



Debates

WEEKLY HANSARD

Legislative Assembly for the ACT

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Tuesday, 20 March 2018

MADAM SPEAKER (Ms J 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.

Matters of public importance Statement by Speaker

MADAM SPEAKER: This morning a proposed matter of public importance was lodged on “the importance of freedom of the press and of a strong, independent media to our democracy”. *House of Representatives Practice*, fifth edition, at page 578 stipulates that matters submitted must be definite—that is, simple, specific and precise in their wording. It also requires the Speaker to have regard to the extent to which the matter concerns the administrative responsibilities of ministers. Similarly, the companion states that the Speaker must take into account whether the matter submitted is within the scope of ministerial responsibilities.

Accordingly, I have ruled that the matter proposed did not fall within the scope of ministerial responsibility and, in accordance with standing order 136, that proposal was not included in the ballot for the MPI today.

In addition, two proposals were returned to the relevant members prior to the ballot as there were inaccuracies in the documents, in that the dates were wrong. One was from the last sitting and one was pre-dated. Can I remind members, when framing their matters for submission, to have regard to those two matters.

Chief Minister—relations with the media Statement by minister

MR BARR (Kurrajong—Chief Minister, Treasurer, Minister for Economic Development and Minister for Tourism and Major Events) (10.03), by leave: On 8 March 2018 I attended a function held here in the reception room of the Legislative Assembly, entitled “Meet the creative services panel”. This was an event organised by the Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate communications team in order to present to a successful panel of communications industry businesses—most of whom were local, I note—the government’s communications and engagement strategy.

At that event I provided what was a frank and sometimes robust assessment of communications, government communications, and the state of the media market in

this city and in this country. During those remarks I made a series of statements that I should not have made and that were not nice things to say. They were statements that I have subsequently, in every media outlet and indeed publicly over the last week, regretted saying, apologised for and acknowledged as being not nice things to say, and I should not have said them.

I do believe there is room in our public debate for frankness, and I do believe that it is appropriate for politicians from time to time to express a view on the media. The media are not above criticism, but that criticism should be framed constructively, and I acknowledge that I did not do so on this occasion. I acknowledge and apologise for the choice of words I used in relation to the presentation to that particular group. Also, I appreciate that the role I have requires me to keep certain opinions to myself and to be very circumspect about when I enter into public debates.

I would like to take the opportunity to address a range of issues that have certainly arisen in the subsequent public debate on these matters. First and foremost, in relation to the media, it is entirely legitimate for there to be a public debate about the role that the media plays in our democracy. I have been forthright on occasion, not just in recent times, but, as some in the media have reported, over my time in this place, in expressing strong views in relation to the independence of the media, the independence of editorial policy, and in expressing strong views against the concentration of media ownership in this country.

I have said, and I intend to stick by this, that I will not be a regular commentator on the media in the future. However, I will repeat some remarks in this place formally for the public record that I have made in the last week in relation to the media, not just in this city but across the country. And there are probably some global implications in terms of issues for the media that not just are relevant to Canberra or Australia but in fact have relevance across all Western liberal democracies.

I want to take the opportunity particularly to highlight what I believe to be a statement of editorial policy that reflects best practice in this nation and that should in fact be emulated across all media outlets—that is, the public stance of the Australian Broadcasting Corporation in relation to its editorial policy. It says:

The ABC takes no editorial stance other than its commitment to fundamental democratic principles including the rule of law, freedom of speech and religion, parliamentary democracy and equality of opportunity.

If all media outlets in this city and in this nation pursued a similar editorial policy, I think our democracy would be enhanced. And I would not be the only person in this parliament, in parliaments around this nation, or indeed the only Australian, who would reach that particular conclusion.

Out of all of this—the debate, the highlights and what sticks in people’s minds around media in this city and in this nation—that question of taking no editorial stance other than a commitment to fundamental democratic principles, the rule of law, freedom of speech and religion, parliamentary democracy and equality of opportunity sets a very good benchmark for how media organisations should operate.

I will repeat some further observations that I have made. I think that the era of newspapers seeking to tell their readers how to vote should end.

Mr Hanson interjecting—

MR BARR: That should end. Regardless of whether newspapers are endorsing the progressive side of politics or the conservative side of politics, that process, in 2018, whereby newspapers seek to influence how their readers and how voters should vote—

Mr Hanson interjecting—

MADAM SPEAKER: Mr Hanson, allow the Chief Minister to be heard in silence, please.

MR BARR: That should be a practice of the past.

Opposition members interjecting—

MADAM SPEAKER: Members of the opposition, please: silence.

Mr Hanson: Outrageous!

MADAM SPEAKER: The request for silence? What, Mr Hanson? Can you please sit in silence?

MR BARR: Madam Speaker, there will always be a variety of views, and we are hearing some of them in the chamber this morning, about editorial independence and the approach of media organisations. But frankly, Madam Speaker, in situations of such concentrated media ownership, with near monopolies in certain sections of the media, the responsibility for even-handedness and for an editorial charter like that of the ABC to be applied across the board could not be clearer. It could not be clearer.

Mrs Jones: Are you talking about government censorship—government censorship of the press?

