: I am pleased to rise today to add my few words in celebration of all that Steve has achieved in this place and more. My first serious conversation with Steve was after I had lost the 2008 election, in which he had won a seat. Steve saw me walking down London Circuit and he stopped me. He wanted to know how I was and he said, “Giulia, I know what it’s like. I know what it’s like to put in so much and to lose. I’ve been there and I know.” It was a really rare moment of a meeting of spirits. We both knew that pain, and he helped me to have the courage to come back and to run again. I remembered that conversation and that he had eventually won his seat here and thought that if he had, perhaps I could too. It was a part of what sustained me through some pretty tough days that were to come.

Steve has a way of noticing something, deciding he should do something about it and never, ever giving up, holding everyone around him to account until it is resolved—or not, in which case he will continue to go after you forever. Perhaps these qualities were forged on the slopes of the mountains of Hungary, as a small boy escaping a political regime which had become dangerous to people with his family’s religious views, a deeply anti-Catholic situation which had become so vindictive that it threatened the very survival of his family.

Much of what we each do in our lives is forged in our experiences of childhood, and Steve through his early years in Australia no doubt realised what it is like to be an outsider, to be at a disadvantage. I am sure he was learning English, feeling different from other kids, overcoming an accent and eating foods that were different from his peers. This experience in Steve’s generation made them tough, and Steve is a resilient and strong man.

Steve has used his tenacity in here to fight for those who cannot fight for themselves. One of the first fundraisers I was aware of was when Steve raised money for Scarlett Sydney-Smith to have an appropriate wheelchair. Scarlett had a condition that meant that after six months growing properly as a baby she suddenly stopped developing mentally and in some ways physically. I knew her family quite well from the Gungahlin area. Scarlett had been to my house many times with her mother and had to lie on the floor or be propped up on a sofa chair. As she grew bigger the strain of trying to care for her increased on her family. I had not even thought of her need for a



purpose-built wheelchair, but Steve had and he got on with bringing good people together to see that she was provided for. Scarlett died in recent years. I really admire Steve for how he has always been able to find out those needs of special young people and use his position and his networks to give them what they need.

As someone who also bears the benefits and the drawbacks of European blood—as we refer to ourselves, the wogs—I can really appreciate Steve’s fortitude and his willingness for a fight, for better or for worse, and his inability to give it a rest. In my cultural heritage it is seen as a positive. We tend to believe we only fight with someone if we care about them or the outcome more than we do about people liking us. In a way, though Steve is very good at creating discomfort for a cause, it is something that comes from deep in our cultural background, which is very different to the culture we have entered here in Australia. This means that sometimes we are misunderstood and at times, frankly, difficult to work with, but it is not for no reason and it is a quality that I think is good to give some context to.

Steve is a rolled-gold networker. I have often seen the effects he is able to have, particularly on the migrant men of his generation, who have all lived the common struggle of new Australians. And he can fundraise like no other. Honestly, I have never known another candidate to wheel suitcases of fundraising outcomes into the party office. It is enough to make a candidate envious.

I am sure that, after three campaigns to be elected here, standing in not two but three seats and representing the people of his home city so strongly over this time, his family can only be very, very proud and that his parents who made the hopeful but frightening choice to come here all those years ago would have been pleased with their decision and would be very proud of what he has achieved in this place.

The Bible, at Proverbs 13:22, says:

A good man leaves an inheritance to his children’s children ...

The outcome of Steve’s work here will give strength and identity to his family for generations to come. His fight for the underprivileged and those in need here has brought comfort and knowledge of their values as human beings and the story of their families for generations to come. I salute you, Steve.

**MS LEE** (Kurrajong) (11.20), by leave: We say goodbye from the Assembly to a man of heart, a man of passion, a man of family. We say goodbye from the Assembly to our colleague and our friend. As a fellow member for Kurrajong I know there are many in our great electorate that will miss dearly Steve’s smile, radio star voice and football anecdotes. Steve is a man of heart.

My first memory of Steve takes me back to before the 2012 ACT election, when he and I were considering running for preselection to be candidates for the electorate of Molonglo. With a kiss on both cheeks and a cheery “Annyeonghaseyo”—Korean for hello—I remember him saying to me, “Koreans and Hungarians share the same ancestry, so I am big brother,” and so he was. Even though Steve had been a member since the previous term, he was new to Molonglo, having only recently moved to

Yarralumla. I spent many hours with “big brother” at Mawson, Gungahlin and Civic shops throughout the winter of 2012.

In the world of Hare-Clarke, where it is not easy to be friends with candidates even within your own party, Steve’s unwavering kindness to me as a newbie on the political scene is something that I will always remember. Not once did Steve try to protect his turf or not want anything but the best for me. Steve even very generously attended my campaign fundraiser and would always be open to campaigning together at the local shops. In a world where it can be all too easy to get jaded or let self-interest or political point scoring get the better of us, Steve’s heart remained the constant.

You do not have to look further than his tireless work in representing the victims of dog attacks and his advocacy on behalf of the boy in the cage. And who can forget Dozzie’s famous trivia nights, an initiative which started with his need and want to raise money for a customised wheelchair that grew into almost 10 years of generously raising hundreds of thousands of dollars for various Canberra charities and organisations which brought together over 600 trivia buffs each year to all dig deep.

Steve has set a high benchmark in my current portfolio of disability, and I acknowledge his work on producing the *Love has its Limits* report on the importance of respite care, an issue that is so relevant today. I know he has left me with big shoes to fill, and if I can make even half the impact that he made in the disabilities sector then I know that I will have done him proud.

One of the very first things we did when we were both elected as members for Kurrajong at the last election was to have a photo shoot down by the lake to release a calendar labelled “Your Liberals Kurrajong team”. Perhaps Steve had learnt from the lessons of having too many photographs with Ms Lawder, but at one point I am sure he was down on one knee and he remarked that for the passers-by it probably looked like a wedding shoot of a Canberra man and his new young bride. So he quickly rose to his feet at that point and there was no more touching on the photo. It was a privilege to be elected to be a member of Kurrajong with you, Steve.

Steve is a man of passion. With one year between them and a mutual love of football, Steve and my father got along from the moment they met on the 2012 campaign. Steve and New South Wales Deputy Premier John Barilaro were regular faces at Canberra’s Korean community organised football competitions. Steve would very graciously wear the outrageously over the top rosette ribbons and dutifully draw the raffles at these events. I know he had a particular soft spot not only for football but also for the raucous and passionate Canberra multicultural community. He was and is a dear friend to the Canberra Korean community, some of whom are here today.

Steve has always been there to take on the issues that others could or would not pursue: the revamp of the grass at Kingston square, the unheard voices of the residents of Oaks Estate, the numerous issues that face Manuka traders, and the concerns of residents over the Yarralumla brickworks. All these people knew that Steve was their man.

There are few things Steve loves more than football and salami, but one of these is his family, because Steve is a man of family. His wife, Maureen, has been his greatest champion, and I know he would not be where he is today without her love and support. I know how proud Steve is of Maureen and his kids, Adam and Amy, and their grandchildren and what a close family they are. Steve's love and loyalty for family extends to his Canberra Liberals family. I know he cannot lay claim to being the oldest member last term, during Val Jeffery's time here, but Steve was certainly the father of the party room and was always a big brother to me.

Steve, your humour and cheek, your heart and passion, your dedication and community spirit are some of the things we will miss most about not having you just down the corridor. You leave this Assembly a better place than when you entered it, and that is all we can ask of anyone who pledges a duty to public office. You leave this Assembly with so many more friends than you will know, and that is all we can ask of anyone who lives such a full life. Thank you for your support, your friendship and your service to the bright-eyed newbie fellow candidate, to the Canberra Liberals and to the broader Canberra community. Thank you and farewell, big brother.

**MR PARTON** (Brindabella) (11.27), by leave: We could talk about this bloke all day. I promise I will be brief. Dozzie, this place is not going to be the same, mate. I am going to speak on behalf of everyone here and summarise, in one sentence, what is going on in their hearts: Steve, we love you, man. I hope you can feel that today. I am sure you can.

Here before us is a truly great man. I want to say how much of a privilege it has been of mine to serve the people of Canberra alongside Steve Doszpot. When you consider where he came from—when you consider the hurdles that have been placed in front of him and the battles that he has had to fight—you begin to realise, as my friend Mr Hanson said, what an extraordinary life that this man has led up till now. What an extraordinary life!

I came to Canberra in 1999 and I came to know Steve very early on in my time here. I was working on the radio at Mix 106.3 initially. Steve, as we all know, has never been shy when it comes to promoting the game of football. Back then we were involved in the 2000 Olympics. I refuse to call the game soccer today; it will be football. It was through his love for this beautiful game that our paths initially crossed.

It meant that when Steve put his hand up to contest a seat in this place I followed his 2001 campaign with great interest. History shows that he was not successful. But I always had an inkling that he would butter up for another go if given the opportunity. Of course he did in 2004, but was beaten in extra time. Takes a glutton for punishment to opt in for all that pain for a third occasion, but he did.

When Steve was elected to this place it happened on the same day that I tried and failed back in 2008. Despite my negative result I was most pleased to celebrate his victory. In the years since, we have seen Steve develop into a first class member, a dogged shadow minister. Much has been said already so I will not go over it. He has achieved so much.

One of the things—and it has been mentioned—that has marked him as an elected member is the fact that, when he sets out to get a result on a particular issue, it does not matter whether it is big picture or desperately small. Steve always puts his weight behind every fight that he is involved in, whether it be fighting for a constituent to have the footpath fixed outside of their home, fighting to end the practice of using diesel to mark lines on sporting grounds, or fighting for justice for the victims of dog attacks.

I have been in this place for only a short time, but the day that sticks in my memory the most vividly is the day that my mate Steve took on the Chief Minister and stuck up for young Jack Hartigan. I will remember that speech for a long time. I am sure that Mr Barr will remember it for a long time as well.

I focus briefly on Mr Doszpot's sense of humour. During my time in here serving alongside Steve, he has cracked me up on countless occasions with his absurd understated humour. Unless you know him really well, there are occasions when you think that he is being deadly serious. That grin then starts to creep over his face.

It has been my pleasure to serve with you, Steve. Coming into this place a little over a year ago with no working knowledge of the committee system, I luckily found myself on the environment, transport and city services committee with Steve as the deputy chair. He showed me the ropes in a way that nobody else could.

Lastly, I pay tribute to the way my friend, Steve Doszpot, has conducted himself in this really tough period. Sitting before me here is a very proud Hungarian-Australian. He has displayed enormous courage in the way that he has dealt with this last year. I know that he will continue to do just that. Steve, thanks for everything, big guy. Thank you.

**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) (11.31), by leave: I will be brief as well. This place gives you the opportunity to meet people that you would not ordinarily get the chance to. Unlike what appears to be the rest of Canberra, I did not know Steve before I came here. But I had the chance to get to know him quite well. On the scrutiny committee you do spend a lot of time scrutinising not only government bills but also each other. That was the chance for us to get to know each other a little bit better as a new member and a more experienced member in this place. I enjoyed the time that I had on both the JACS and education committees.

We have all talked about the relationships that we have built with Dozzie—sorry, Dozzie? Is that OK?—particularly in the sports portfolio. People have talked about your doggedness in pursuing things. It was because of that doggedness that I was prepared for questions around diesel line marking. The sports ministers before me had those same questions, but I was ready for them because I knew that you would ask them again in one of my first hearings. I am sure it will not be the end of the question of diesel line markings.

And there is the beautiful game of football. If only we had had more time to get to know each other. My memories growing up in Canberra were of the Canberra Arrows back in the early days. Football has evolved a lot since then. I remember we were handing out some trophies to some young kids playing football out at the McKellar football park. I had only just met you, and you said, “Yeah, see that emblem? I did that.” I said, “What? What are you talking about?” It is the Canberra City Football Club emblem. I googled this little story from earlier this year:

Quietly, City were imbued with the best of St George-Budapest, Australia’s leading club during the 1960s and early 1970s. The club’s blue-and-gold emblem was designed by Doszpot in the same shape as the Hungarian coat of arms. At Doszpot’s recommendation, Johnny Warren—St George-Budapest’s favourite son—was Canberra City’s first coach.

So there you go. That is something in Canberra that you will always be remembered for. You were talking about being patron of the Weston Molonglo Football Club. I looked for some photos of this:

In 1975 a young dark haired, moustachioed Steve Doszpot became Captain/Coach of the Senior team...

“Moustachioed” is a pretty cool description of somebody we have come to know in this place. He will be very sorely missed. I do not have a quote from the Bible, but I do have this one for you: “Get with the might, pull on the black and white, and fly with the magpie.”

I will attempt this: köszönöm, thank you.

**MS FITZHARRIS** (Yerrabi—Minister for Health, Minister for Transport and City Services and Minister for Higher Education, Training and Research) (11.35), by leave: Steve, you mentioned that you would miss us here in the Assembly, and we will miss you. Your life story, told again here today, is really quite remarkable. For many of us, fleeing—as an eight-year-old with your mum and dad and siblings—from violence and oppression to a very different country 14,000 kilometres away is something we cannot imagine. It is something I saw in my own parents-in-law reflected through their families: a gentle gratitude for the peace and the profound opportunities that Australia offers.

This is instilled in Australians from many nations over our country’s history. Refugees and migrants contribute to our community in many ways. A few, like you Steve, make an enormous contribution to public life. You tell a story that is important to be told, both through your own history, and your vision for a happy and prosperous country. I could not help but note that many names that you thanked were non-Anglo, European and Asian. You have a huge supporter base in our community.

I have always thought of you, Steve, through the lens of your and your parents’ journey to Australia nearly 60 years ago. Today must be a hard day for you and your family, but it is a measure of your humanity and compassion that you are here to say thank you and push a bit harder for a few things. It must have been a difficult decision

to use your own personal story to help others. I was not at all surprised to read in today's paper that you will use this opportunity to highlight the growing incidence of liver cancer in our community, and maybe even hold a fundraiser. It is a reflection of your true dedication and community spirit.

When I read your background before you came into this place, I saw that it was one of a longstanding and deep commitment to Canberra. Your involvement in community groups goes back decades, with a successful career before parliamentary service and contributing to many community organisations supporting sport and especially football.

I can tell everyone that when Steve and I were part of opposing teams last year at a community soccer match at Gungahlin United, he still had a very deft touch—very nimble around a very small pitch. You certainly gave someone 30 years your junior—I am talking about Zed Seselja here—a run for his money. You were extremely gracious. I think the final score in the match was two-nil. I believe you had scored one goal; I scored the second goal. However, it was an own goal. Steve was very gracious when I contributed to his team's win.

We met properly during the campaign of 2012. You really lived up to your reputation, as many of us have reflected on, as a true gentleman. The funny thing about being elected by your community is that at an individual level we strike up a rapport across party lines with different people. Despite the values we share with our political parties, it does not define us as human beings. At our best, we are representatives and champions elected by our communities to make a difference. On days like today, we all remember that. At our worst, I think we are viewed narrowly as politicians.

Steve always strove to be a representative, a champion and a parliamentarian and to fight—as has been told in today's *Canberra Times* story; others have reflected on this—for what he called “lost causes”. They are not lost when Steve takes them on. His passion at times is quite a force. He continues to fight for these causes. In a reflection of how he brings people's stories into the chamber, he—more frequently than any of us I think—has brought people into the chamber to hear our debates. Today is just another reflection of that.

Steve, it is an achievement to raise issues and hold governments accountable. In fact, it is essential. Thank you for your many achievements. Most recently, you fought for improvements to our legislation regarding victims of dog attacks. I think we have struck upon a way to work together to realise this achievement for you. And Steve, we will. It is one of the best features of our larger Assembly that we have the ability to work together through the committee system. You get the chance to know one another from across the political divide and work on issues that we collectively think are important, even if we disagree on the manner of achieving them.

Steve and I worked on a number of committees together. It was pretty good fun. I miss some of those committee days. I can attest to Steve's ability to continue fighting for those lost causes behind closed doors.

Thank you for sharing your personal story today. It is personal, and one that must have been hard for you to reveal. But I know how important it is for you to make a contribution wherever you can in whatever circumstances. It will make a difference. Even if one person with Type 2 Diabetes gets a scan that picks up the disease earlier, you will have made a big difference—and I think it will be many more than that.

I wish you and your family all the very best over the coming months. You always talk about them and you are so proud of them. We all know what an impact this life has on our families: how we simply could not do our jobs without our families; how much they contribute; and how much, through us, they live this life as well. Thank you Steve; go well.

**MS ORR** (Yerrabi) (11.40), by leave: Starting a new job is always a nerve-racking experience. Coming into this place was no exception. In particular, the prospect of working with those opposite on committees was a bit of an unknown. None of us was really sure how personalities would mesh and how it would all play out.

I have to say I got lucky. Working with Steve on the environment and transport and city services committee has been a pleasure. Right from day one, Steve has worked collaboratively with his first-time committee colleagues, often mentoring us as we learned the ropes. He was the most experienced person on the committee, but he never took advantage of the fact he had been around a bit longer and, by default, knew a bit more than we, as fresh faces, did. He took opportunities to share advice when needed or provide encouragement when he could tell we might be second guessing ourselves even just a little, and usually on a matter of process.

This is not to say that Steve has not done his job as an opposition MLA. I will never forget when, at the end of the first day chairing an annual reports hearing, Steve lent over to me and said, “Sorry for giving you a bit of grief, but you handled it well.” And I think that goes to the heart of what I have come to appreciate Steve to be—a dedicated MLA who goes about his work, but always in a manner that reflects the gentleman that he is.

In those first days when we were all wondering what it would be like working in the Assembly alongside those of a different political stripe, I never thought I would be standing here speaking glowingly about a colleague opposite. But I am, and we have all heard the reasons why today. Steve, it has been an absolute pleasure to work with you. I thank you for the lessons that you have imparted to me.

**Sitting suspended from 11.45 am to 2.30 pm.**

### **Questions without notice**

#### **Land—block 24, city**

**MR COE:** My question is to the Chief Minister regarding a brief that he signed on 7 November 2015 about the casino redevelopment. In that brief the Chief Minister double-ticked the recommendation for community consultation, considering it to be essential to address “in particular concerns by residents affected by Acquis’ rights to

Block 24 Section 65". This is, of course, the block subsequently acquired by the LDA. In the public accounts committee on 27 September this year you said that you may have confused this block with another block in the area. Minister, why did you sign a document that says that Acquis has rights to block 24 section 65?

**MR BARR:** It does not have rights to that block.

**MR COE:** Chief Minister, why did sign a document that said that Aquis has rights to block 24 section 65? Why did the brief draw particular attention to this fact?

**MR BARR:** The brief asked for noting. As I indicated in my response in the committee, there is an adjacent block that is in exactly the same section that the casino has rights over. As indicated, I was asked to note a brief; not to approve any rights. No rights exist.

**Mr Coe:** Double tick!

**MR BARR:** My double tick was on consultation.

**MS LAWDER:** Chief Minister, why were you confused?

**MR BARR:** Within that block and section, there are a number of different blocks, one of which the casino has rights over. That is the block immediately behind the National Convention Centre that is adjacent to the current casino building but not immediately obvious to most people that it is under the casino lease.

### **Gaming—poker machines**

**MS LE COUTEUR:** My question is to the Minister for Regulatory Services and relates to recent allegations of tampering with poker machines and illegal operations in the pokies industry in Victoria. Minister, has the ACT government received any allegations of poker machine tampering, including removing betting options, shaving down buttons to allow continuous play or manipulating return rates for players, occurring in the ACT?

**MR RAMSAY:** I thank Ms Le Couteur for her question and for her interest in the area of gambling and gambling reform. To my understanding, no, we have not received any such allegations, but we are certainly monitoring what is happening in the Victorian situation and will continue to do so. I have the utmost confidence in the Gambling and Racing Commission and the ongoing monitoring—

*Opposition members interjecting—*

**Ms Le Couteur:** A point of order, Madam Speaker, I cannot hear a word the minister is saying. It is two against one and I just cannot hear anything.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** I remind members that it would be nice to have question time with a little bit of animation but not a complete bloc of noise coming from those opposite. Minister, you have the floor, and the clock is starting.



**MR RAMSAY:** As I was saying, I have the utmost confidence in the Gambling and Racing Commission, but I also request that if members of the public in the ACT have concerns in relation to any matters around gambling, especially in relation to poker machines, they send those through to the Gambling and Racing Commission.

**MS LE COUTEUR:** Minister, will the ACT government undertake an investigation into the operations of pokie machines in the ACT in light of these allegations and if not, why not?

**MR RAMSAY:** I thank Ms Le Couteur for the supplementary question. As I say, the Gambling and Racing Commission regularly monitors the gambling that occurs here including in relation to electronic gaming machines in clubs, and we will continue to do that. I commend the Gambling and Racing Commission's work.

### **Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate— governance**

**MS LAWDER:** My question is to the Chief Minister and Minister for Economic Development. Minister, you are quoted in the *Canberra Times* of 28 September as saying that the LDA failed because of the “prevailing culture” of the development industry. The former CEO of the LDA was also head of the economic development directorate. Minister, were there cultural issues at the economic development directorate as well? If so, why did you allow the culture of your directorate to deteriorate?

**MR BARR:** No, Madam Speaker.

**MS LAWDER:** Minister, what responsibility do you accept for the governance failures in the LDA and the economic development directorate?

**MR BARR:** The government has responded to the issues raised by the Auditor-General.

**MR COE:** Chief Minister, what responsibility do you have as the responsible minister and as Chief Minister for ensuring that your agencies have appropriate governance structures in place?

**MR BARR:** The relative and respective responsibilities are outlined in the Public Sector Management Act.

### **Gaming—poker machines**

**MR PARTON:** My question is to the Chief Minister and Treasurer. Chief Minister, in 2012 the ACT government rejected a proposal by a dissenting member of the taxation review who recommended that poker machines be allowed into the Canberra casino. Why has your government reversed the 2012 decision by the Gallagher government not to allow poker machines in the casino?

**MR BARR:** The government is giving consideration to changed circumstances and has adopted a new position.

**MR PARTON:** What specifically triggered this change? What change of circumstance are we talking about?

**MR BARR:** No one specific event.

*Mr Coe interjecting—*

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Mr Coe, I am sure you want Mr Hanson to ask his supplementary.

**Mr Coe:** I think we all do.

**MR HANSON:** The Chief Minister might not. Chief Minister, why does your government ignore the economic, social and ethical considerations that previous governments had taken into account in the community gaming model?

**MR BARR:** We have not.

### **Economy—business confidence**

**MS CODY:** My question is to the Chief Minister. How has the government delivered on its election commitment to continue to strengthen the territory's local business and boost exports and investment?

**MR BARR:** I thank Ms Cody for the question. The government's goal is to grow and diversify Canberra's economy, and we are implementing the strategies we have developed to achieve this. We took to the election a series of commitments to grow the CBR Innovation Network, to help local businesses take advantage of international markets and to boost particular areas of strength in the territory economy, and we are delivering on those commitments.

Next week the territory government will host an air freight symposium attracting key multinational operators as well as a range of export ready and interested Canberra businesses to ensure that we are making the most of the increased aviation capacity into and out of our airport. We are supporting the Canberra Business Chamber to deliver a range of business development and export-ready programs, and we will continue to support a range of trade delegations to keep delivering new business opportunities for local companies.

The government is partnering with the education and research sector to grow key strength areas in the economy. We are well ahead of the pack and running hard in the key fields of space and spatial technologies. For example, the ACT government's seed funding to support the ANU and UNSW Canberra has led to the creation of successful spin-out companies such as the recently launched Skykraft, which is building satellites from scratch here in Canberra.

**MS CODY:** Chief Minister, how have the government's international engagements contributed to attracting inward investment for Canberra and the region?

**MR BARR:** Recently I have taken the opportunity to set out the benefits of Canberra to a range of multinationals, including Cisco, Lockheed Martin, Northrop Grumman, Boeing, SpaceX, Planet Labs and Microsoft, with a focus on opportunities to further develop the space, defence, ICT and cybersecurity sectors in our city.

I particularly stressed the opportunities to partner with thriving and innovative local small and medium enterprises in each of these sectors. The government has delivered on a range of significant international engagement initiatives in the 2016-17 fiscal year, including trade and investment-focussed delegations to Wellington, the United States, Singapore, Nara and Tokyo in Japan, Hong Kong, and Beijing and Shenzhen in China.

Recent inward investment success or significant export contracts for Canberra have included the Microsoft Azure cloud platform established with Canberra Data Centres; Intelledox securing a \$4 million investment from Ellerston Capital; and ONTHEGO Sports, Inland Trading Co, QuintessenceLabs, WildBear Entertainment, Bottles of Australia, the Cogito Group, automed and Seeing Machines all receiving significant new contracts or inward investment.

**MS CHEYNE:** Chief Minister, what have been some of the success stories from local Canberra businesses entering the international market?

**MR BARR:** Automed is a good example. It is an agricultural services company that automatically calculates, delivers and records livestock treatments. The business relocated from Newcastle to be part of the vibrant Canberra business start-up community and the networks and services we have here.

The government's innovation connect program helped the final phases of the company's product development strategy. It is now offering its products globally through a US company, Neogen, supplying into the US, Canada, Asia and Europe.

Instaclustr was founded in 2013 in Canberra. It offers cloud-based, open source data platform services delivering scalable reliability to build applications and technology. It recently received an investment of \$7 million led by Bailador Technology Investments, which declared Instaclustr as a "market leader, with a world-class team and deep expertise".

Instaclustr has customer-focused resources in North America, Asia and Europe. The company's Canberra workforce has doubled to 40 people in the past year since it moved from its incubator space at the Canberra Innovation Network.

The remaining time permits me to mention one other: QuintessenceLabs, which was formed from the ANU quantum data security technology. It is a globally renowned company securing investments from a wide range of sources and collaborating with NASA, IBM and a range of US defence companies. QuintessenceLabs has also

engaged actively in the networks and services support available here in the ACT and is held in very high regard, particularly in the United States.

### **Trade unions—influence on government**

**MR WALL:** My question is to the Chief Minister. Chief Minister, on 21 July this year the *Canberra Times* reported on a letter from Unions ACT to all ACT Labor MLAs. This letter requested that Labor MLAs “inform Unions ACT as soon as possible whether you have attended, or intend to participate in, any meetings with, or events or forums organised or sponsored by, the Master Builders Association”. Chief Minister, no Labor Party MLAs attended the MBA annual awards dinner on 19 October. Did the Labor Party boycott the MBA annual awards dinner as a result of the Unions ACT letter?

**MR BARR:** I do not believe so, no.

**Mr Hanson:** You don’t believe so?

**MR WALL:** The Chief Minister seems rather uncertain as to what the actions were. Chief Minister, are Labor MLAs required to seek the approval of Unions ACT before they meet with the MBA or attend any of their events?

**MR BARR:** No.

**MR COE:** Chief Minister, why do we have a situation where Labor ministers or MLAs will not meet with the greyhound racing industry, ClubsACT and now the MBA?

**MR BARR:** We do not have that situation, Madam Speaker.

### **Land—section 72, Dickson**

**MRS JONES:** My question is to the Minister for Planning and Land Management. On 23 October 2017 the government announced plans to develop section 72 in Dickson as Common Ground housing. There was a land swap deal between the LDA and the CFMEU involving the CFMEU headquarters in Rosevear Place. The government paid the CFMEU \$3.9 million in 2014 and has allowed the CFMEU to use the site rent free for three years. The CFMEU was to pay \$3.2 million for the neighbouring car park. Minister, why did the government agree to pay \$3.9 million in late 2014 to the CFMEU when it did not use the site until late 2017?

**MR GENTLEMAN:** I thank Mrs Jones for her question; it is an important one. The government has already provided a significant amount of documentation in relation to this transaction as part of an Assembly motion. My previous response in the Assembly and the subsequent release of information in responding to the Assembly resolution provided detailed information on the strategic considerations that guided the negotiations and purchases of the sites in Dickson. I refer members to that detailed information, which, of course, included an explanation, that is, because a development was already proposed for another car park site at Dickson, block 21 section 30.

The government made arrangements to ensure that car parking in the Dickson area would not be further impacted by the sale of the Dickson Tradies car park. To limit the impact on parking, the government included a clause in the contract that settled on the sale of the Dickson Tradies car park site that that could not occur until development had been completed and a certificate of occupancy had been granted for the development of the nearby car park site: block 21 section 30. Because the development of that block had been delayed and is yet to start, the settlement for the Dickson Tradies car park site is still some way off.

**MRS JONES:** Minister, has the government received payment of \$3.2 million for the neighbouring car park from the Tradies? If not, when will it do so?

**MR GENTLEMAN:** That is a matter to be dealt with economic development but I am very pleased that I was able to make that announcement yesterday. I think it is very important that we are able to deliver on section 72 Dickson. It is going to be a fantastic opportunity for social housing and community housing and the opportunity, I think, for mixed use as well and perhaps some private—

**Mr Wall:** Point of order, Madam Speaker.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Resume your seat, please.

**Mr Wall:** Madam Speaker, the point of order goes to relevance. The Minister was asked: “Has the government received the \$3.2 million for the neighbouring car park from the CFMEU, from the Tradies group?” not “What is the alternative Dickson block being used for?”

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mr Wall. You raised that point of order 20 seconds into the answer. You have a minute plus to respond, Mr Gentleman.

**MR GENTLEMAN:** As I said at the beginning of my supplementary answer, it is a matter for Economic Development to deal with and they are dealing with that. As I said, it is very important that we allow section 72 to be constructed with the views of the Canberra community at the base of that consultation. That is what I announced yesterday, a new opportunity for the Canberra community to come on board and to talk about what they want to see on section 72.

**Mr Coe:** It is a different site.

**Mrs Jones:** Different site.

**MR GENTLEMAN:** Madam Speaker, it was referred to in the question. I was very pleased to see the North Canberra Community Council come on board and say that they are really encouraged by that opportunity.

**Mr Coe:** Point of order, Madam Speaker.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Is there a point of order, Mr Coe?

**Mr Coe:** Yes, on relevance. I noted that you made mention of the minister having only 20 seconds. He has near on 80 seconds and to that end would he please directly answer whether the government has received payment for the block?

**MADAM SPEAKER:** The minister has referred twice to the responsible directorate and I think it is within his policy answer of what he is responsible for in the question. Do you have anything further to add, minister?

**Mr Gentleman:** No.

**MR COE:** Minister, has the government received payment of \$3.2 million from the Tradies group and can you say with any confidence whether any of the \$3.9 million paid to the Tradies group was used to support Labor candidates or Labor causes in an election campaign?

**MR GENTLEMAN:** I am not the minister for the Labor Party in the ACT.

### **Schools—infrastructure**

**MS CHEYNE:** My question is to the Minister for Education and Early Childhood Development. Can the minister update the Assembly on a year of delivering better school infrastructure for Canberra?

**MS BERRY:** As people in this place would know, the government went to the election with a promise that it would continue to invest in better school infrastructure so that children in Canberra have access to the things that they need for a great education. I am happy to report that across its first year the government has lived up to this promise. I doubt that members have missed my regular announcements of upgrades at ACT schools. Right across our city children are benefitting.

The government has supported improved outdoor learning and active play spaces such as the Torrens Primary School courtyard, outdoor learning spaces at Turner school, a new football precinct at Melrose High School and nature play grants to community organisations providing child services. The government has invested in expanding schools in the growing Gungahlin region, with capacity for extra students at Taylor, Gold Creek, Harrison, Palmerston and Neville Bonner schools to make sure that all children have access to a great education.

Noting the importance of learning skills for life and vocational pathways, as the future of education conversation is confirming, students at Alfred Deakin High School and Lake Tuggeranong College now have access to some great new teaching kitchens. And I can affirm the fact that what is cooked in those kitchens is very tasty and is of the highest quality.

Work is also continuing on contemporary learning and teaching environments at Belconnen High School, with upgrades to technology areas and learning spaces as well as roof replacements. The government has continued to provide grants to support

non-government preschools such as St Anthony's Early Learning Centre in Wanniasa which I had the chance to officially open in August.

These are just some of the examples of the work that is underway, drawing on a record \$85 million capital upgrade budget alongside capital initiatives dedicated to particular projects.