MR BARR: The nature of the interjections that we are hearing from those opposite fundamentally misunderstands the point I am making, fundamentally misunderstands that point.

Madam Speaker, through this debate in recent times there have been a series of extended commentaries in relation to observations of the demographic nature of the audiences for particular media outlets.

Mrs Jones: I think you started that conversation, actually.

Mr Parton: You are the one who brought it up.

MR BARR: Indeed, yes, I did. The average age of ABC TV viewers was pointed out to me and other state and territory leaders over dinner at COAG by the Prime Minister a few weeks ago. Yes, that fact surprised me a little. He asked everyone to guess what the average age of a 7 pm ABC TV news audience member was. Given that my career before being in this place was in the media monitoring industry, I am somewhat familiar with the long-running history of the demographics of the media in this city and, indeed, around the nation.

But to make that observation is no more remarkable than saying that young people are the primary audience of JJJ or that in Canberra at the moment more young people listen to Hit 104.7 than listen to 2CC. In the context of the government's attempts to engage with a broader number of Canberrans, we recognise that every media outlet will reach a different demographic but even all of them combined will not reach every Canberran.

So I believe in direct communication. That is hardly a novel thing. We all talk to constituents. We all knock on doors. We all hold street stalls. We all engage with Canberrans by a variety of different means. In the 2016 election the people who are sitting on this side of the chamber, together with all of the other Labor candidates, had more than 250,000 conversations with Canberrans. I know that each and every member of the government continues on a daily basis to talk with hundreds, if not thousands, of Canberrans. That is part of an elected representative's job.

Not every element of that engagement is undertaken through the media. Some of it is, but not all of it. An example of where I undertake on a fortnightly basis that engagement with the community through the media is Chief Minister's talkback, every second Friday on ABC Radio. That is but one example of communication with Canberrans. I think it is entirely appropriate and unremarkable that members of this place engage with the Canberra community using a variety of means. At no point have I ever said that the government would no longer engage with the traditional media.

What I have said is that we will engage using a variety of forms. That is exactly what the government communication strategy outlines. It outlines engagement in a variety of ways, because we have a diverse community. The government will seek to talk across that community to the widest variety and the largest possible demographic mix that we can achieve. We are actively communicating with all Canberrans through a variety of different channels. This includes the traditional media. It is important that we communicate with Canberrans of all ages.

Again, it is not mutually exclusive to seek to bring younger Canberrans into our public debate, particularly when the median age of this city is 34. As has been pointed out to me through this debate, yes, I am older than the average Canberran. When I came into this place I was the same age as the average Canberran. I am now older. I am now older than the average Canberran. It is my observation that, through the previous methods of engagement on matters that affect Canberrans, we have not done well enough in communicating and engaging with that younger cohort.

Attempting to do more to engage with those people does not mean that you are excluding other people. It does not mean that and nor should it mean that. To be very

clear, the government intend to engage through a variety of different means with as many people as we can. That is common sense and that is the approach that we will take.

To communicate effectively, you need to engage in a variety of different mediums. Mr Parton would be aware of that, given his business before entering this place, after leaving his role in the traditional media to work in that other communications area. This is hardly novel. As the media sector changes, governments across the world are changing the way they engage with their communities.

In the 2016 election I promised more representative consultation with the Canberra community. That is the process that we are implementing. We have already put forward, and we are in the middle of implementing, a series of quite innovative engagement strategies. We have, I openly confess, a goal to engage hard-to-reach audiences, to include them in our democratic process, thus ensuring that in the long term demographically representative engagement becomes standard practice for this place. We want to embrace new technologies and more direct ways of communicating with our community.

There is a lesson out of the last week or so. It is very clear that communications that are concise, that are engaging and that are delivered through the most appropriate channels will reach intended audiences. The government respects the role of the mainstream media and of journalists in both reporting on and providing analysis of government policy. I am not seeking to subvert that role.

I will make further observations on this question. I think it would be helpful for all consumers in the media market for a very clear distinction to be drawn between news and opinion and that they be clearly labelled as such. They should be clearly labelled as such when presented to the community. Most media outlets do that, and do that very effectively. Where a piece is an opinion piece, it is acknowledged as that. That is entirely appropriate.

We will continue to look for new ways to engage with Canberrans, from our government newsletter to delivering democratic examples like citizens juries and the new online community panel to engage in various social media platforms. It is also important through this process that we be clear about what is up for debate. We will be clear when we are sharing information to keep Canberrans up to date on new or changed services that happen as a result of community feedback.

Since launching the whole-of-government communications and engagements strategy last month, we have received feedback via the your say website and a series of face-to-face meetings on how best to turn this strategy and intent into reality. We know that Canberrans want a city that is inclusive, a city that is innovative, active and fun to live in. Shaping our growing city to make sure that all Canberrans are heard, and not just those with the loudest voices, is, I believe, vital to maintaining our city's livability into the future.

I apologise again for the comments that I have made. I regret using the word "hate" and I am sorry. After today, my career as a media commentator whilst holding public

office is certainly over. But I am not the only person in this place, or indeed in our community, who has said or done a silly thing in their lives. I could have said that chocolate addictions are more serious than gambling addictions, but I did not, Madam Speaker. I could have said that marriage is intrinsically about getting men to grow up and take responsibility for the women they get pregnant, but I did not.