**MS CHEYNE:** Minister, what work is happening at Campbell and at Narrabundah College?

**MS BERRY:** As members would be aware, the government has commenced work to modernise two older schools in inner Canberra by upgrading facilities and removing asbestos. Several of the existing buildings at these schools cannot be upgraded to meet modern learning needs due to the presence of friable asbestos. The decision was made—as with many old buildings in the ACT—to make sure that those were safely demolished so that new and more sustainable and suitable classrooms could be built with the school communities.

Over the coming months, the government will be working with the school communities within both of these schools to plan and design learning spaces for the future. In the interim, both schools will have access to high quality transportable learning spaces that will provide classrooms and, at Narrabundah College, specialist learning spaces like science labs.

**MR STEEL:** What are some of the school infrastructure projects planned for the next few years?

**MS BERRY:** As have noted, the 2017 ACT budget invested millions in the renewal of Canberra's school facilities. This is a big investment and a lot of work is happening to put this to its best use. New learning spaces, toilets, change rooms, garden and horticulture facilities, heating and cooling upgrades and energy efficiency improvements are all underway.

School classroom and facilities upgrades are underway at Mount Stromlo High School, the Woden School, and the Malkara School. Lake Ginninderra College and Aranda Primary School will also benefit from projects such as school security enhancements and extra classrooms. The renewal of Canberra's public school facilities will make sure the government keeps providing our students and staff with great infrastructure and services to support quality learning and teaching.

As well as quality facilities for our students and staff, these are valuable facilities for the wider community. Public schools are more than just learning environments for our young people; they are also the heart of our suburbs, with the facilities being accessed by many local community groups and multicultural and sporting organisations. Our renewal of these school facilities will help keep students and community groups connected and help make these community assets accessible to the wider community. Alongside this the government is continuing to plan for the schools of the future as suburban development continues in Gungahlin as well as Molonglo.

**Crime—anti-consorting laws**

**MR HANSON:** My question is for the Attorney-General and it follows the latest bikie-related violence in Canberra. Attorney-General, the latest incident allegedly involved a home invasion, a person shot twice, and the fire-bombing of two cars. One of the bullets fired went through a window into a home where there were two children present. The Chief Police Officer has stated that she would prefer to have anti-consorting laws to prevent this violence, but it was “off the table”. Attorney-General, why are these laws off the table for this government following such an extended period of violence?

**MR RAMSAY:** I thank Mr Hanson for his question and the invitation to explain why it is that the government is looking at the areas of reform that we are doing. Yes, certainly, the government takes OMCG violence extremely seriously. I certainly support the minister for police and the Chief Police Officer in their ongoing responses to the latest incident. The government is continuing to work to make sure that this community is and remains safe.

In terms of the law reform, what this government will do is that it will work to make sure that our reforms are evidence based and not incident based. That is one of the ways that you ensure that you have good, sound policy for the work that is going ahead. That is why, in my particular portfolio area of responsibility, I will be working with the new drive-by shooting offence, better powers to investigate crime scenes and also anti-fortification laws.

*Mr Hanson interjecting—*

**MADAM SPEAKER:** You may want to listen to the answer, given that you asked the question.

**MR RAMSAY:** In terms of the particular laws that Mr Hanson is suggesting—the anti-consorting laws—I note that Mr Hanson’s exposure draft is actually not an anti-consorting law. It is a criminal organisation control order, which is a very different model. It is good for Mr Hanson, as the shadow attorney-general, to understand the difference between anti-consorting and criminal organisation control orders. That would also help inform good policy response. But the best way to evaluate the way that we will head forward is to look at the evidence for it.

One of the key bits of evidence is: will this law work? When the New South Wales Ombudsman was reviewing the laws that Mr Hanson is suggesting that we have, the New South Wales Ombudsman said, “The act does not provide police with a viable mechanism to tackle criminal organisations and is unlikely ever to be able to be used effectively.” The Ombudsman make one recommendation: that the law be rejected. *(Time expired.)*

**MR HANSON:** Attorney-General, how many OMCG-related incidents have occurred in our suburbs in the 18 months since the previous Labor government abandoned anti-consorting laws?



**MR RAMSAY:** It is a matter under investigation and it is for the police to determine the number of incidents related to OMCGs. I refer Mr Hanson to that. The situation, however, is that we will continue to work in the areas of reform that are effective and deliver the ongoing safety we have and will continue to have in Canberra under this government.

**MRS JONES:** Attorney-General, are you aware of UnionsACT, or any other union or unions, raising objections to anti-consorting laws?

**MR RAMSAY:** It is my understanding that, prior to the previous election, there was a consultation in relation to anti-consorting legislation. A number of pieces of information were received as part of that after my predecessor, Mr Corbell, undertook a consultation process on the human rights implications, noting that anti-consorting laws, rather than community organisation control orders, impact—as has been found in other parts of Australia—people who are most vulnerable.

**Mr Hanson:** Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. The question is very direct: it asks the Attorney-General whether UnionsACT or any other union raised objections to anti-consorting laws.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Attorney-General, I think you made reference to an earlier consultation. But perhaps you want to provide more clarity.

**MR RAMSAY:** On the basis of the consultation, the government decided not to pursue anti-consorting laws. I am not aware of any consultation that was received from unions.

### **Disability services—special needs transport**

**MS LEE:** My question is to the Minister for Disability, Children and Youth. At the hearings of the joint standing committee on the NDIS at Parliament House on Friday the issue of funding of transport for special needs students was raised by several witnesses, including you, minister, and ACT directorate staff. An officer from your directorate said there was no solution for the ACT as yet and that you were still working on developing a model. Minister, what advice have you provided to parents with children who require special needs transport but are not yet able to access it?

**MS STEPHEN-SMITH:** I thank Ms Lee for her question. I think there is probably a little bit of confusion between school bus transport—characterised as special needs transport—and transport that is provided and funded as part of people's individual packages. The conversation in the joint committee hearing related largely to school transport—so special needs transport—to get children to and from school. It is a matter of ongoing discussion between the commonwealth and the states as to how that should operate within the NDIS environment. Currently that continues to be block funded by the states and provided by the states as in-kind support under the national disability insurance scheme.

I am not aware of—and to my recollection I have not received any correspondence from—any parents have been unable to receive special needs transport in that context. If Ms Lee is aware of any parents who have a concern about special needs transport I invite her to let me know.

**MS LEE:** Minister, for any NDIS participant who does not have transport, officially or otherwise, included in their package, will the ACT government be providing that service?

**MS STEPHEN-SMITH:** Transport is included in people's package under what is called a core support. Participants have flexibility within the core support element of their package to use that to fund transport or other items. That has led to some difficulty with some participants and, indeed, providers navigating the provision and the access to transport. Over time, my understanding is that that is ironing itself out as people improve their understanding of what they are able to purchase under the core support elements of their plan and as providers become better able to adjust their business models to provide transport on an individually funded basis.

I should also, however, add that the ACT government continues to provide transport services for people with disability as well as other people with mobility issues, for example, the flexible bus service provided through Transport Canberra, for which I lobbied during the election campaign to have extended to the inner north, and that has now been delivered.

### **Transport—light rail**

**MR STEEL:** My question is to the Minister for Transport and City Services. Minister, could you please provide an update on the progress of stage 1 of the city-wide light rail network?

**MS FITZHARRIS:** I thank Mr Steel for the question and I am delighted to update the Assembly on progress of building our city-wide light rail network. Madam Speaker, as you know for the past decade the ACT Labor government has been committed to building a state-of-the-art, integrated transport network for Canberra, including public transport, active transport, community transport and, of course, private transport.

It is very exciting to think that in about a year from now Canberrans will have an integrated transport system linking our buses, light rail network and forms of active travel. Progress is becoming more obvious every day to those of us who work near, drive past or, indeed, live near the corridor. A great deal of work has got us to where we are now. The vast majority of utilities along the corridor have been re-located. Almost 5,000 metres of track slab has been installed. Wall cladding and roofing on the depot buildings are continuing in preparation for the delivery of the light rail vehicles later this year. I have it on good advice from the Chief Minister that they are, indeed, fantastic vehicles.

Significant road works, such a road widening along the route, have been ticking along well. Around 1,000 trees and thousands of plants have been grown in preparation for landscaping along the corridor. The team at Transport Canberra have also been hard at work planning for the delivery of our new bus network that will be integrated with light rail.

Most recently, the Chief Minister and a team from Transport Canberra visited the manufacturer of the vehicles to see how the rolling stock is taking shape. As I mentioned earlier, they reported back the exciting news that the first light rail vehicle is just about to be shipped out to Australia.

This is a large, complicated infrastructure project, as all city-shaping infrastructure projects are. But day by day Canberrans can now see real progress. As the government gets on with the job of delivering light rail for the ACT, it is, indeed, disappointing to continue to see the lack of overall support for the vision for our transport network from those opposite. I look forward to continuing to update the Assembly on progress with light rail.

**MR STEEL:** Minister, what can Canberrans expect to see as this work continues along the light rail corridor?

**MS FITZHARRIS:** I was very pleased to join with the Chief Minister, Mr Pettersson and other stakeholders, including Transport Canberra, Canberra Metro and the Public Transport Association of Canberra to mark the first track laying in Gungahlin on 6 October. Laying track is a complex, laborious and very precise task that literally sits upon the months of work that has been done underground to create a base for the track. I know that the very visible milestone of track being laid must have been incredibly rewarding for all of those involved with the project.

I wish to acknowledge that the construction of such a major piece of public transport infrastructure can bring some disruption for those living in and near the work zone. The initial track laying confirms to our community who have patiently lived through much of this disruption that progress is being made and we are closer and closer to being able to take full advantage of the benefits that this sustainable, modern transport network will bring.

**MS ORR:** What are the upcoming major project milestones for stage 1 of light rail?

**MS FITZHARRIS:** I thank Ms Orr for the supplementary question. Indeed, one of the most exciting upcoming project milestones is that which I mentioned in my earlier answer, and that is the arrival of the first light rail vehicle in Canberra. It is being prepared for shipment from Spain as we speak.

Transport Canberra will be giving those interested the opportunity to track the progress of the ship via social media. The journey will take just over one month and we should expect to have the wrapped vehicle safely delivered to the new depot just off Flemington Road in Mitchell in December. The vehicle will then undergo preliminary testing and final fitout, ready to start testing along the northern section of

the line in the early months of 2018. Canberra Metro will also initiate a small round of driver recruitment later this year to ensure that the women and men who will be involved in operating the vehicle are trained and ready to go.

As we know, this is an exciting time for Canberra. The introduction of light rail is an important part of the story about our city—our maturing city—growing from a small government town to a growing, sustainable, progressive city embracing diverse and progressive industries and enterprises. I look forward to continuing to report as we get closer to boarding Canberra’s light rail.

### **Centenary Hospital for Women and Children—capacity**

**MRS DUNNE:** My question is to the Minister for Health and Wellbeing. In September a group of expectant mothers in Canberra exchanged messages in a Facebook group. One message in late September read, “Don’t go into labour today, ladies. Cross your legs if you have to. It is a madhouse at TCH.” Another read, “Antenatal, postnatal and delivery are full and there are three people labouring in the waiting area.” Minister, were the delivery suite and/or the maternity ward at the Centenary Hospital for Women and Children over capacity at any time during September 2017?

**MS FITZHARRIS:** I am not aware of that particular conversation, but if Mrs Dunne could provide further information and a direct link I would appreciate it. I certainly know there has been some pressure in the birthing centre and also the other labour delivery rooms in the hospital. As to the question of whether it was over capacity during September, I will take the specifics on notice.

**MRS DUNNE:** Minister, were the delivery suite and maternity ward at Calvary Public Hospital at or over capacity at any time during September?

**MS FITZHARRIS:** I will again take the specifics of the question on notice but, no, I do not believe so. One thing I can advise the Assembly of—I know it has been discussed previously in this place, and not while I have been minister—is that we are seeing increased growth in maternity services at the Canberra Hospital and a decrease in growth at Calvary hospital.

There is much work underway to address this because, of course, we have wonderful public maternity services at both Canberra and at Calvary hospitals. We do think there is additional capacity within Calvary that we could offer to Canberra women and their families who are seeking to have their babies, particularly those on the north side.

**MRS JONES:** Minister, what contingency arrangements are in place to cater for the needs of expectant women at times of peak demand?

**MS FITZHARRIS:** What I can advise the Assembly is that all those professionals—midwives, nurses and, particularly, obstetricians—who are working with women about to birth are working in a multitude of different circumstances. It may include spontaneous labour; it may include women who need to be induced; it may include

women who have, for another reason, been inpatients at Canberra Hospital. We of course have the birthing centre and the more traditional birthing method at Canberra Hospital as well as those birthing facilities at Calvary hospital.

The staff there will do everything that they can in order to manage this. Something that Canberra Hospital and I know Calvary hospital do every day is look at the status of the patients and the beds within each of the hospitals and understand how best to provide the highest quality service particularly to those women who are birthing. I will take the specifics of specific clinical contingencies on notice.

### **Municipal services—fix my street**

**MS ORR:** My question is to the Minister for Regulatory Services. Can the minister update the Assembly on the newly relaunched fix my street website?

**MR RAMSAY:** Minister Fitzharris and I were very pleased to launch the newest version of the fix my street website earlier this morning. The website has been significantly redesigned and now provides even more information.

This new system is designed to make it even easier and quicker for Canberrans to interact with government. It continues to use your smartphone's location so it can quickly and accurately find where you are when you are reporting an issue. That makes it simple and easy to report things like broken street lights or a car that might be parked illegally. This will save people time, as they do not have to wait on the phone to report minor issues.

Since fix my street began in 2010, Access Canberra has expanded it to now cover 30 different categories that people can report. Canberrans visiting the site will now start off by letting us know which suburb the matter is located in. New dashboards and interactive maps will provide the user with an increased level of information on what the government is already doing in their suburb.

We have been out and we have tested the new system with some of our most frequent users of fix my street, as well as a number of members of the public who have visited the Woden Service Centre recently, to ensure that we shaped it to best meet the needs of the community.

But there is more to come. We are constantly looking for ways to improve the website and add in new functionality. So the page has a link where people can provide feedback on the site and let us know what additional details, links or functions they would like to see. I encourage all Canberrans to jump online to have a look at what the new site can do and to let the government know what else they might like to see in the future.

**MS ORR:** Minister, how will the new map function in fix my street help constituents have access to a greater level of information about what the government is working on in their streets and suburbs?

**MR RAMSAY:** I thank Ms Orr for the supplementary question. One of the features I am most happy to see in this new version of fix my street is this new interactive map. The map shows the user at a suburb level if an issue has already been reported. This means members of the public need not duplicate reports to ensure that we know about the issue and it will save time for our hard working staff as there will be fewer duplicate jobs in the system.

At present the map shows our more common issues, including those relating to shopping trolleys, trees and shrubs, potholes and street lights. Access Canberra started with these four as they are some of the higher volume transactions. Scope remains to add to the list as time goes on as we make improvements to the system.

The new version of fix my street is also more accessible for those using assistance technologies online. The page has a text-based list of the issues reported, which will help those using screen reading and other similar technologies to still interact with the system and access it to its full capability.

Tools like this site help the government deliver services around Canberra more efficiently. It contributes to us actioning on average every three months requests to fix around 300 potholes, 850 streetlights, 110 shopping trolleys and over 2,000 issues with trees right across Canberra.

**MS CODY:** Minister, what other extra information will the new fix my street website provide?

**MR RAMSAY:** I thank Ms Cody for the supplementary question. The new version of fix my street is designed to give a holistic view of what the government is doing in your suburb. Once a user searches for their suburb, the system will provide them with the information about all the services that are available to them. They will be able to view things like when their garbage and recycling are next due for collection or where the mowing or street sweeping schedules are for the area, all in one convenient page.

It will also provide links to requests for services, such as repairs and replacements for their bins, the ability to report missed collections and a request for street sweeping. We will continue to look at what information Canberrans would like the page to provide and continue to innovate accordingly.

While the site will provide information in new and improved ways to Canberrans who are using it, my hope is that the newly launched website will mean that an even greater number of Canberrans will use it. This will mean that an even greater amount of information will be available to the government about what people are seeing and hearing out in the community so that our hard working public servants can ensure that our city is looking good and operating in the most efficient way possible.

Madam Speaker, I can assure you that I am a frequent user of the site and I encourage all Canberrans to be the same. This will ensure that our service delivery agencies like Access Canberra and Transport Canberra and City Services are best placed to get out and not only fix my street but your street as well.