Mrs Jones interjecting—

MADAM SPEAKER: Mrs Jones!

Mrs Jones interjecting—

MADAM SPEAKER: Mrs Jones, please!

MR BARR: I could have said that Milo Yiannopoulos is pretty cool and refreshing—

Mrs Jones interjecting—

MADAM SPEAKER: Mrs Jones!

MR BARR: but I did not. There are, of course, a variety of opinions on these matters. I do find it interesting, Madam Speaker, that those opposite are interjecting.

Members interjecting—

MADAM SPEAKER: Members of the opposition!

Mrs Jones interjecting—

MADAM SPEAKER: Mrs Jones, please. I do not want to warn you in this debate, but please be quiet. Mr Barr.

MR BARR: Thank you, Madam Speaker. We have all said things in our lives that we regret. You are never too old to learn. In this instance, I said something that was silly. It hurt some people and I acknowledge that it could and should have been framed in a more positive way. I acknowledge that and I apologise again. I cannot take back what was said; it has been said. I can apologise for saying it. I have reflected upon my reasons for holding that view. I recognise that in the role I hold it is not appropriate to make comments like that. Again, I apologise to the Assembly, to the journalists and to anyone who took offence at those comments.

I do, however, stand by my right to have an opinion and to express an opinion on the media. But, as I have said, I have said my piece in relation to the media and my career as a media commentator is now formally over. The other issues will undoubtedly be the subject of a censure motion that will be, I understand, moved by the Leader of the Opposition following this statement.

There are a variety of different views in relation to public policy as it pertains to intergenerational equity. They are perfectly legitimately held on both sides. We look

forward a robust debate in this place and in this country over the coming 12 months on the range of public policy issues that are undoubtedly going to be at the centre of our national election in 2019, as there are very clearly a range of policies that already are being labelled in that context. That will be what it will be.

But for now, Madam Speaker, having acknowledged a mistake, recognised that it was the wrong thing to say and apologised again, I thank the Assembly for granting me leave to make these statements this morning.

Chief Minister

Motion of censure

MR COE (Yerrabi—Leader of the Opposition) (10.25), by leave: I move:

That this Assembly censures the Chief Minister, Andrew Barr MLA, for expressing hatred of journalists and contempt for seniors.

When I came into this place this morning I expected that we would be discussing the events of the last seven or eight days. I did not expect that I would be responding to Mr Barr's comments to date. What he has made is the apology when you do not want to make an apology. It was a sham. Had he just left it at the last minute of his 25-minute speech he would have actually shown some wisdom and he would have shown some leadership. Instead, what he did this morning was, in fact, pour fuel on the fire. What he did was incite even more animosity from his government towards journalists and seniors. It was a conditional apology; it was an apology you make when you actually do not believe it.

On Friday, after several days of being berated by media outlets across the country and having dozens of letters to the editor and calls to talkback radio saying his comments were hurtful and offensive, he reluctantly apologised on morning radio. That could have been the end of it, but we all know that that apology was not a genuine apology, just like his words this morning were not genuine.

The reality is that the words of the Chief Minister matter. The words of the first minister, a head of government, really do matter. When you have the Chief Minister saying that he hates journalists, it has an impact. It has an impact on those in Canberra in the profession, striving to report on the comings and goings of the ACT government and the Assembly. It has an impact on the status of the profession. It has an impact on the students at the University of Canberra studying journalism at one of the premier journalism schools in the country when the Chief Minister of that jurisdiction says, "When you graduate, I will hate you." It has an impact on the school students that might strive to become journalists one day and have that noble aspiration to report on the news, to report on our democracy and to hold our parliaments to account.

That is why it was not just a passing comment; that is why it should not just be seen in isolation—it has an impact. And on Friday Andrew Barr tried to book-end it; he tried to say, "It's done." Well, I think it is incumbent upon the ACT Legislative Assembly, the representatives of Canberra, to stand up and say, "We don't tolerate this. We

expect better from our Chief Minister.” We are not saying it is a hanging offence. We are not saying we should move a no-confidence motion and he should be sacked. We are saying that the Assembly should raise the bar and not tolerate this kind of spite from the Chief Minister of the ACT.

The Chief Minister has always been bitter—we know that. But in the last week he has taken his vindictiveness to a whole new level. We saw that this morning. Had the Chief Minister come into this place at 10 o’clock and made a one-minute, sincere apology for the hurt he has caused journalists and seniors and others, he would be in a much stronger position right now. Instead, in effect, he bunkered down and actually went beyond what he had said in those offensive remarks of a week and a half ago. He said there should not be editorial independence in journalism in Australia, that we should not have free press in Australia, and that people should not be able to express an opinion. It is quite possibly a matter for a privileges committee as to whether he has gone so far as to stifle the effects of the Human Rights Act in the ACT.

For 16 or 17 years the Labor Party, with the Greens’ support, have supposedly championed human rights. We now know that that was a sham, because the Chief Minister has demonstrated today and over the last week that he does not tolerate anybody having a different opinion to his. He does not tolerate anybody who has a different world view to his. He does not want journalists to report on the dodgy deals of his government.