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

### **Answers to questions on notice Questions Nos 604 and 619**

**MRS DUNNE:** Under standing order 118A, I ask for an explanation from the Minister for Mental Health in relation to the lateness of question on notice No 604, relating to custodial care, and No 619, relating to Brian Hennessy House, which were overdue from 15 October. I have not received the questions. I have checked with the Clerk's office and they have not received the questions as of 1.19 today, and I have received no communication from the minister or his office to give an explanation as to why the questions are late, so in accordance with standing order 118A(a) I seek an explanation from the minister.

**MR RATTENBURY:** I will need to seek some advice. I had understood that I had all of Mrs Dunne's questions on notice back to her, and I apologise that I have not. I will follow up those two specific questions and provide an answer as soon as I can.

Motion (by **Mrs Dunne**) agreed to:

Under standing order 118A(b), that the Assembly take note of the explanation.

### **Question No 442**

**MR COE:** Also under standing order 118A, I believe that question No 442, to the Minister for Transport and City Services, is also outstanding.

**MS FITZHARRIS:** I do apologise for a number outstanding in my Transport and City Services portfolio. I understand that my office did contact Mr Coe's office, Ms Lawder's office and Ms Le Couteur's office to apologise and say that I have put an "urgent" on these with the directorate.

### **Question No 667**

**MS LAWDER:** Under standing order 118A, I ask the Chief Minister for an explanation in relation to my question No 667, relating to a copy of the cost-benefit analysis of the city to lake project.

**MR BARR:** That question expired just last week whilst I was overseas. I signed off all of the remaining questions to all members in my portfolio immediately upon my return. I think the three that are in the papers have all now been provided to members. That was the case by lunchtime today.

## **Papers**

**Madam Speaker** presented the following papers:

Annual Reports (Government Agencies) Act, pursuant to section 15—Annual reports 2016-2017—

ACT Auditor-General—Report No 9/2017, dated 12 October 2017.

ACT Electoral Commission, dated 8 September 2017.

ACT Ombudsman, dated 1 October 2017.

Office of the Legislative Assembly, dated October 2017.

Auditor-General Act, pursuant to subsection 17(5)—Auditor-General's Report No 8/2017—Selected ACT Government agencies' management of public art, dated 12 October 2017.

These reports were circulated to members when the Assembly was not sitting.

Standing order 191—Amendments to:

Planning and Development Amendment Bill 2017, dated 22 September 2017.

Statute Law Amendment Bill 2017, dated 22 September 2017.

**Mr Barr** presented the following papers:

Annual Reports (Government Agencies) Act, pursuant to section 13—Annual reports 2016-2017—

Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate (4 volumes), dated 20 September 2017.

ACT Public Service—State of the Service Report (incorporating the Head of Service, ACT Public Service Workforce and ACT Public Sector), dated 4 October 2017.

Trans-Tasman Mutual Recognition Act, pursuant to section 7—

Trans-Tasman Mutual Recognition (Container Deposit Scheme) Endorsement 2017 (No 1)—Notifiable instrument NI2017-514, dated 6 October 2017.

Mutual Recognition (Container Deposit Scheme) Notice 2017 (No 1)—Notifiable instrument NI2017-515, dated 19 October 2017.

Annual Reports (Government Agencies) Act, pursuant to section 13—Annual reports 2016-2017—

Australian Capital Territory Insurance Authority, dated 5 October 2017.

Icon Water Limited, dated 27 September 2017.

Independent Competition and Regulatory Commission—Report 9 of 2017, dated 29 September 2017.



**Ms Berry** presented the following papers:

Annual Reports (Government Agencies) Act, pursuant to section 13—Annual report 2016-2017—Education Directorate, dated 22 September 2017.

Annual Reports (Government Agencies) Act, pursuant to section 13—Annual report 2016-2017—Land Development Agency, dated 3 October 2017.

### **Auditor-General's report No 7 of 2017—government response Paper and statement by minister**

**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) (3.22): For the information of members, I present the following paper:

Auditor-General Act, pursuant to subsection 21(1)—Auditor-General's Report No 7/2017—Public Housing Renewal Program—Government response.

I seek leave to make a statement.

Leave granted.

**MS BERRY:** On 27 June this year the Auditor-General's report on public housing renewal was tabled in the Legislative Assembly. In accordance with the Auditor-General Act 1996, I am required to prepare a written response to the report and present it to the Assembly within four months. I seek leave to provide that information now.

The Auditor-General's report has found that the public housing renewal program has sound governance and administration and effective management. It has also found that the relocation needs and preferences of housing tenants have been effectively recognised and managed by Housing ACT.

I would like to thank all of those who have been involved in supporting our public housing tenants to move home as part of this program, particularly community organisations that are now part of the Linking into New Communities Taskforce and the Transforming Communities Partnership.

This government is working to improve the quality of our public housing by delivering modern and efficient homes throughout our city. We remain committed to this program of renewal and are on track to provide 1,288 new public housing dwellings by 2019, with more than 600 homes transferred from the Public Housing Renewal Taskforce to the Commissioner for Social Housing so far.

The three recommendations in the Auditor-General's report related to reporting and modelling for the renewal program. I have tabled the ACT government's formal response to these recommendations.

I am pleased to provide this information to the Assembly.

## Papers

**Ms Fitzharris** presented the following papers:

Annual Reports (Government Agencies) Act, pursuant to section 13—Annual reports—

2015-2016—Health Directorate—Corrigendum, dated October 2017.

2016-2017—Health Directorate, dated 4 October 2017.

Health Practitioner Regulation National Law and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2017 (Queensland—Act No 32 of 2017).

Annual Reports (Government Agencies) Act, pursuant to section 13—Annual report 2016-2017—Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate (2 volumes), including the ACT Public Cemeteries Authority, dated 3 October 2017.

Auditor-General Act, pursuant to subsection 21(1)—Auditor-General's Report No 5/2017—Maintenance of Selected Road Infrastructure Assets—Government response.

Annual Reports (Government Agencies) Act, pursuant to section 13—Annual report 2016-2017—ACT Building and Construction Industry Training Fund Authority, dated 13 September 2017.

**Mr Gentleman** presented the following papers:

Annual Reports (Government Agencies) Act, pursuant to section 13—Annual report 2016-2017—ACT Policing, dated 29 September 2017, in accordance with the Policing Arrangement between the Commonwealth and Australian Capital Territory Governments.

Crimes (Controlled Operations) Act, pursuant to subsection 28(9)—Annual Report 2016-17—ACT Policing Controlled Operations, dated 31 August 2017, together with a corrigendum to the Report.

Crimes (Surveillance Devices) Act, pursuant to subsection 38(4)—Annual Report 2016-17—ACT Policing Surveillance Devices, dated 31 August 2017, together with a corrigendum to the Report.

Annual Reports (Government Agencies) Act, pursuant to section 13—Annual report 2016-2017—Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate, dated 18 September 2017.

**Mr Ramsay** presented the following papers:

Annual Reports (Government Agencies) Act, pursuant to section 13—Annual reports 2016-2017—

Director of Public Prosecutions, dated 6 October 2017.

Justice and Community Safety Directorate, dated 6 October 2017.

Legal Aid Commission (ACT), dated 15 September 2017.

Public Trustee and Guardian for the ACT, dated 5 October 2017, together with a corrigendum to the Report.

Annual Reports (Government Agencies) Act, pursuant to section 13—Annual report 2016-2017—ACT Gambling and Racing Commission, dated 19 September 2017.

Annual Reports (Government Agencies) Act, pursuant to section 13—Annual report 2016-2017—Cultural Facilities Corporation, dated 4 October 2017.

**Mr Rattenbury** presented the following papers:

Climate Change and Greenhouse Gas Reduction Act, pursuant to subsection 19(4)—Climate Change Council annual report 2016-17.

Annual Reports (Government Agencies) Act, pursuant to section 13—Annual report 2016-2017—Office of the Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment, dated 29 August 2017.

Annual Reports (Government Agencies) Act, pursuant to section 13—Annual report 2016-2017—ACT Human Rights Commission, dated 6 October 2017.

Office of the National Rail Safety Regulator—Annual report 2016-2017.

### **Auditor-General's report No 6 of 2017—government response Paper and statement by minister**

**MR RATTENBURY** (Kurrajong—Minister for Climate Change and Sustainability, Minister for Justice, Consumer Affairs and Road Safety, Minister for Corrections and Minister for Mental Health) (3.: For the information of members, I present the following paper:

Auditor-General Act, pursuant to subsection 21(1)—Auditor-General's Report No 6/2017—Mental Health Services—Transition from Acute Care—Government response.

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

Leave granted.

**MR RATTENBURY:** I am tabling the government's response to the findings and recommendations of the Auditor-General's performance audit on mental health services—transition from acute care. In summary, the government has agreed to all seven recommendations of the audit. I am also pleased to inform members that the government has made significant progress in implementing the recommendations.

Mental health services are a critical part of our healthcare system. The government recognises the seriousness of mental health and illness in our community and the need to provide coordinated and accessible services to people who need help. As part of this, health staff work closely with the mental health service providers in our community when people are transitioning from acute-based services and treatment. It

also includes supporting patients as they transition to these community-based services.

That is why the ACT government has agreed to all seven of the Auditor-General's recommendations and we are implementing these recommendations as a priority. The focus of this work initially has been on improving ACT Health's electronic clinical record system, MHAGIC, which has recently been upgraded. The system will now be known as MAJICeR, the Mental Health, Alcohol and Drug Services, Justice Health Integrated Care eRecord, and is anticipated to go live this month, October.

The new system will enhance the ACT's clinical reporting capabilities for inpatient and community episodes of care and also help to develop multidisciplinary communication pathways for those treating patients. As part of the implementation, ACT Health will ensure that policy, procedure and guidance manuals support the changes to the electronic records. These will form the basis for training of staff.

Another focus has been on reviewing the adult community mental health services model of care, which is currently out for final consultation. This model of care is a redesign of the existing ACMHS and aims to improve access, efficiency and clinical outcomes for mental health consumers. This model of care will provide a more integrated and contemporary service provision within the adult community mental health services.

ACT Health will work to improve processes regarding reviewing recovery plans and treatment and care plans in the adult mental health unit as a priority. A dedicated mental health, justice health, alcohol and drug services recovery planning working group has been established to progress this recommendation.

While the ACT government has a strong record of investment in the provision of mental health services, we will further strengthen the delivery and coordination of mental health services for those in our community who need them the most through the establishment of the office for mental health. The office will also be another way that the implementation of the audit recommendations will continue through 2018.

As members will be aware and as I have said in the Assembly before, the office for mental health is a key priority for me as the ACT's first dedicated Minister for Mental Health. I believe a body such as this has the potential to make real and lasting change for mental health consumers, carers and their families.

In the context of the audit report, my intent is that the new office will have a role in coordinating a range of existing support services provided by both the government and the community sector and ensuring that nobody is falling through the gaps. It will also support services to work together to ensure that the transition of care from acute-based services to community-based settings is streamlined for those using these services.

As I have said before, mental health services are a critical part of our healthcare system and the ACT government is committed to continuing to invest in better services and facilities to support some of our community's most vulnerable to stay well in the community and reduce the demand on the inpatient setting.

The 2017-18 budget saw \$5.3 million invested in a range of programs and services to improve the mental health of Canberrans, including continued funding for headspace and the detention exit outreach program. We have also invested \$1.8 million to reduce the incidence of suicide in our community through funding for the Black Dog Institute's LifeSpan suicide prevention program.

Of course, a range of other services are being provided right across our community directly by government through things such as our community mental health services as well as the more acute end of the spectrum in the emergency department and the adult mental health unit, then through a range of community organisations that are funded by the government to provide support and, of course, the additional resources they bring to it through fundraising.

In closing let me say that we have a system that works reasonably well here in the ACT when it comes to mental health but I think that we can make it work better. That is what we are trying to achieve and why we are investing so much effort in getting it right. And that is why the government has agreed to all recommendations from the Auditor-General's report.

There is a lot of work across the community. My focus in the next couple of years is to ensure that these services are well coordinated and provide a clear pathway for people who come into contact with these services. I am pleased to table the government's response today and commend it to the Assembly.

## Papers

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

Annual Reports (Government Agencies) Act, pursuant to section 13—Annual report 2016-2017—Community Services Directorate, dated 19 September 2017.  
Annual Reports (Government Agencies) Act, pursuant to section 13—Annual report 2016-2017—Long Service Leave Authority, dated 18 September 2017.

**Mr Gentleman** presented the following papers:

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

Legislation Act, pursuant to section 64—

Civil Law (Wrongs) Act—Civil Law (Wrongs) Professional Standards Council Appointment 2017 (No 3)—Disallowable Instrument DI2017-235 (LR, 21 September 2017).

Climate Change and Greenhouse Gas Reduction Act—Climate Change and Greenhouse Gas Reduction (Greenhouse Gas Emissions Measurement Method) Determination 2017—Disallowable Instrument DI2017-250 (LR, 3 October 2017).

Crimes (Sentence Administration) Act—Crimes (Sentence Administration) (Sentence Administration Board) Appointment 2017 (No 13)—Disallowable Instrument DI2017-236 (LR, 21 September 2017).

## Duties Act—

Duties (Corporate Reconstruction Transaction Guidelines) Determination 2017 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2017-229 (LR, 14 September 2017).

Duties (Intergenerational Rural Transfer Guidelines) Determination 2017 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2017-230 (LR, 14 September 2017).

Electoral Act—Electoral Commission (Acting Electoral Commissioner) Appointment 2017 (No 2)—Disallowable Instrument DI2017-245 (LR, 21 September 2017).

Emergencies Act—Emergencies (Bushfire Council Members) Appointment 2017 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2017-233 (LR, 14 September 2017).

Energy Efficiency (Cost of Living) Improvement Act—Energy Efficiency (Cost of Living) Improvement (Priority Household Target) Determination 2017, including a regulatory impact statement—Disallowable Instrument DI2017-251 (LR, 3 October 2017).

Official Visitor Act—Official Visitor (Children and Young People) Appointment 2017 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2017-225 (LR, 14 September 2017).

Public Place Names Act—Public Place Names (Taylor) Determination 2017 (No 3)—Disallowable Instrument DI2017-244 (LR, 21 September 2017).

Public Sector Management Act—Public Sector Management Amendment Standards 2017 (No 2)—Disallowable Instrument DI2017-246 (LR, 21 September 2017).

## Road Transport (General) Act—

Road Transport (General) Application of Road Transport Legislation Declaration 2017 (No 7)—Disallowable Instrument DI2017-234 (LR, 14 September 2017).

Road Transport (Offences) Amendment Regulation 2017 (No 1)—Subordinate Law SL2017-30 (LR, 14 September 2017).

Road Transport (Public Passenger Services) Act—Road Transport (Public Passenger Services) Maximum Fares for Taxi Services Determination 2017 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2017-247 (LR, 26 September 2017).

## Smoke-Free Public Places Act—

Smoke-Free Public Places (Public Transport Stations) Declaration 2017 (No 1), including a regulatory impact statement—Disallowable Instrument DI2017-249 (LR, 26 September 2017).

Smoke-Free Public Places (Public Transport Stops) Declaration 2017 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2017-248 (LR, 26 September 2017).

## Taxation Administration Act—

Taxation Administration (Amounts Payable—Disability Duty Concession Scheme) Determination 2017 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2017-228 (LR, 14 September 2017).

Taxation Administration (Amounts Payable—Home Buyer Concession Scheme) Determination 2017 (No 2)—Disallowable Instrument DI2017-226 (LR, 14 September 2017).

Taxation Administration (Amounts Payable—Loose-fill Asbestos Insulation Eradication Buyback Concession Scheme) Determination 2017 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2017-231 (LR, 14 September 2017).

Taxation Administration (Amounts Payable—Loose-fill Asbestos Insulation Eradication Buyback Concession Scheme—Eligible Impacted Properties) Determination 2017 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2017-232 (LR, 14 September 2017).

Taxation Administration (Amounts Payable—Pensioner Duty Concession Scheme) Determination 2017 (No 2)—Disallowable Instrument DI2017-227 (LR, 14 September 2017).

Territory Records Act—

Territory Records (Advisory Council) Appointment 2017 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2017-237 (LR, 19 September 2017).

Territory Records (Advisory Council) Appointment 2017 (No 2)—Disallowable Instrument DI2017-238 (LR, 19 September 2017).