The context in which the Chief Minister made these comments was, of course, after weeks of reporting of property scandals in his ministry. Whether you talk about the Dickson deal, the Glebe Park deal, the lakeside deal, the Griffith deal or the multitude of rural leases, all these have been reported on in the *Canberra Times*, on the ABC, on 2CC, on the FM stations, on 2CA and via other outlets in Canberra.

For the Chief Minister to say that the *Canberra Times* is a conservative, right-wing publication is news to me, and I reckon it is news to most Canberrans as well. And if it is, it is the only Fairfax paper in the country that gets that brand. It shows you how arrogant and how disconnected the Chief Minister is if he thinks the *Canberra Times* is a right-wing publication. Perhaps if *Pravda* delivered to the ACT he might get that on his front lawn each morning. But the reality is that all that we have seen from journalists in Canberra is the reporting of the facts on this government.

There have been many articles in the paper that I have disagreed with and there have been many slants in those stories that I think are incorrect. There have been opinions expressed on ABC Radio and on 2CC and other stations that I disagree with, but never would I say that I hate the people who wrote them or said them.

We all make mistakes, and the Chief Minister is right—it was a mistake and he should not have said it. But to then double down and, in effect, offer a defence of those statements is a very worrying thing from the Chief Minister of the ACT. We need to have freedom of the press in this country because it is a very slippery slope when you do not. We have seen countries around the world slip into dictatorships after remarks like this. I am not going to be a sensationalist and say that is the direction that we are going in—of course we are not. But we have to be vigilant. We actually have to fight

for the freedoms we have in this country, and one of those freedoms that has been upheld by all sides of politics has been freedom of the press.

When the Chief Minister said today that the media should not have an opinion and cannot have editorials, that is a stifling of one of the principles or foundations of this country, and it is a serious thing. As I said before, the wise thing would have been to come into this place and give a simple, sincere apology. Instead, we have not seen that today.

So now the ball is going to be in his colleagues' court, and when I say "colleagues" I also include the Greens, because it is the Greens that are propping up this government and this Chief Minister. It is the Greens that voted for Andrew Barr to be Chief Minister back in late 2016. So are the Greens going to tolerate the kind of spiteful language that we have seen over the last week? Are they going to tolerate Andrew Barr's remarks this morning that there should not be freedom of the press in this country? Or are they going to stand up for their supposed principles and say, "Enough is enough. Our community has a higher standard than what we have seen over the last week"?

I have hardly touched on the serious remarks he made about seniors in our community. The seniors demographic is, of course, the growing demographic of Canberra, the largest demographic of Canberra. These people have made enormous contributions over a lifetime to this city, and the reason we have relative affluence and comfort in this city is because of the hard work of past generations. We should be thanking them rather than condemning them. We should be putting them on a pedestal rather than trying to kick them in the teeth as the Chief Minister is doing. I and my colleagues in the Liberal Party are grateful for the contribution seniors have made and continue to make to this city. Whilst we will have our disagreements with journalists—and there is a sometimes awkward co-dependence—we are also grateful for the role they play in Canberra. It is just a shame the first minister of the ACT disagrees.

I call upon Labor colleagues, those supposedly fighting for the labour movement and the values of the labour movement, to stand up with a united voice and say that the Chief Minister's remarks of the last week and this morning were inappropriate. It is a very simple vote. The consequences are not huge, but they are symbolic. I urge all in this place to vote for this censure.

MR BARR (Kurrajong—Chief Minister, Treasurer, Minister for Economic Development and Minister for Tourism and Major Events) (10.37): I acknowledge that the Leader of the Opposition, in moving this motion, is seeking to make a particular political point; that is understood and not at all surprising. I imagine that, were I in his position, I would make similar observations. It would be fair to observe that I have provided a very easy platform for the Leader of the Opposition in this instance, in that it clearly was a political mistake, in addition to being a personal mistake. So, as I have already outlined this morning to the Assembly, I do indeed apologise for the remarks that I made.

I think the Leader of the Opposition has, in his comments, overreached somewhat. If a statement of commitment to fundamental democratic principles, including the rule of

law, freedom of speech and religion, parliamentary democracy and equality of opportunity, is a statement that leads towards a totalitarian state then that is a little bit over the top. While there is always a temptation to get excited in moments like these and the rhetoric will rise, and just as I have been guilty myself in the past of rhetorical flourishes that could be described as overreach, I think we might just have witnessed that in relation to the comments I have made this morning.

I think those democratic principles of the rule of law, freedom of speech and religion, parliamentary democracy and equality of opportunity are principles worth standing up for, and I believe that nothing I have said contravenes those principles. I am pleased to be able to reiterate today support for those principles.

In relation to the other comments from the Leader of the Opposition, I have reflected and will continue to reflect upon the various factors that contribute to the views I have formed and some of the things I have said. We all in our lives need to reflect upon certain things. As I have said, you are never too old to learn, and I will take the opportunity, particularly over the Easter period, to reflect further upon those issues. I acknowledge I have made a mistake.

I have made a mistake, but I am not the only person to have ever said something they regret or to have done something they regret. That is something those opposite, I am sure, will continue to remind me of, as will those in the media. I will inevitably live with that for as long as I am in public life. I acknowledge and understand that. It is what it is; all I can do is apologise and seek to move on with the responsibilities that both this place and the people of Canberra have granted through the ballot box and the democratic process.