Territory Records (Advisory Council) Appointment 2017 (No 3)—Disallowable Instrument DI2017-239 (LR, 19 September 2017).

Territory Records (Advisory Council) Appointment 2017 (No 4)—Disallowable Instrument DI2017-240 (LR, 19 September 2017).

Territory Records (Advisory Council) Appointment 2017 (No 5)—Disallowable Instrument DI2017-241 (LR, 19 September 2017).

Territory Records (Advisory Council) Appointment 2017 (No 6)—Disallowable Instrument DI2017-242 (LR, 19 September 2017).

Territory Records (Advisory Council) Appointment 2017 (No 7)—Disallowable Instrument DI2017-243 (LR, 19 September 2017).

## **Delivering the better Canberra we promised**

### **Ministerial statement**

**MR BARR** (Kurrajong—Chief Minister, Treasurer, Minister for Economic Development and Minister for Tourism and Major Events) (3.35): I am pleased to report on the government's policy and legislative achievements one year on from our re-election. Since the government's re-election last October we have been working to deliver what Canberrans voted for. The commitments we took to the election focused on health, education, transport and better services for the community.

Over the past year we have been building better schools, constructing an integrated transport system across Canberra and creating better links to our city from other major cities, providing essential health care where and when people need it and supporting our community with even better services. We have introduced and secured Assembly support for significant legislation to:

- strengthen the response to domestic, family and sexual violence;
- establish a new City Renewal Authority and Suburban Land Agency;
- tighten access to cash facilities in gaming venues and provide incentives for venues to diversify their business model away from gaming;
- make a night out safer through new drink spiking and liquor laws;
- automatically recognise civil unions and same-sex marriages that have occurred overseas; and
- establish an Australian-first Reconciliation Day public holiday.

We want to keep the Canberra we love but make it better. Our focus over the past year has been on funding and delivering our comprehensive election platform across our priorities of health services, better schools and facilities for our kids, a transport system that caters for a growing city, better and tidier suburbs and a strong and job-creating economy. We are renewing our city and delivering better and more essential services to more Canberrans. Our balanced budget position provides a firm basis to deliver the government's policies.

The ACT is the fastest growing state or territory in Australia and the ACT government is continuing to invest in the infrastructure and services Canberrans need as our city continues to grow. Tracks are in the ground on light rail stage 1, and new rapid bus services will keep Canberrans moving. And we have delivered free off-peak and weekend bus transport for concession cardholders as a key cost-of-living and community participation measure.

We have expanded the emergency department at the Canberra Hospital and started further significant upgrades at the hospital, boosted funding to attract more nurses to our health system, launched a HIV prevention pre-exposure prophylaxis trial and opened the bush healing farm. We have started shaping the future of education in the territory through engagement with students, parents and teachers. We are:

- funding safe schools to make sure our public schools include and support everyone;
- delivering significant school upgrades;
- expanding capacity in our city's growth areas; and
- ahead of schedule in the rollout of electronic devices for high school and college students.

The government has made a record investment in out of home care, established the office for disability and provided extra counselling support services for LGBTIQ Canberrans during this divisive, non-binding marriage equality postal survey.

We have established the City Renewal Authority and Suburban Land Agency, created a major events fund to attract more large events and shows to our city. We have reduced caravan registration costs for Canberrans and opened two new solar farms within the ACT to help us reach our 100 per cent renewable target by 2020.



There are many important commitments and areas of work that the government will focus on in the next 12 months. We will continue to strengthen the territory's budget position in parallel to our tax reform agenda. This is to create a fairer Canberra, a stronger economy and a more vibrant city. Work will continue on stage 1 and the planning and development of stage 2 of the city-wide light rail network as well as boosting our bus network. We will open Canberra's teaching and rehabilitation public hospital at the University of Canberra.

Over the next 12 months the ACT will welcome our second international carrier to Canberra airport, offering services to the Middle East and beyond. We will continue working with the New South Wales and federal governments on a range of practical speed and scheduling improvements on the train line between Canberra and Sydney. We will also continue to develop export and investment opportunities for Canberra businesses based around our international engagement strategy and we will work to boost our capabilities in defence, cyber security and the space technology industry to further diversify the territory's economy.

Significant road infrastructure projects, such as the duplication of Cotter Road, will be completed and we will focus our efforts on making housing more affordable for those who are struggling, including continuing the implementation of tax reform, particularly the cutting of stamp duty, as recommended in the Productivity Commission report released today by federal Treasurer, Scott Morrison.

The government is focused on what Canberrans value most and what they want from their city. We are now a city which is home to more than 409,000 people and, on the current rate of population growth, we will exceed 425,000 people by 2020. Now is the time to shape our city as we grow so that we remain one of the most livable cities in the world.

Canberrans have demonstrated over the last five elections that they want a progressive government and in 2016 they endorsed my government's plan to make the Canberra we love even better, and that is exactly what we are delivering in this place now. I present a copy of the following statement:

Delivering the better Canberra we promised—Ministerial statement, 24 October 2017.

I move:

That the Assembly take note of the paper.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

## **Government achievements 2017**

### **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) (3.42): In December last year I outlined some of

the government's and my own key priorities for this term of government. I am pleased to be able to provide an update on the progress of those priorities and share some of the successes in my portfolio areas. As I said last year, the work of government and the role of ministers are about having those continual conversations with the community and delivering on the policy platform that we took to last year's election.

It has been an engaging and inspiring year in my role as Minister for Education and Early Childhood Development. It has been rewarding to work with our fantastic educators, teachers and school leaders to deliver on key education priorities and to see the great work they do to broaden the horizon for our students and the community as a whole.

In one year the government has built on investment and innovation across the education system and has delivered continued implementation of the schools for all program, with five new school psychologists to be employed over the next six months and 15 more over the next three years. From term 1 in 2018 every public school student from years 7 to 11 will be provided with an electronic device for their studies and the ACT government will not give up the push for a truly needs-based funding approach to ensure that every student gets the funding they need.

At the system level, work is well underway on improving the ACT's education system, together with each school and community. In February this year I launched a community conversation that will result in a strategy for the future of education in Canberra, one with equity and inclusion at its heart. So far we have heard from over 2,500 people as part of this conversation, including directly from students and young people, parents and carers, teachers, principals, school staff, public servants and the early childhood and community sectors. At the heart of this conversation is a commitment to equity and to ensuring that every child and young person in the ACT can access the education that will make them the best they can be and give them the best opportunities in life.

Quality infrastructure is also vital. This year's budget delivered more than \$100 million for capital upgrades in schools across Canberra. The government is delivering on its promise for record investment in our schools. Across Canberra there have been upgrades, big and small, that are meeting future need for spaces where students can learn and grow.

A community and global conversation has also continued this year about how we can build and advance support for true gender equity. As a member of Australia's first parliament with a majority of women and as Minister for Women, this is something that has been important to me and something that we can advance as a community.

Most notably for Canberra women and girls, in March was I pleased to launch the first women's action plan 2017-2019, which outlines key actions that will be taken across government to improve the health and wellbeing of Canberra women. As I have said previously, maintaining the momentum in these areas remains a key goal for me because true equity takes sustained campaigns that work on behaviour change and lead by example.

Next week the government will partner with the YWCA and run its first biannual gender equity forum to keep that momentum and focus. The Ministerial Advisory Council on Women continues to track the progress of the women's action plan and has a rolling program of reporting directly from directorates on what they have achieved and what is next on the program of works.

One area of significant achievement is in sport and recreation. Elite sportswomen are important role models in promoting participation. I have been happy to have delivered Labor's commitment to increasing support to our pinnacle women's teams, the Canberra Capitals and Canberra United. Each now has longer term funding support, allowing them to build their programs and further engage in the promotion and development of their respective sports in the community.

The Capitals, of course, also have a new home at the National Convention Centre, courtesy of a \$500,000 investment from the territory. In addition, we remain committed to ensuring that the sporting environment for women and girls—in particular, change rooms and toilet facilities—is safe and welcoming and meets the needs of all participants.

The ACT government made a clear commitment through its safer families program announced in 2016. This work continues, through my portfolio responsibility as Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence and with the Office of the Coordinator-General for Family Safety. As we expected, as awareness grows on this issue so does reporting and the need for greater service response.

Over the last year the family safety hub co-design process has allowed for considerable work to be undertaken with groups of Canberrans to ensure that we design and deliver a program that will help us address family violence across government and the community. To undertake this work, a co-design team and a critical friends team were established to help guide the co-design process. Through the process, the government has heard from 50 front-line workers from services working with victims and perpetrators and 20 people with a lived experience of domestic and family violence.

We have provided insight walk-through sessions with hundreds of local government and community stakeholders, including walk-through sessions for MLAs of all parties. I will continue to seek the support of all Assembly colleagues for this important work because, as I have said, this is a cultural and social change that we seek to make, and it must be driven from all corners of the government and the community.

Finally, I want to provide an update on the progress of another key plank of the government's policy platform—the need for new approaches to housing so that more Canberra families can secure a house that meets their needs. Last week I hosted a housing and homelessness summit which brought together over 200 representatives from across the community, industry and government to discuss and refine ideas to reduce homelessness, to strengthen social housing assistance and to increase affordable rental and affordable home ownership.

There was extensive involvement from all parts of the housing sector in the lead-up to the summit. As we now sit down to develop a new strategy, I hope these perspectives will continue to be present. At the summit I announced three initiatives that are an important first step to progressing this work: a housing innovation fund of \$1 million to seed new affordable housing initiatives; the first annual affordable public and community housing supply target; and a new affordable home purchase database to ensure that the subsidy the community provides for affordable land release is provided fairly and equitably.

The government has also focused on making sure that those facing homelessness continue to have access to quality support services. Of course, in public housing the unprecedented renewal program has continued its work, replacing more than 10 per cent of the ACT's public housing dwellings through an investment of more than half a billion dollars.

Through our wideranging conversations across the community we are continuing to reflect on and talk about the design locations for the remaining dwellings in both new and established areas. On 1 July 2017 the Suburban Land Agency was established to promote suburban land development and urban renewal in established centres and suburbs outside declared urban renewal precincts. As an enabler of housing types and a shaper of future suburbs, this agency is key to all of the government's housing goals. Its formation marks another achievement of the government's first year.

I want to take this opportunity to thank the many generous people who have contributed to the achievements in my portfolio areas. In the last year I have been constantly reminded of the commitment, professionalism and community-mindedness that so many Canberrans have. They have been central to the success of this work. I look forward to more achievements in the year ahead, earned together with the many great contributors in our community. Madam Speaker, I present the following paper:

Government achievements—One year in—Ministerial statement, 24 October 2017.

I move:

That the Assembly take note of the paper.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

## **Residential Tenancies Amendment Bill 2017**

Debate resumed from 14 September 2017, on motion by **Mr Ramsay**:

That this bill be agreed to in principle.

**MR PARTON** (Brindabella) (3.50): This is an interesting bill from a number of aspects. The Residential Tenancies Act already caters for bond guarantees, but it does not say much about them other than that they are an alternative form of bond. This

amendment bill appears to be something of an emergency measure in that its main purpose is to ban the sale of commercial guarantees for residential tenancy bonds while the government catches its breath and decides how to regulate these. These are very new products but they are being offered right now, and this bill aims to press pause so that the market operation for the sale of commercial guarantees is effectively in suspended animation while the government and the bureaucracy work out exactly what to do with them.

The stipulations of the bill provide a set of high level requirements which, from where I sit, appear to line up pretty consistently with the current bond process. The bill requires that the terms and conditions for a commercial guarantee must be registered by each vendor with the Commissioner for Fair Trading. Each vendor must apply to register their standard guarantee contract and, in turn, a commercial guarantee sold to a tenant to indemnify a lessor must comply with the standard guarantee contract terms and conditions.

To some extent this is another case of the government providing us with an incomplete bill and the regulations are still to be figured out. I would hope that the terms to be prescribed by regulation in the standard guarantee contract are not so excessive that they deter the provision of commercial guarantees as a viable alternative to cash bonds.

In relation to regulation-making powers, the minister has given himself a lot of wriggle room in the requirements he can impose on vendors seeking to sell commercial guarantees within the territory. The regulation-making powers allow Mr Ramsay to determine a number of things, including the terms and conditions to be offered in commercial guarantees, the matters that must be excluded, the conditions for applying to register a standard guarantee contract and also information required to register a standard guarantee contract. The minister will be able to set fees associated with this bill, but it is unclear what the fees will be and whom they might apply to or what they might apply to.

I am not sure if you have noticed, Madam Assistant Speaker—I dare say you probably have—but this government is building quite a reputation when it comes to fees and charges. Certainly that is what I am told whenever I am doorknocking in Tuggeranong or hosting shopping centre engagement sessions. I am sure that operators like Snug will be waiting with bated breath to see what the government will come up with on that fee front.

There are a few things I would ask the minister to keep in mind as he develops his regulations to administer this bill, to enable schedule 2 to come into effect. First, the minister's regulations must not impose a burden on lessors by loading them up with excessive administrative prescription. This will simply deter their ability to make a claim against the commercial guarantee. If so deterred, they will vote with their feet by avoiding commercial guarantees in preference for cash bonds.

If this bill is to provide a genuine alternative to cash bond lodgement, the registration process and costs for standard guarantee contracts should not be a disincentive to using these, nor should the administrative process be structured in a way that adds to

the taxpayers' burden in funding government oversight. We have far too much of a tax burden already.

The commercial guarantee vendors must be free to operate in the ACT market with the minimum of red tape. But, by the same token, product descriptions and disclosures must be clear and transparent, with lessors and tenants provided with a practical comprehension of what is to be offered or not offered in the guarantee. The lessors' claims process requirements must be made clear and the discretion of lessors to choose a cash bond option must be protected.

In relation to the rental bond trust account, a significant move by lessors away from cash bonds could affect its earnings and the use of these funds. And the bill's explanation does not address the implications of this for the budget and the funding levels for ACAT and also the Tenants Union. The minister might wish to elaborate on this at some stage, and I am sure he will.

I note that the JACS scrutiny committee has brought a few things to the Assembly's attention. While the scrutiny committee did not have a grave concern about the retrospectivity of schedule 1 of the bill, it does bring to the Assembly's attention that providers are prevented from selling commercial guarantee products until such time as schedule 2 of the bill comes into effect. As I mentioned earlier, this denies tenants an opportunity to obtain a rental bond at a much lower cost, providing the landlord agrees of course.

In the same section the scrutiny report observes that the original explanatory statement placed on the ACT legislation register at the time of the bill's introduction was replaced on 28 September. The minister should note that many stakeholders are heavily reliant on these statements, both on the government side and the opposition side, as well as effective industry and consumer sectors. And while I appreciate the pressures that staff are under in regard to these processes it would be useful if the minister could in future let us know that a change has occurred. He might also explain why a revised statement was necessary in this particular instance.

The scrutiny report also brings some human rights issues to the attention of the minister in relation to regulation-making powers in section 136 of schedule 2. In this case the committee has actually asked the minister for a response and perhaps the minister could share it with us today.

In conclusion, I have not received any indication that there are significant problems with the bill; nor have I reached any such conclusion. The Tenants Union raised some concerns about it but that is not unexpected. I have had a conversation also with the developer of one of the main products, who was not displeased that we were going down a path of what he described as formalising his company's entrance into this market.

On balance, we believe the principles underpinning the bill are acceptable. The provisions seem to present an opportunity to safeguard lessors, tenants and vendors of commercial guarantees alike and this is reinforced by having the overarching standard guarantee contract terms and conditions registered with the Commissioner of Fair

Trading. I look forward to seeing the regulations that will enable schedule 2 in particular to be activated and the reaction of industry and consumer groups to that.

**MS LE COUTEUR** (Murrumbidgee) (3.57): I rise today to support the bill. I also support the retrospective commencement of this application in relation to schemes in schedule 1. I understand that the need for retrospectivity is to ensure that any current operators in the marketplace who are offering bond guarantees cannot offer them on a commercial basis until such time as there is appropriate regulation of a standardised contract. This bill will effectively prevent these guarantees being accepted as an alternative to the bond while the government does further work to regulate them.

I am pleased that there is an effort to regulate the operations of the commercial bond guarantors because there is a significant risk that they may become very much like the payday loan scheme and end up being something which is not in fact in the long-term interests of tenants. If it does end up like the payday loan scheme it could well be an example of private operators potentially exploiting the vulnerable. Those who are unable to afford a bond are those who are least able to manage unnecessary payments to a third party in lieu of a bond. This regulation needs to include requirements to keep records of all commercial bond guarantee contracts, including administration and reporting to the Commissioner for Fair Trading.

We already know that people in the ACT pay the second highest rents in the country and that more and more people are entering the rental market as a way of ensuring a roof over their heads. Those who rent in most cases are unable to buy and are then at the mercy of landlords and the rental market. This is why we need a robust Rental Tenancies Act that protects renters' rights as well as spelling out the obligations of landlords.

I note that when this bill was tabled there was discussion about the rental bond loan scheme, and I reiterate that the scheme should be much more widely publicised to ensure that those who are struggling to accumulate enough money for a bond are able to access a loan through the scheme.

I also support the changes identified in schedule 3 of the bill which will allow electronic lodgement of bonds and allow for them to be lodged without a signature. And I very much hope and assume that this means that it will also enable quicker processing of bonds at the termination of the lease. Delays in refunds can lead to more hardship because, in effect, a person will have for a period two bonds out, not one. For many people that is a considerable imposition.

**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) (4.00): I support this bill in its aim of assisting vulnerable Canberrans. Access to a secure tenancy in the private rental market can provide housing security for individuals and families. Whether you are transitioning from public housing or leaving the family home for the first time, it is not always easy to take that step.

The government has worked towards ensuring that people have support when making this transition. Work has been undertaken to help protect people from not having to unintentionally incur debt when trying to get established in the private rental market and this bill is part of that broader work. It seeks to regulate commercial rental guarantees for the protection of ACT consumers.

Under the proposed regulations the Commissioner for Fair Trading will approve standard guarantee contracts to ensure that they are fair to landlords and renters. Those with new ideas or products aimed at improving housing affordability are welcome to put them forward for Canberra, subject to these requirements.

I just recently held a housing and homelessness summit, the first for the ACT, to explore some of these possibilities and options. I launched at the summit an innovation fund to draw out possible affordable housing initiatives, but every initiative and every idea needs to be well thought out to ensure that it meets the need within our community. The government has continued and will continue to ensure that individuals in search of a home have laws that ensure their interests are protected. In developing these amendments the government has sought the expertise of key stakeholders in the rental housing sector.

The stakeholders the government has heard from have given clear and expert opinion, which I am grateful for. They want to support encouraging new initiatives that can make the affordable rental market more accessible to disadvantaged individuals and families, but they also agree that the long-term interests of financially vulnerable tenants who want to find secure homes must always come first.

It is in this context that the government is taking the opportunity to review our support for people who might be struggling in the rental market. Low and middle income earners who are able to sustain a tenancy in the private rental market but cannot afford a bond may be eligible for the ACT government's rental bond loan scheme. The scheme offers up to 90 per cent of the rental bond amount under their tenancy agreement. The bond loans are interest free and are paid back to the ACT government over 20 months. People who qualify for a bond also receive a grant of \$100 to help them sustain their tenancy.

From the tenant's perspective the tenant will be required to pay back the loan to the government in full but with no interest and in a way which is affordable. From the lessor's perspective they can claim on the bond in the same that they would have if the tenant had paid the bond in full. This applies whether or not the loan has been fully paid back to the government. This bill demonstrates that the ACT is engaged with new developments in the sector and has put the needs of vulnerable Canberrans at the forefront of our policy response on this issue.

**MR STEEL** (Murrumbidgee) (4.03): I rise today to support the Residential Tenancies Amendment Bill 2017. I welcome the move by the minister, in the bill, to regulate the new bond guarantee industry from the outset as part of the ACT government's proactive approach in regulating new industries to ensure that they operate for the benefit of all Canberrans. I also welcome the move by the minister to facilitate the electronic payment of traditional bonds both online and through direct debit.



Like many Canberrans I have had experience in the property market as a renter and I know from personal experience that it can be difficult to cobble together a bond for a rental property, which can be up to or in excess of \$1,000 for an individual, particularly for people who are on lower incomes and in insecure work.

Recently released figures from the census show that almost 32 per cent of all Canberra dwellings were rented, as were 60 per cent of all apartment dwellings in the ACT, the latter of which are disproportionately housing younger Canberrans. For a university student working part time who wants to live close to the ANU and their place of employment in the retail sector, the bond can be a whole fortnight's salary or more, which is a significant sum and can be difficult to budget for.

While the bond is redeemable at the end of a tenancy, a renter will not see the bond returned until they exit the rental market. Should bond guarantee products deliver on their full promise, they may provide lower income Canberrans relief from having to make that large up-front payment. My understanding of the way that these schemes work is that a renter will pay an initial non-refundable fee at the beginning of their tenancy to the guarantee provider, which will be a fraction of what the bond amount would have been.

If there are no property damages at the end of a lease, the renter has avoided paying the cost of a full bond. If there are damages, the guarantee provider will immediately pay out to the landlord and then may engage in a repayment plan with the lessee to cover the gap between their initial fee and the amount recovered by the landlord from the guarantee provider. This would mean that the lessee would not be worse off than they would have been had they paid a traditional bond, and the lessee gains the flexibility to pay the damages off over a longer period through a payment plan.

I understand that the company Snug has indicated its intention to offer a rental guarantee product in the market, which will charge an initial annual fee of \$110 for the first year of a tenancy for a one-and-a-half thousand dollar bond. In subsequent years, the fee would be reduced to \$60 for the second year, \$53 for the third year and \$45 for any subsequent years.

This option could be an alternative for cash-poor members of the community to avoid up-front bond payments, but it is important that it is regulated properly. The government has an important role to play in regulating any proposed market and bond conditions. The ACT government already has strict regulations on bond conditions to prevent exploitation from lessors. For example, it is illegal for lessors themselves to hold a bond. All bonds must instead go to the independent government-run Office of Rental Bonds, which prevents lessors from claiming the bond as damages without due process. This is critically important for renters, who are already subject to a power imbalance.

If there are not stringent regulations surrounding a proposed bond guarantees marketplace at its commencement, financially vulnerable people could be at risk of exploitation. That is why all commercial guarantee products will now require approval from the ACT Commissioner for Fair Trading, part of the Chief Minister,

Treasury and Economic Development Directorate, before they can be accepted by landlords in place of a bond.

The regulatory requirements will henceforth be subject to statutory instruments and not require further legislative changes, allowing the government and the commissioner to respond to the flow of events in the market and any potential loopholes or evidence of exploitation as they arise. This bill also has retrospective effect so as to ensure that it covers the market from the outset.

The government will be able to require commercial guarantees to include certain terms by making regulations. The commissioner will have to consider those terms in deciding whether to approve a bond guarantee contract. The commissioner will also be able to set conditions on the grant of an approval. Whatever individual rules the government puts in place, they will be guided by the principle that no commercial guarantee situation should result in the lessee being in a worse financial position than they would have been in the default bond payment scenario.

For example, the government may decide as part of the requirements that tenants will not be liable for further payment to a landlord if their bond is claimed for damages beyond the gap between the initial fee that they have already paid for the bond guarantee product and the amount in damages owed, up to the amount paid to the landlord. The government may also decide to regulate the exact specifics of any proposed repayment plans, including the period length and interest rate.

It is important to note that Housing ACT already has an excellent bond loan program that is both generous in its financial provisions and comprehensive in its eligibility criteria. Housing ACT currently offers an interest-free loan of up to 90 per cent of the total bond amount to people who wish to access the private rental market, and \$100 of that can be offered as a grant which does not require repayment, depending on income and asset assessments.

To ensure that people have financial certainty, which is also critical for those on lower incomes or whose work hours fluctuate, Housing ACT has a pre-approval period of 90 days for prospective tenants under the loan program so that they can be ready for any property that they are given the okay for at any given moment. Once a property is secured and the tenants have moved in, Housing ACT will transfer the loan to the Office of Rental Bonds themselves and provide a generous three-month grace period before the small repayments need to commence. The bond loans offered are interest free.

The program is not just available to low-income earners like students. It is available to middle-income earners as well, subject to a means test. The introduction of a bond insurance scheme in this bill is not so much about filling a gap in the current market, because the ACT government already has a rental bond scheme; it is about improving consumer choices and making sure that those choices are properly regulated.

This bill will facilitate the direct debiting of traditional bond payments and an online system of bond payments as well. This will be a significant improvement from the

previous situation, which required payment either by mail or in person at Fyshwick, which is burdensome and inaccessible for many renters.

Bond guarantees make the promise of providing innovation and greater choice in the payment of bonds, but they must be properly regulated. In the context of our continuing discussion about a housing strategy for the ACT, the introduction of a tightly regulated commercial bond guarantee market is important, and our government wants to ensure that the potential financial exploitation that comes with that is limited.

Renters around Canberra will also be assisted by the introduction of electronic payment of traditional bonds in this bill. Together, these measures build on the ACT government's commitment to providing housing options for all Canberrans. I commend the bill to the Assembly.

**MR RAMSAY** (Ginninderra—Attorney-General, Minister for Regulatory Services, Minister for the Arts and Community Events and Minister for Veterans and Seniors) (4.11), in reply: I thank Mr Parton, Ms Le Couteur, the Deputy Chief Minister and Mr Steel for their contributions to this debate. It is an important debate on an important matter that is dealing with innovation and the fostering of innovation and also with important protection for tenants and vulnerable members of our society.

I note that Mr Parton raised the question of the online version of the explanatory statement. I reiterate the explanation that the statement that was uploaded originally was an out-of-date version with missing schedules and that it was replaced by the Parliamentary Counsel's Office with the version that was presented to the Assembly and to the committee. So there has not been any change—simply that update to make sure that it was the right one that was up there.

The Residential Tenancies Amendment Bill introduces two changes to the ways that rental bonds are managed in the ACT. The first of these changes will regulate alternatives to a traditional bond lodged with the Office of Rental Bonds, and the second will make changes to allow an online bonds system for the electronic lodgement of bonds.

The government is committed to working with the community to address the issue of housing affordability. We have heard the concerns of the community about the cost of housing and we appreciate the need for stable and secure housing. Housing is particularly important for the vulnerable members of our community. It was these members of the community that the government had in mind when considering the new products emerging in the market that offer an alternative to the traditional bonds. The government is aware of two of these products in the Australian market, neither of which is operating in Canberra, though one has signalled an intention to do so.

As the Deputy Chief Minister has noted, the recent housing affordability and homelessness summit was a wonderful demonstration of the government engaging with the community to cast the net wide to examine solutions to one of the most important issues facing our community. With this bill the government makes clear the statement that we support innovation but not at the expense of vulnerable people. The government is absolutely committed to an inclusive community where everyone

belongs. While we place great importance on working with innovators, we do not support innovation that does not take account of the impact on the vulnerable people in our community.

The products proposed to be regulated by the bill operate by a three-way contract between the landlord, the tenant and the company. Each product operates slightly differently but the end result of a claim is that the tenant will have to pay back any amount of money that has been paid to the landlord by the company. The company may engage debt collectors and may charge interest on the amount owing.

The products that this bill will regulate are relatively untested in the Australian rental market. We do not know the impact they will have and what consequences may flow from them. We do know that renting is at record highs and there are changing perceptions in our community about the role of renting in the housing market. Regulation plays an important role in maintaining a robust and fair market where there is otherwise a disparity in power between players.

The bill is structured in three schedules. The first schedule prohibits landlords from accepting an alternative rental bond product when entering into a rental agreement with a tenant. These products will be known as commercial guarantees under the Residential Tenancies Act.

Schedule 1 will be taken to have commenced on the day the bill was introduced, which was 14 September this year. This provides the space for the government to assess these products and to work with stakeholders to develop a regulatory framework for allowing them to operate in the ACT. I am pleased to advise the Assembly that this work has already commenced and that the organisations who represent vulnerable tenants have already engaged in the process. I thank these groups for the work that they do for our community and for giving this and other government processes so much time to ensure that Canberra is a community where no-one is left behind.

The Deputy Chief Minister discussed the government's rental bond loan scheme. I would like to remind members of this scheme, as Mr Steel has also done. The scheme offers up to 90 per cent of the rental bond amount under a tenancy agreement. Bond loans are interest free, and they are paid back to the ACT government over 20 months, starting no later than three months from the date of the loan. People who qualify for a bond also receive a grant of \$100 to assist with the costs of the new tenancy.

The second schedule of the bill provides that a landlord can only accept one of these products, known as commercial guarantees, if the product has been approved by the Commissioner for Fair Trading. The contract associated with commercial guarantee is described as a standard guarantee contract. The second schedule provides that a regulation may be developed setting out matters that the Commissioner for Fair Trading can consider when making their decision about whether a standard guarantee contract can be registered.

The criteria include but are not limited to grounds for registering; applying a condition to or refusing to register a standard guarantee contract; a matter that must be included in, or excluded from, a commercial guarantee; requirements in relation to reporting on, record keeping for and the administration of commercial guarantees; if a person has registered a standard guarantee contract, information that the person must give to another person before entering into a commercial guarantee with the other person; and amending, renewing, ending or suspending the registration of a standard guarantee contract. These provisions will not require each individual contractual relationship to be registered. The registration will be of a type of contract, the standard guarantee contract, that will be offered by the provider. This regulation will be in place within the next six months.

The third and final schedule of the bill will allow for the introduction of an online rental bonds system. This is an exciting innovation for Canberra and a significant move forward for tenants and landlords. I am advised that many property managers will also welcome its introduction. This system will allow property managers and lessors to lodge rental bonds online and greatly reduce the manual handling of rental bonds. Further development of this system will allow refunds to be processed electronically through it. The new system will improve record keeping and efficiency, reducing the time it takes to both lodge and refund a bond. This will benefit both landlords and tenants and bring the ACT rental bonds system up to best practice standards across Australia. This system will still allow for the use of paper-based forms for those who do not have access to technology.

The experience of renting in Canberra is rapidly changing. As last week's summit demonstrates, the government is listening and listening well to the community and is committed to providing a fair and equitable rental sector. I commend the bill to the Assembly.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Bill agreed to in principle.

Leave granted to dispense with the detail stage.

Bill agreed to.

## **Utilities Legislation Amendment Bill 2017**

Debate resumed from 21 September 2017, on motion by **Mr Rattenbury**:

That this bill be agreed to in principle.

**MS LAWDER** (Brindabella) (4.19): The Utilities Legislation Amendment Bill 2017 makes changes to the Utilities Act 2000 and the Utilities (Technical Regulation) Act 2014. These changes insert a general regulation-making power into each act that will enable classes of services to be removed from the regulatory schemes if certain conditions are met. A second set of amendments provides for the first use of the

exemption power in relation to the embedded electricity networks. This provides that certain types of utilities services do not need to comply with the regulatory schemes and inserts flexibility into determining the application of the regulatory framework.

Embedded networks should deliver lower electricity prices and, as such, we will be supporting this bill today. Currently the regulatory schemes in both utilities laws have a broad application. In most situations a broad definition of utility services is appropriate. However, some new technologies or new utility services delivery models are falling into the broad definition. Small-scale installations that should not require this level of regulation are having licensing and operating certificate regimes imposed on them. This bill will allow for a class of utility services to be exempt from the application of each act, provided that safety preconditions are met.

The bill excludes embedded networks from the regulatory schemes of the act. Embedded networks are an electricity distribution system which involves multiple customers aggregated together through a single connection point. This allows for customers to combine their electricity buying power to reduce their costs. Currently under the act this is considered to be a utility service and, as such, is heavily regulated. Considering that there are only minor infrastructure differences, this is not considered appropriate.

Due to the small scale of embedded networks, they are appropriately regulated under the Electricity Safety Act without the need for additional regulation under the Utilities Act or the Utilities (Technical Regulation) Act. As such, the bill is intended to remove unnecessary regulation. Given that it has the capacity and, hopefully, the outcome of reducing of costs to deliver lower electricity prices for consumers, we are pleased to support this bill today.