We were elected to deliver a series of pretty clear commitments, and that will remain my focus during this parliamentary term. I understand there will be an amendment to this particular motion which reflects a more balanced position, and I indicate that we will support that amendment.

MR RATTENBURY (Kurrajong) (10.40): I rise to speak to this motion this morning and express the Greens' concerns at the comments made by the Chief Minister. I think they were regrettable and reflected inappropriately on the mainstream media and also raised concerns for some of the older members of the Canberra community. I welcome the fact that the Chief Minister has come to the chamber this morning and made the apologies and the remarks that he has made. As he rightly observed, we have all made comments in the heat of the moment that we later regret and perhaps wish we had not made or wish we had expressed differently. I welcome the fact that the Chief Minister has made those remarks both in the media generally and in the chamber this morning.

The Greens will be moving an amendment to this censure motion. I have just given that to the Assembly staff to circulate. My apologies for the late circulation, but we did not see the Liberal Party motion until we walked in here this morning and so we had to draft our amendment after that. The practicalities of getting that circulated dictate that it is just coming now. Members will see it shortly, but it reflects the remarks I have just made.

In terms of where the Greens are coming from, we fundamentally support freedom of the press, the right of journalists to express their views and their important role in our democracy. I do not believe that is in dispute in this chamber. That is something we hold very dearly. We have certainly had our share over the years of being attacked and unfairly reported at times, but that is the way it goes. Certainly there is an important robustness to the relationship between politics and journalism in Australia on the whole, probably with some noble exceptions, but each will have their different views on what those are.

I think the Chief Minister was right in expressing the necessity of communicating through a range of different fora and mediums; that is something on which we share the view of the Chief Minister. I do not think that is a matter of diminishing those already there or detracting from the role they play; rather, it is a matter of acknowledging that people communicate through an increasing range of channels and that to get to some demographics in our community the government needs to participate in those channels. That is something I certainly support, and I think all members of this place are trying to make sure we are present in all of those places where our community is getting their information.

In chatting about this particular issue to some younger people I know, they had not seen the comments of the Chief Minister because they had not appeared in their Facebook feed or their Instagram account or any of the things they use to communicate. They did not even know about the story, and that illustrates one of the important points the Chief Minister was trying to make—that is, we need to communicate through different channels. If he had expressed that without some of the other comments, I think we would be having a very different discussion. It is incumbent upon government and political parties to make sure that we are going where the people are, and I note that the people are in different places.

In terms of the analysis that has been made of the Chief Minister's take on older Canberrans, as I said on radio this morning, there is no doubt that this city is changing, and for some people that is very challenging. The one truth we know is that Canberra will be different in the future; it necessarily must be as our population grows rapidly and as technology changes. It is incumbent upon us to seek to build a community consensus about what that different future looks like, to take on board the different needs of our community and to build people's understanding of why some of these changes are occurring or perhaps have to occur.

The Greens are very committed to working with all members of our community across all the age, racial and religious groups and the many different perspectives that people hold in explaining some of these things and debating the propositions we have to address some of the challenges that our coming our way.

My remarks are reflected in our amendment this morning. The amendment notes with concern the comments made by the Chief Minister regarding the communication strategy and the role of the media. It notes the apology offered by the Chief Minister in both the media and here in the Assembly today. The amendment proposes that the Assembly collectively affirm its support for the freedom of the press and the

important role journalists in all forms of media play in our democracy and its commitment to an inclusive Canberra that takes account of all of the perspectives out there.

That does not mean everybody has to agree all the time, and one of the most challenging things in this place is that you cannot always bring forward policy ideas or solutions that will suit everybody all of the time. There will be contested ideas, but there is a difference between having contested ideas versus not hearing all of the opinions. As a minister I find it very challenging that you talk to all sorts of people in the community and you get many different perspectives and you then have to try to hone those down to one suitable pathway forward. I know you cannot always find a pathway that everybody is happy with, so we need to find that balance between having that broad and inclusive conversation and being able to go forward with new directions and new ideas.

I commend my amendment to the Assembly. I think it reflects the true state of the debate in this place. Therefore, I move:

Omit all words after “That this Assembly”, substitute:

- “(1) notes with concern the comments made by the Chief Minister regarding communications strategy and the role of media;
- (2) further notes the apology offered by the Chief Minister in both the media and in the Assembly;
- (3) further affirms its support for the freedom of the press and the important role that journalists and all forms of media play in our democracy; and
- (4) also affirms its commitment to an inclusive Canberra that respects all members of the community, across all age groups, racial and religious groups, and the different perspectives members of our community hold.”.

MS LAWDER (Brindabella) (10.48): Ordinarily I would rise and say I was pleased to speak to a motion put forward by my colleague Mr Coe, but today I am not pleased. In fact, I am really disappointed that we have had to bring on this motion to highlight the appalling statements made by the Chief Minister. As the shadow minister for seniors, I was actually shocked by the comments made by the Chief Minister when he made clear his opinion of those who read, watch or seek their news from the traditional news media and that a large portion of those are seniors. Under this government, seniors are not just being ignored; they are systematically targeted.

Currently there are 68,193 people in the ACT over the age of 60, and this is only going to increase with the baby boomer generation ageing. Over the next 40 years the number of seniors will double. The Chief Minister last week made it very clear how he feels about seniors, how he feels about their opinions and how he wants to live in a place where as soon as you become a senior you leave town—or perhaps something even darker or more permanent happens—or, at the very least, if you remain, the government no longer has any requirement to consult or engage with you.

What the Chief Minister actually said was that the average age of the viewership of the ABC news in the evening, the 7 pm bulletin, is mid-60s, that the *Canberra Times*

print edition has a circulation of fewer than 15,000 and “fewer and fewer people are accessing traditional media; therefore we have to completely overhaul the way we communicate as a government”. But that is ignoring those people that need that traditional media. One of the biggest issues facing seniors, I hear, is loneliness. I have heard this over and over again as I have recently taken up the role of shadow minister for seniors. We have to make sure that seniors remain connected and engaged with their community wherever we can, and the traditional media is one of those channels.

I can assure you, as Mr Coe has, that we do not always agree with what happens and what is being reported in the *Canberra Times*, but we must acknowledge and appreciate the role that the media play in a democracy. Last week was Seniors Week, and I can tell you that the seniors’ community were not happy about those remarks. I spent the whole day on Thursday at the seniors’ expo talking to people. The sentiment on the ground was one of disappointment but not surprise that the Chief Minister had shown his true colours yet again, backing up previous comments he had made about seniors.

We have a Labor government here in the ACT that do not want to listen to seniors. They do not want to keep seniors abreast of what the government are doing. We have a Labor government here in the ACT that want to increase seniors’ rates and charges. They want to take away seniors’ concessions. They want to increase the eligibility age for the seniors card. And we have a federal Labor opposition that wants to take away their tax credits. Labor’s new retirement tax would hit 3,877 pensioners in the ACT, but Labor is happy to see 3,877 pensioners in the ACT worse off with the proposed retirement tax.

It is clear that the Labor Party inherently hates seniors and sees them as an easy target. We are talking about those people who have spent their entire life building our community, paying taxes and rates and fees and charges, and now they are being used as a soft target to fund pet projects. According to this Labor government, as soon as you retire, as soon as you are no longer a member of a union, they chew you up and throw you out. They do not want to know about you anymore.

The Labor Party, in particular this government, hates not only journalists but also seniors. One of the rationales for hating journalists was that only old people read their papers or listen to their news, but over here on this side of the chamber we understand something about seniors. We understand that we must listen to them, no matter how they get their news, no matter their opinions, and above all we must respect them, even if they disagree with us.

While this Chief Minister does not want to hear the views of seniors, he is certainly willing to take their taxes. He is willing to increase their rates, reduce their subsidies and concessions, but do not ask for their opinions on planning because they are just old. As an Assembly we must respect their experience. Seniors are often, but not always, retired. They have a lifetime of experience behind them. But now they also have the time to review policy and contribute to public debate, which they may not have had in those years when they had full-time work and were raising their families.

For many seniors it is a way of keeping engaged with the community, keeping their minds active and using the years of experience that they have garnered. They have reached a point in their lives where they may be physically, mentally and financially able to give back to the community through volunteering and contributing to policy debate. Yet this government is continually devaluing, degrading and dismissing their contribution. Communication is not just a hashtag or a one-word tweet, unless, as this Chief Minister seems to be moving towards, you adhere to the Trump model of communication by Twitter.

I also want to make some comments directly relating to the crossbench. These arrogant and out-of-touch comments from the Chief Minister will continue unless we as an Assembly call him out for this and hold him to account. The Chief Minister, with his apology that was not an apology this morning, has not taken responsibility for his actions. He is sorry he was caught out, not for what he said. We have the responsibility to call him out and say, "This is not good enough."

The *Canberra Times* of 12 March reported:

Ms Le Couteur also hit out at Mr Barr's apparent dismissal of the views of older Canberrans, saying that even people over 60 years old were important and "the most rapidly growing demographic in the ACT".

So I say to Ms Le Couteur, "Just this once, won't you back up your words in the paper with your vote in the Assembly? Do not come into the chamber, having told us in the media what you think, and then vote a different way. Do not say one thing out there and another thing here in the chamber." We see you do it. Are you happy with what the Chief Minister said or will you fall back into line once again, pretending to be a crossbench to those out in the public arena but refusing to act as one in the chamber?

If you vote against this censure motion you are allowing him to degrade you and your views. You are allowing him to ignore you and your views. We know that Mr Rattenbury is shackled to the government, as a minister, but Ms Le Couteur is not. If you choose to oppose this motion, you are endorsing his comments. Expressing hatred and contempt for part of the community, based on their occupation, age, race, religion or any other demographic, is contrary to the code of conduct for members of the Legislative Assembly, which states that members should treat all citizens of the Australian Capital Territory with courtesy and respect the diversity of their backgrounds, experiences and views. It also states that ministers are rightly expected to uphold and demonstrate the highest standards of personal and professional conduct and must act with integrity, probity and respect for others.