**MR RATTENBURY** (Kurrajong—Minister for Climate Change and Sustainability, Minister for Justice, Consumer Affairs and Road Safety, Minister for Corrections and Minister for Mental Health) (4.22), in reply: I thank Ms Lawder for her contribution during the debate on this bill today. The bill is a leading example of the government's commitment to reducing red tape and providing regulatory frameworks that encourage innovation. Energy policy, of course, is in the spotlight at both the territory and national levels, with regular media stories on rising costs for consumers, concerns about the security of supply and the sources of the energy that we use. Today's bill is a positive story for the utilities industry and consumers in the territory as the government moves to reduce regulatory barriers for industry, which will lead to lower regulatory costs and lower prices offered to consumers.

In removing the requirement for some classes of utilities services to be licensed or hold an operating certificate, the government is removing local red tape that restricts the effect of national energy laws and rules. This will allow innovators to come into the market more readily and offer new products and services to consumers.

The government is seeking to achieve these deregulation objectives by making changes to the two major laws that regulate the provision of utility services in the territory—namely, the Utilities Act 2000 and the Utilities (Technical Regulation)

Act 2014. These acts provide for the regulation of utility services in the territory, ranging from electricity to gas to water supply. They regulate the generation and supply of utility services, including, for the purposes of this bill, the distribution of electricity. Together the Utilities Act and the Utilities (Technical Regulation) Act have regulatory goals relating to the safe, reliable and efficient delivery of services, the protection of customers and the protection of public safety and the environment.

Madam Assistant Speaker, the amendments proposed by the government today are to insert a regulation-making power into both the Utilities Act and the Utilities (Technical Regulation) Act that will enable whole classes of utility services to be removed from the regulatory scheme if certain conditions are met. The bill also proposes a second set of amendments which will provide for the first opportunity to use the exemption power.

The first class of utility services to be exempted under each act are embedded electricity networks. Clauses 4 and 7 of the bill insert a general power to make an exemption regulation in the Utilities Act and the Utilities (Technical Regulation) Act respectively. This power allows the executive to make a regulation that exempts a class of utility services from the respective act if the minister is satisfied on reasonable grounds that the service is adequately regulated under another territory law or national law or is not required to be regulated.

For the Utilities Act provision the minister must also be satisfied that exempting the class of utility service will not significantly impede the Independent Competition and Regulatory Commission's objects under section 3 of that act. For the Utilities (Technical Regulation) Act provision the minister must be satisfied that making the class exempt will not impede the achievement of the object of the UTR act.

By making the exemption power subject to these considerations the minister and the executive must consider the broader legislative context and make a determination about whether the regulation in place for that class of utility services is appropriate. This is about ensuring that regulation is necessary and targeted, with the right set of rules applying to the right sized operations.

The minister is also required to consult with the relevant regulator when considering these issues—that is the ICRC for the Utilities Act and the technical regulator for the Utilities (Technical Regulation) Act. This will ensure that the relevant regulatory expert provides advice on the adequacy of the current regulatory scheme and whether an exemption will be inconsistent with other provisions of the act.

It is important for the minister to receive the advice of the relevant regulatory expert, given the complexity and multifaceted nature of utility regulation. Under clauses 4 and 7 of the bill a number of other factors must be considered by the minister in determining whether the current regulatory regime is adequate. These include: the nature and kind of utility service; the risk of the utility service failing or failing to provide the service in a safe, reliable and effective way; and the consequences of a failure for consumers, public safety and the environment.

These safeguards on the exemption-making power are very important and involve a detailed consideration of the individual circumstances of a class of utility services and the appropriateness of other legislation that applies to it. The safeguards ensure that there can be no arbitrary exercise of the exemption-making power and that it is subject to detailed consideration by the minister and advice from the regulatory expert before an exemption regulation can be made. These safeguards are necessary limitations and ensure that any decision to exempt a class of utility services must be based on supporting evidence.

I now move to discuss the first use of the exemption power. Clauses 6 and 8 of the bill provide regulations that exempt embedded networks from each act. An embedded network is an electricity distribution system which involves multiple customers who are aggregated through a single connection point to the electricity network. Embedded networks are in operation in other states and are becoming popular as an incentive to new buyers in apartment buildings as there is the potential for lower prices offered by the embedded network operator compared to the standard market rate. Embedded networks offer potential cost savings for customers due to their aggregation of customers and the combined buying power which results. Embedded networks are also commonly operated in caravan parks, shopping centres and retirement villages.

Because the embedded network by definition involves the distribution of electricity through its network, the regulatory regimes under the Utilities Act and the Utilities (Technical Regulation) Act are enlivened. This means that while the embedded network is not too dissimilar to the standard electrical wiring in an apartment building and only contains an extra electricity meter and some additional wiring, it is required to hold a licence under the Utilities Act and an operating certificate under the Utilities (Technical Regulation) Act. This is a heavy regulatory requirement that is not commensurate with the risk posed by the embedded network.

The bill includes specific regulations which exempt embedded networks. I am satisfied that this class of utility services meets the criteria in clauses 4 and 7 of the bill. The retail relationship component of embedded networks is appropriately regulated by operation of sections 75(b) and (c) of the Utilities Act and the application of protections under national electricity laws.

Those operators who sell electricity are regulated under the National Energy Retail Law (ACT), also known as the NERL, and must either be authorised NERL retailers or NERL exempt sellers. Sections 75(b) and (c) of the Utilities Act operate to make a certain part of the act apply to NERL retailers and NERL exempt sellers as if they were licensed utilities under the act.

For our purposes today this means that part 12 of the Utilities Act allowing for customers to complain to the ACT Civil and Administrative Tribunal, or ACAT, about utilities applies to embedded network operators and installs basic protections for customers. These basic protections include the right of a customer to apply to ACAT to maintain the provision of utility services where the failure to provide services or the withdrawal of services would cause substantial hardship on the customer.



Also, embedded network operators have obligations under the Human Rights Act 2004 which also act as important and fundamental protections for the customer. Under the Human Rights Act the provision of electricity is considered a function of a public nature. Because embedded networks will be providing functions of a public nature, they will be bound by the Human Rights Act and under section 40B of that act must act consistently with human rights. This is an important obligation as the provision of electricity services may impact on the right to life and the protection of the family and children, and it is important that embedded network operators always act in accordance with these rights.

The other component of the embedded network that requires some form of regulation is the electrical infrastructure component. For embedded networks that is appropriately regulated by provisions within the Electricity Safety Act 1971, including requirements for the work to be done by a licensed electrician and certified against industry standards.

In summary, the amendments in this bill find the right balance between removing unnecessary regulation that impedes industry investment and innovation and placing controls on the power of the executive to determine the application of legislation. I envisage that the general exemption power may be used in a similar way in the future where regulation is considered to not be appropriate after the specific circumstances have been considered. I commend the bill to the Assembly.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Bill agreed to in principle.

Leave granted to dispense with the detail stage.

Bill agreed to.

## **Utilities (Technical Regulation) Amendment Bill 2017**

Debate resumed from 21 September 2017, on motion by **Mr Rattenbury**:

That this bill be agreed to in principle.

**MS LAWDER** (Brindabella) (4.32): This amendment bill makes changes to the Utilities (Technical Regulation) Act 2014. The bill addresses several issues relating to trees touching live powerlines in order to increase public safety and address actions under the strategic bushfire management plan. The bill makes it clear that ActewAGL is the utility responsible for maintaining vegetation on all land in the ACT besides urban backyards and national land.

The act will be amended to make ActewAGL responsible for vegetation management on unleased territory land within urban areas. Currently TCCS are responsible for ensuring that vegetation does not interfere with utility networks. The act will be amended to make ActewAGL responsible for vegetation management on unleased

territory land in non-urban areas as well. Currently ActewAGL undertakes this work, making sure that vegetation does not interfere with utility networks in non-urban areas, under the previous agreement with the ACT government. The amendment provides the legislative responsibility for this work.

The act will be amended to make ActewAGL responsible for vegetation management on leased territory land within non-urban areas and for private poles on rural leased land. The amendment allows ActewAGL to enter private property for the purpose of inspection and maintenance and to issue notices to owners to make them safe.

In the presentation speech, Mr Rattenbury said that the changes are being introduced to reduce the risk of bushfires being started by powerlines in rural areas, which of course makes us wonder whether enough has been done up until now. We have also had the comment in Mr Rattenbury's presentation speech that:

Some trees are dangerously close to the powerlines and require outages to prune them back to within acceptable clearances. The utility is confident that after a transition period of three to five years, the trees will be in a much more manageable state and costs will reduce, as outages will not be needed.

Again, it makes one question what has been done up until now that it is going to take us three to five years to have these trees in a manageable state.

The bill also introduces a strict liability offence, enforcing ActewAGL to comply with minimum vegetation safety clearance distances from poles and wires. This amendment to the act will create a regulatory change event that will allow ActewAGL to apply to the Australian Energy Regulator to pass on the cost of urban area tree management to customers. This will see an increase of \$9 to \$10 added to the average household electricity bill per year, according to Mr Rattenbury's presentation speech.

Whilst Mr Rattenbury said shortly after that in his speech that when trees are in a more manageable state costs will reduce, as outages will not be needed, I have yet to see any changes introduced by this government that lead to a reduction of electricity prices. What we see time and again is a small increase and another small increase and another small increase. The government likes to refer to it as something like "just the cost of one cup of coffee a week" or "two cups of coffee a week". At this rate, coffee will become completely out of fashion. None of us will have any money left to purchase cups of coffee.

On the basis that this has the result of seeing an increase of \$9 to \$10 per year in the average household electricity bill, we will be opposing this bill today. It is currently taking place, arguably perhaps not well enough, according to Mr Rattenbury's introductory speech. It is currently taking place. This change is going to see an increase for consumers. I do not understand what the benefit is going to be. All it is going to be is another charge to consumers. That is on top of every other charge that we see.

These cost of living increases are hitting Canberra households hard time and again. You might think that \$9 or \$10 a year is nothing, but when you add it to everything

else, for households that are already under housing stress that \$9 or \$10 is going to hurt a lot of households in Canberra. On that basis we will be opposing this bill.

**MR RATTENBURY** (Kurrajong—Minister for Climate Change and Sustainability, Minister for Justice, Consumer Affairs and Road Safety, Minister for Corrections and Minister for Mental Health) (4.37), in reply: As Ms Lawder has noted, this bill makes amendments to the Utilities (Technical Regulation) Act 2014, which falls within the climate change and sustainability portfolio, and makes consequential amendments to the Tree Protection Act 2005. This bill demonstrates the government's important commitment to public safety, as it addresses ongoing issues relating to the risk caused by trees coming into contact with live powerlines.

One of the most significant risks associated with contact of this kind is ignition of a bushfire in the outer rural areas of the ACT, which could easily spread into the urban area, as seen in the 2003 Canberra bushfires. As well as addressing key actions under the strategic bushfire management plan 2014-19, such as reducing ignitions from power infrastructure, the bill also resolves discrepancies that exist for vegetation clearance responsibilities. The bill achieves these important outcomes by making a series of amendments to the Utilities (Technical Regulation) Act to clearly define responsibility for vegetation clearance and maintenance work.

The amendments in the bill can be broken down into the following major categories, which I will discuss in further detail shortly: one, vegetation clearances; two, electrical infrastructure management within the network boundary; three, inspection outside the network boundary; and, four, offences. A number of supporting amendments are also made in the bill to ensure that the legislative powers introduced in the bill are exercised in an appropriate way.

Let me move on to discuss some of the more significant amendments of the bill in detail. Firstly, I would like to discuss the utility's responsibilities under the bill for keeping vegetation clear of powerlines. When branches and other vegetation come into contact with powerlines, there is the potential to cause ignition. This risk is increased on days of high bushfire danger, when an ignition can quickly turn into a fire that can spread rapidly, especially in rural areas. Maintaining acceptable minimum clearance distances for trees is integral to ensuring that the ACT does not experience a major preventable bushfire and also to ensure reliability of supply during major storms.

New section 41D is inserted by clause 7 of the bill. It provides that the utility is responsible for clearing vegetation to minimum distances from aerial lines on certain defined land. As I mentioned in my introduction speech, this now specifically includes unleased territory land such as nature strips, national parks and reserves, and rural land, which includes clearing vegetation from powerlines within and outside the network boundary on rural properties.

This gives effect to a role the utility currently undertakes in national parks and reserves and also provides it with new vegetation clearing responsibilities on unleased territory land in the urban area. The utility is limited only to undertaking work that is reasonably necessary for clearing vegetation. It must be undertaken in accordance

with an approved technical code, which may contain specific requirements for protected areas. This safeguard will help to ensure the utility cannot use its powers under this section to perform any other activity that is not reasonably related to vegetation clearance.

The utility will continue to cut to minimum clearance distances, which have been in place since 2001 and which have not been increased. These distances are provided in a table in new section 41D and have been replicated from the Utility Networks (Public Safety) Regulation 2001.

I will now move on to talk about electrical infrastructure management within the network boundary. For context, the Utilities (Electricity Network Boundary Code) Determination 2013 defines the boundary between the electricity distributor's network and a customer's premises as "the point of attachment of an overhead service line to the customer's building or structure". This means that any powerlines before the point of attachment are the responsibility of the utility, whether or not they are on public land. Keeping this infrastructure in good condition is a crucial part of the utility's bushfire mitigation measures.

New section 41G, inserted by clause 7 of the bill, reinforces that the utility is responsible for maintaining any electrical infrastructure within its network and for making sure that its assets are safe, which aligns with its existing responsibilities under the Utilities Act. This demonstrates the contrast between provisions in the bill dealing with what the utility needs to do within its own network and what it needs to do on the consumer side of the network boundary in the case of powerlines on rural private land.

New section 41H provides powers to the utility to enter and occupy land and to undertake any work required for maintaining electrical infrastructure. Recognising that sometimes private land will need to be accessed to maintain utility infrastructure, the utility is required to provide a notice to an owner of land, under section 41L, at least seven days before it starts work, stating the nature of the proposed activities and the period for which the activity is expected to be carried out.

While the utility has ultimate responsibility for ensuring that any of the infrastructure covered in the bill is safe from causing fires due to deterioration or encroaching vegetation, the way this is undertaken for rural private land is different, as these electrical assets are not within the utility's network. For clarity, a new definition of "management operations" is inserted in new section 41J, which includes all activities the utility can undertake under the bill, such as clearing vegetation in all areas, maintaining electrical infrastructure within their network, inspecting electrical infrastructure on private land outside their network and repairing it if the owner does not do so.

This leads me to the next major amendment, which is a new provision that requires the utility to inspect electrical infrastructure outside the network boundary on rural land. New section 41I is inserted by clause 7 of the bill and requires the responsible utility to inspect electrical infrastructure outside the network boundary on rural leased land. The responsible utility is required to undertake these inspections at least every

three years to determine whether this electricity distribution infrastructure is operating safely and is appropriately maintained. Ultimately this inspection regime is necessary to mitigate the risk of bushfires from faulty or unsafe infrastructure.

This recognises that private landholders should not be responsible for assessing the safety of this high-risk electrical infrastructure on their land, as the utility is better placed to implement an inspection regime and has the technical knowledge to determine whether the infrastructure is safe or poses a risk. These amendments balance the need for safety with the rights of rural landholders to privacy.

The new offence provisions that are inserted by the bill also support the transfer of legislative responsibilities and will add to the compliance options available to the technical regulator. Clause 5 of the bill inserts an offence provision into section 16 of the act for failing to comply with a technical code. This anticipates the creation of a new technical code for vegetation management that will apply to the responsible utility. A technical code can be approved by the minister under the existing section 14 of the act and is a disallowable instrument.

It is anticipated that the code will be prepared once the bill passes the Assembly and will become effective at the same time as the legislative amendments commence. The code will incorporate parts of the initial policy decision relating to bushfire mitigation measures as well as standards for tree pruning work that are of a technical nature that are not suitable for inclusion in the bill.

The new strict liability offence for failing to comply with a technical code incurs a maximum penalty of 30 penalty units. This is a strengthening of the enforcement options available to the technical regulator under the act and provides an offence for minor contraventions of technical codes. It is anticipated that it will compel the utility to comply with the code and may apply to such activities as not pruning a street tree in accordance with a prescribed method in the code.

I anticipate that the new code will balance the need for compliance with existing clearances to protect public safety and the need to pursue environmental considerations such as the sympathetic pruning of street trees. To find the right balance, the development of the code will require consultation with both the responsible utility and the Conservator of Flora and Fauna, amongst other community interest groups and key stakeholders. To ensure the appropriate protection of trees during vegetation clearance works, I will make sure that the code contains a requirement for the utility to submit a works plan, outlining their intended upcoming clearance work and bushfire management activities, to the conservator for approval.