The parliamentary agreement between Mr Barr, on behalf of ACT Labor, and the two Greens members commits itself to social inclusion and participation in community life, but it is quite clear from Mr Barr's comments that that social inclusion does not apply to everyone. Can you imagine the outrage if these comments related to a multicultural group, women or a disability group, and we said, "We hate them and we are not going to consult them anymore; we do not care about their views"? But it seems to be okay for Mr Barr to say that about seniors.

This motion should be the time for all of us to come together to reflect and say that this is not good enough. The basic question here is: were the Chief Minister's comments okay? If you think so, vote against the motion. If you think the comments were not okay, you should support the motion from Mr Coe this morning. I commend this censure motion from Mr Coe because I do not support those comments from Mr Barr.

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) (10.57): Again the Canberra Liberals are using this very serious process in the Assembly to pursue their political agenda. Of course, the Chief Minister did give them a free kick on this one, and he said that this morning when he apologised numerous times for the words that he used.

However, it is a poor reflection on them—and more so on their complete lack of consistency in policy ideas or vision for Canberra. There is absolutely nothing of substance coming from them. Last year, in November, I made the offer that if they decided that they truly wanted to pursue opportunities for our city they could get on board, but it seems that will not be the case today.

I heard Ms Lawder talking about seniors and suggesting that the Labor Party does not like them. She is talking about my father, my mother, my aunt, my grandmother, my neighbours, people in my community, people in this Assembly who are gradually getting closer to that age group. I think it is entirely unfair to make an allegation or an accusation like that when she knows that there are older people in our lives.

Members interjecting—

MADAM SPEAKER: Members, please. Mr Hanson, be quiet.

MS BERRY: It is like this has been given to them as an opportunity to bully the Labor Party on this occasion. Only days after the National Day of Action against Bullying—

Mrs Jones: That is how you defend the bullying. Accuse the person objecting of being a bully because you are defending a bully.

MS BERRY: Constant interruptions, snide, sarcastic comments coming from those opposite, continuous interruptions—that is described online as trolling, and in person it is described as bullying. And it is continuing today. It says a lot about the opposition that that is what they actually wanted to come into this place to discuss today. It was an opportunity to have a go at us. That is fine; we will take it and we will continue with the important work of the Assembly.

The Chief Minister has apologised for his comments numerous times. He has apologised to the Labor caucus. He has apologised to the Greens. He has apologised to everybody here today. He has apologised to journalists generally and he has

apologised personally to a number of those that have contacted him. He has accepted that what he said was not the kindest thing to say, that the words were hurtful. There is not much more he can do except to continue to apologise and hope that people take that for what it was.

His work in engaging the Canberra community in the decision-making of government is absolutely vital, and that work will continue to occur alongside traditional media. It needs to happen alongside traditional media, and that is why the amendment that has been moved by Mr Rattenbury today is so appropriate: that this Assembly does affirm its support for freedom of the press and acknowledges the important role of journalists and all forms of media in our democracy. The Canberra community has always judged the government on its ability to communicate to everybody in our community on all kinds of issues, particularly around social justice, equality, tax, climate change, economic reform, and they continue to do that.

For the benefit of the Assembly, I feel I do need to clarify a couple of areas in which the ACT government, led by the Chief Minister, Andrew Barr, has shown its ability to be a national leader on key issues of social justice and economic reform, not least in areas benefiting seniors, where they experience disadvantage. I want to focus on family safety.

In 2016, under the leadership of the Chief Minister, the government refocused its efforts to combat domestic and family violence with a comprehensive reform agenda. We picked up the royal commission recommendations that no other jurisdiction has implemented and are now starting to see results, which is another testament to the Chief Minister's leadership. The government's safer families work extends to all corners of the community. It is an agenda that seeks to engage the whole community in the response and ultimately achieve zero tolerance for domestic and family violence in the ACT.

We know that this issue of domestic, family and intimate partner violence does not discriminate and impacts many in our community: children, their parents, families, grandparents, work colleagues, friends and neighbours. The government's reform agenda is built around five themes: leadership and cultural change; prevention and early intervention; information-sharing; collaboration and integration; and transparency and accountability. Through this work already we have seen many achievements that are making a real difference in how we tackle this community-wide issue.

Another very clear example of leadership from the Chief Minister is housing and homelessness. The Canberra community, through the government, supports housing and related services for tens of thousands of Canberrans of all ages and backgrounds. We maintain the highest proportion of social housing per capita in Australia and, again under the Chief Minister's leadership, we are delivering the largest public housing renewal program in Canberra's history. Members may also have noticed that in the new census data released last week the ACT bucked the national trend with a decline in both the rate and number of homeless people in Canberra.

This is what a sustained commitment to fairness and social investment can achieve for young and for old. It stands in stark contrast to an alternative on offer, and that offer is to audit and sell off public housing, to end housing renewal and to stigmatise housing tenants across the ACT. The Assembly has very important work to do this week. This matter was settled publicly. We need to get on with what we are here for.

MS LE COUTEUR (Murrumbidgee) (11.04): My first observation is that Mr Barr is a human being as well as Chief Minister. As such, he is entitled to his views and he has apologised profusely and extensively for how he has expressed them. For Ms Lawder's benefit or for anyone else who might doubt it, I of course stand by my comments in the *Canberra Times*. The Greens believe that independent journalism is critical to the functioning of our democracy. From the Greens' point of view, we obviously do not totally share Mr Barr's views. But I and the Greens believe that a free and well-resourced press is vital to our democracy. It is part of our democracy.