The amendments I have mentioned, along with the forthcoming technical code, will increase public safety through mitigating bushfire risk caused by electrical infrastructure. Environmental safeguards are contained in the new provisions and will be built into the forthcoming technical code, as the ACT community appreciates its unique environment and values its protection, whilst also mitigating the risks posed by bushfires.

This, of course, is the flaw in the position that Ms Lawder has adopted today. We do have a responsibility to ensure adequate protection against bushfire. That is something I have sought to do through this legislation. Of course, as I have outlined, I have been very mindful of ensuring adequate protection so that we do not see unnecessary pruning of trees, but the bottom line is that we do need to prune some trees around powerlines for electrical safety.

This does not come for free. The position Ms Lawder has adopted on behalf of the Liberal Party ignores that fact. These services need to be paid for. We have sought to minimise the cost of them. To come in here and say, “We support bushfire protection but we don’t want to pay for it,” is, I think, a very disingenuous position.

**Mr Coe:** How does it get paid for now?

**MR RATTENBURY:** I have been quite open about the facts. Ms Lawder made this observation herself in her own speech. At the moment this work is not considered to be done to an adequate standard. That has been identified in the strategic bushfire management plan, which is why we are moving to amend the act. This will increase the provision of services and that provision comes at a cost.

I invite the Liberal Party to reconsider their position. I think it is a flawed position. To increase bushfire safety in the ACT in accordance with the strategic bushfire management plan does require additional services to be undertaken. That is what has to be paid for and that is why there is this \$9 or \$10 a year cost that we have anticipated will come with these legislative changes.

Question put:

That this bill be agreed to in principle.

The Assembly voted—

Ayes 11

Noes 8

Ms Berry	Ms Orr	Mr Coe	Mr Parton
Ms Burch	Mr Ramsay	Mrs Dunne	Mr Wall
Ms Cheyne	Mr Rattenbury	Mr Hanson	
Ms Cody	Mr Steel	Mrs Jones	
Mr Gentleman	Ms Stephen-Smith	Ms Lawder	
Ms Le Couteur		Ms Lee	

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Bill agreed to in principle.

Leave granted to dispense with the detail stage.

Bill agreed to.

## Adjournment

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

That the Assembly do now adjourn.

## Plan Australia #GirlsTakeover

**MS CHEYNE** (Ginninderra) (4.53): “Children are our future” is a phrase we often hear, to the point of cliché. The truth of this statement is fairly self-evident. But almost equally as often we hear that youth is too indifferent, particularly when it comes to the realm of politics. This thought is contentious at best.

Throughout October this year, more than 600 young women will take—and have been taking—over positions of leadership in 60 organisations across the globe. Hosted by Plan International, this #GirlsTakeover movement opens up the doorway of potential not only for the young women taking part but also for the institutions which have taken them on board.

International Day of the Girl was on 11 October. The ACT Legislative Assembly celebrated by welcoming six young women into our offices whose passions ranged from politics and sports to media, art and beyond. But their diverse range of interests are founded strongly on common ground: a passion for the rights of women and girls, and for gender equality.

The young woman who took over my office, Linda, leads what she describes as a largely normal existence. She was born and raised in Canberra. She spends most of her days studying at the ANU and has a fondness for writing, Mexican food and this year’s *Bachelorette*. Hey, who doesn’t? But the idea of politics or serving as a politician was something that had always given her hives. It had always seemed either too exhausting or perhaps out of reach for her, a career path that was both intimidating and frustrating in equal measure.

It seems that these views are not uncommon amongst young women across Australia when it comes to their dreams and ambitions. In a report released by Plan International Australia, 40 per cent of girls said that they feel that gender is the greatest barrier to becoming a leader.

So why did Linda sign up to take over our parliament? The short answer to that is because she cared. Like the rest of the women who chose to take over an MLA position, she wanted to represent young women across Canberra and beyond—to bring to light their issues, to amplify their voices and to show that, even though she had never previously considered a political career for herself, young people possess the skills, smarts and passion for public service and politics.

The voice of youth, especially of young people below the voting age, can often be overlooked in the political sphere. But they are engaged and they do care about the work that we do here. Initiatives like the International Day of the Girl and the

#GirlsTakeover remind us to listen to these groups and to take stock of both the significant concerns they voice and the range of things that they are able to accomplish.

I am sure that the members of the Assembly will join me in thanking the #GirlsTakeover for reminding us of the strength, power and creativity of young women. I also thank Linda herself for her significant assistance in drafting what I think was a most excellent speech that I just read.

### **Greyhound racing industry**

**MR PARTON** (Brindabella) (4.57): I rise to speak about the current greyhound controversy in the ACT. The minister, Mr Ramsay, assures us that greyhound racing is out of step with community values in Canberra but refuses to provide details of polling that we know through an FOI request was done in April this year.

In the interests of getting a clearer picture of community values in this area, I am here to help the minister to understand what the community feels about greyhound racing. I announce here in this chamber right now that I will be inviting members of the

Canberra community to join what will be known as the Community Values Syndicate to race a greyhound in this region. If members of the Canberra community wish to have their voices heard on this issue, there can be no better way to do this. They can be a part of this and send the government a very clear message.

As soon as I get clear from this chamber, I will be posting this information on my social media channels. I wish I could be a part of this syndicate, but I do not want to deny a spot to someone else. We will be looking for the first 20 people to register and join the Community Values Syndicate. Tanya from Dunlop is locked away as the syndicate manager. She is fired up and ready to go. To widen the circle, we are hoping to get into this venture people who have no involvement whatsoever with this wonderful sport of greyhound racing.

The syndicate will be purchasing a young greyhound from Victoria. This dog is by Lochinvar Marlow out of Poor Effort. He has been trialling over the 390-metre trip at Ballarat and carving it out at around 22.60. He will be extremely competitive here in the ACT. He has good early speed. We are hopeful that he can break the maiden status very early on in the piece. He will be trained by Lesley Hannaford at Bungendore. We have not yet found a name for this dog. Isn't that going to be some fun? We are not sure if we could call the dog "Community Values", "Ramsay's Mistake" or just plain "Stick It Up Your Jumper".

The Community Values Syndicate will be purchasing this dog. Those who wish to be involved will have an initial outlay of \$300, with no ongoing costs at all. It will be a lot of fun. It will be a perfect way to display very clearly what you think about this absurd greyhound ban. These spots on the syndicate will go very quickly. If you want to be involved, the email address is [canberragreyhound@outlook.com](mailto:canberragreyhound@outlook.com) or you can message me on Facebook. I will be happy to pass it on. Ms Cody, if you—



**Ms Cody:** How much are people going to have to spend?

**MR PARTON:** Three hundred dollars—one-off cost.

**Ms Cody:** Times 20.

**MR PARTON:** If you are interested you can just see me in the corridor, Ms Cody. I know you may be interested. Are you ready to lie down or do you want to stand up and fight? I am not going to lie down. I hope you will join this syndicate to stand up and fight.

### **Red Nose Canberra**

**MS CODY** (Murrumbidgee) (5.00): I rise tonight to thank my colleagues in the Assembly and my friends and family outside the Assembly for all the generous support they gave to me recently in performing an extremely entertaining dance routine. My colleague Ms Lee and I had the great pleasure of being involved with seven other local celebrities/identities—I am not sure I am a celebrity—

**Mr Parton:** You are.

**MS CODY:** Thank you. We were partnered with a professional dancer to come up with a routine to raise much-needed funds for and awareness of Red Nose. For those that are not aware, there are 3,200 Australian families that annually experience the sudden and unexpected death of a baby or child. That is 3,200 too many. Through world-class research, advocacy and education, Red Nose passionately believe they can put an end to this. By my making an absolute fool of myself but enjoying every moment of it, we helped to raise much-needed funds to go towards that research and education and to hopefully save babies' and children's lives in Canberra.

I would like to give a big shout out to my fabulous dance partner, Catherine. She worked with Canberra's worst dancer, me, to teach me a wonderful 1970s disco theme inspired dance with all the costumes and props you can possibly imagine, including the disco ball that was spinning above my head. Ms Lee was amazing and took out the award that evening, and it was a well-deserved win. She had all of us up on our toes dancing along with her and her partner Shorty's fabulous routine. I believe that my partner, Catherine, and I came a very close second, if for nothing else than that we looked amazing.

I would like to thank Red Nose Canberra for all their hard work and all the effort that they put in to put on this spectacular Canberra Takes 2 evening. I hope that I will be involved in it again in the future because it was a lot of fun, a lot of hard work, but most importantly because it raised much-needed and well-earned funds for such a fantastic and fabulous cause.

Tonight I would like to pay my respects to my dance partner, Catherine, for all her hard work and effort in teaching me a 1970s dance routine, which I even performed at home for my family, who were unable to make it that night. I thank Ms Lee for her

amazing efforts that night and thank everyone else that was involved, from the local celebrities and identities through to their professional dance partners, and all their friends and family that came along and supported such a worthwhile cause. As I said, I hope that the money raised can help save at least one child or baby in the ACT.

### **International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons**

**MS LE COUTEUR** (Murrumbidgee) (5.04): I rise today to offer the congratulations of the ACT Greens to ICAN, the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons, on their recent receipt of the Nobel Peace Prize. As members would be aware, the Nobel Peace Prize is the pre-eminent accolade for people and organisations working towards the peaceful resolution of some of humanity's most difficult and dangerous problems. The Nobel committee awarded the prize to ICAN for its work to draw attention to the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons and for its ground-breaking efforts to achieve a treaty-based prohibition of such weapons. The committee acknowledged in their statement awarding the prize:

We live in a world where the risk of nuclear weapons being used is greater than it has been for a long time. Some states are modernising their nuclear arsenals, and there is a real danger that more countries will try to procure nuclear weapons, as exemplified by North Korea.

Nuclear weapons pose a constant threat to humanity and all life on earth. Through binding international agreements, the international community has previously adopted prohibitions against land mines, cluster munitions and biological and chemical weapons. Nuclear weapons are even more destructive, but have not yet been made the object of a similar international legal prohibition.

It is for its ongoing efforts to address this legal gap that ICAN was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.

ICAN first opened their offices in Melbourne in 2006 and have since grown from a coalition consisting of several hundred non-government organisations, from local peace groups, to global federations from over 100 countries and representing millions of people. The Nobel Prize committee acknowledged that the coalition:

... has been a driving force in prevailing upon the world's nations to pledge to cooperate with all relevant stakeholders in efforts to stigmatise, prohibit and eliminate nuclear weapons. To date, 127 states have made such a commitment, known as the Humanitarian Pledge.

Although ICAN began in Australia, the Australian government's track record on nuclear non-proliferation is less impressive. Australia did not participate in the negotiation of the UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. It voted against the UN Assembly's resolution in 2016 that established the mandate for nations to negotiate the treaty. Earlier that year Australia had attempted to derail a special UN working group on nuclear disarmament in Geneva, which adopted a report recommending the negotiation of the treaty.

Australia claims that US nuclear weapons are essential for its security. We are all aware of the history of the British nuclear testing in the 1950s and 1960s and the enormous damage it caused to both the local population and the surrounding environment. While it is certainly disappointing, it is perhaps no surprise that Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull made no effort to congratulate ICAN on their award.

While ICAN maintains headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland, I would like to directly congratulate the hardworking members of ICAN Australia, including president Richard Tanter; Canberra's own Sue Wareham; Jessica Lawson; Marcus Yip; Margaret Beavis; Daisy Gardener; Daryl Le Cornu; Ruth Mitchell; Tilam Ruff; Dave Sweeny; Tim Wright; Gem Romuld; and Chrys Gardener. To all the members and volunteers of ICAN Australia and throughout the international coalition, I congratulate you on this well-deserved recognition and I thank you for your ongoing and tireless efforts to make the world a better place for all of us.

### **Red Nose Canberra**

**MS LEE** (Kurrajong) (5.08): I echo Ms Cody's remarks, as I also had the great pleasure and privilege of participating in the Red Nose Canberra Takes 2 with a twist event this year. In July 1977 sudden infant death syndrome took the life of Glen Nelson, one of 18 babies to die of SIDS in Victoria in that month alone, and so in July 1977 the initiative to reduce that to zero was born. I congratulate Red Nose, which will be turning 40 this year. It was last year that SIDS and Kids changed its name to Red Nose because of the need to broaden its focus to other causes of infant and child deaths. In the past 40 years Red Nose has provided support and education resources and has made a significant impact upon reducing the number of child deaths in Australia.

In the ACT region it started in 2012 as then SIDS and Kids ACT, now Red Nose, with an initiative called Canberra Takes 2. I understand it was a singing competition of a kind. This year they decided to make it Canberra Takes 2 with a twist and turned it into a dancing competition. As Ms Cody pointed out, it was based loosely on the *Dancing with the Stars* concept, although in this case I would probably say it was more like "Dancing with some random Canberra people who couldn't say no." In addition to me and Ms Cody, many other brave souls bared a lot of themselves on stage, all to raise funds for Red Nose.

I was very lucky to be partnered with Matthew "Shorty" Short, whom I have known for quite a few years. Not only was he a neighbour of mine who literally was the kind of neighbour who would knock on my door and say, "Have you got a cup of sugar 'cause I'm baking and I've run out," but he was also an integral part of the ANU Hockey Club, which I played for in my much younger and springier days.

Shorty and I managed to get together a few times where he took me through a few rock and roll steps. After that unfortunately life got in the way and there were five weeks of nothing. It was only with Shorty's help and the trust that I had in him that we finalised the choreography four days before the event and did the final lift the day

before. It is a miracle that I am actually standing here with both my legs still functioning.

I want to thank everybody who took part, because it is not easy putting yourself out there to do this type of thing. I thank all the donors who very kindly donated to Shorty and me, because it was with their help that we were able to take out, very importantly, the fundraiser extraordinaire trophy, having raised almost \$5,000 as a pair. I also wish to thank the judges, Coralie and Steve, for the judge's choice award for our 50s fusion of rock and roll and a bit of SH'BAM thrown in.

I thank Red Nose, especially Taren and Trudy, for their hard work, because organising events like this, especially rounding up people who are not used to competing, is no mean feat. The event last year raised \$13,000, and I understand that Mrs Jones participated last year. The aim this year was to at least meet that amount. I am very glad to report that this year, with the combined efforts of all the participants, the event raised over \$25,000. So best wishes to Red Nose in continuing the fight. SIDS takes nine little lives each day, and we want to do our part to ensure that we get that down to zero.

### **Women in parliament**

**MRS JONES** (Murrumbidgee) (5.12): Last night here in the ACT Assembly we held an event to celebrate more than 50 per cent of members of the Assembly being women. It was held in conjunction with my role as the ACT rep for Commonwealth

Women Parliamentarians under the banner of stepping up events, which they encourage every parliament in Australia to hold each year to encourage younger women to consider a career in politics.

I pay special thanks to the Speaker, Ms Burch, who, from the very beginning of my asking about this concept, got behind it. I also put my thanks on record to Kate Carnell, former Liberal Chief Minister, for coming as our special guest to answer questions from the young women involved. Caroline Le Couteur, Tara Cheyne and I, as members in this place, sat on a panel with Kate Carnell to answer questions, and I also acknowledge Meegan Fitzharris, Vicki Dunne and Nicole Lawder for attending the event.

In particular, I give thanks to every single woman MLA in the place who nominated women to attend, because by reaching out to women of all sorts of political and other persuasions we spread the message that young people are capable of getting into this place. We heard this morning in Mr Doszpot's speech about how empowering it can be to realise that this is not an unattainable goal for people in our city.

I put special thanks on the record to Madam Speaker for enabling the event to occur and managing the event by sending out invitations and getting back the RSVPs. I thank her staff for assisting us on the night with our nibbles. Two of Ms Burch's staff are great women who are expecting babies; they stood on their feet all night, so I was particularly grateful to them. My son Maximus, famous for being the first baby

breastfed in the Assembly, came along to give us all a little bit of entertainment for the evening. We demonstrated work-life balance while my husband was away.

Thanks to all involved. I think it was a great event and I hope next year we will do something again to bring more women into this place and to give young women the opportunity to know that their voices matter and that they, too, could sit here one day.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

**The Assembly adjourned at 5.15 pm.**