How do people get their information about what is happening in the political sphere or in any sphere? That is the role of the press, and we should be seeking to strengthen it, not diminish it. I personally hope that we have robust debates and differences of opinion in the media, but unfortunately we seem to be having this less and less.

Most people and most journalists, it seems, unfortunately do not have the time, energy and resources to access and understand all the information on issues. This is where journalists and the media are incredibly important in that they do have, in a diminishing amount it seems, the resources to actually look at what is happening, to make the commentary: "Yes, so-and-so said this two months ago, but now they are saying this or they are saying this. Two years ago there was a court case on it." That is the role of journalists and we should all be supporting it.

I think there are issues with media in Australia. I am pleased to hear Mr Barr's strong support for the ABC and its charter. I think that is important. But I would go further and say that media is very concentrated in Australia and in the ACT—and unfortunately that is true—and, running the risk of sounding like Mr Trump, that is actually very sad. The solution is not, however, to say that we should have less to do with media, that we should have less to do with journalists. The solution is to double down and do more.

Other parts of the media are not perfect. In the last couple of days we have had a major story about Facebook having leaked the profiles of 50 million people. That is a media sin far exceeding anything that has been done by traditional media in recent years, I think. I would say that probably the biggest issue probably for all our media is that they are not paying enough attention to the really big issues.

The Assembly knows what I think the really big issues are. If we do not address climate change with a lot more energy and enthusiasm than we as a local community or we as a world are doing then the other issues will become irrelevant because of the significant climate changes that we are already seeing happen. That is, in my mind, the biggest problem of media at present. But there are other environmental issues.

Of course, the other big issue that our media is under-representing is social justice. Australia is getting to be a less equal not more equal society. Members will remember that I have been rabbiting on about housing and housing affordability for a long time. These are the sorts of issues. Newstart has not gone up for, I do not think, about 30 years. This is the sort of issue that we should be talking about. I have been a single mother. I know I am not the only person in this Assembly who has been a single mother. It is tough. We need better social support for all our community. These are the things that our media should be concentrating more of their efforts on, rather than our internal fights about political points.

I totally support Mr Rattenbury's amendment. Probably the only other thing I should really say, as someone who is over 60 and, I believe, the oldest member of the Assembly, is that older members of our community are vitally important. As Ms Lawder said, they are often the only people who have the time to actually look at what is going on in our community. They have a wealth of knowledge from various parts of their lives and it is vital that they are a continuing part of our community. Yes, it does get harder as you get older. It is not as easy to get out, you find that the fonts of things are impossible to read and your hearing is not as good.

We need to place particular emphasis on making sure that our communication is accessible to all—accessible to older people and to younger people and, of course, to the people, the majority of Canberrans, in between. I regret the comments that have led to this censure motion and Mr Rattenbury's amendment, but I will be supporting Mr Rattenbury's amendment.

MR STEEL (Murrumbidgee) (11.09): As a member of the ACT Assembly for the Labor Party, I believe strongly that the media and quality journalism are important to the healthy functioning of our democracy. The Chief Minister has quite genuinely apologised for his comments, today and in the media last week.

We respect the role that mainstream media organisations and journalists play in reporting and providing analysis of governments, businesses and organisations. The government and the Chief Minister are not seeking to subvert that role. Instead, we are using a range of new ways of engaging with Canberrans in addition to traditional media. Labor, both ACT and federal, have been very clear in our party platforms that we will engage with young Australians, including through social media and new technology, as well as mainstream media. We must engage the hard-to-reach audiences and include them in our decision-making.

Last sitting week in the Assembly, I brought forward a matter of public importance about the importance of broad engagement with the community where I said that we must find new ways of engaging with young people as well as continuing to engage with older audiences on existing platforms. Those comments seemed unremarkable at the time, but maybe Mr Coe will bring on a censure motion in the chamber against me and censure me for those comments in the next sitting week.

That view should not be seen as offensive to older people, with whom we will continue to engage actively through the channels that they engage with. But it is about

engaging with other groups, too, in addition and simultaneously. We already established at the election that the Liberals cannot walk and chew gum at the same time when it comes to delivering policies for our city, but we can and must engage with multiple audiences and multiple channels at the same time.

At the election, I made a commitment to the community on participatory democracy. I said:

I will seize the opportunity of a smaller electorate to deliver better constituent representation through increasing contact with my constituents, especially with those that don't usually have a voice in our democracy. I will conduct regular, published mobile offices and make myself available to residents on the Southside. I will regularly update people on work in the Assembly and seek feedback—

on key issues affecting people in the region. I said:

... I will represent Labor's ... policies and values in the Assembly and seek feedback on implementation and policy development from residents.

The ACT government's policy on engagement is entirely consistent with this. We and the Chief Minister welcome tough questions from journalists and hope that they continue to keep governments of either stripe accountable into the future. They also have a responsibility to be independent and fair in their reporting of the news, just as we have the responsibility to be accountable as elected members.

Labor has always supported a well-funded and independent ABC as critical to a fair, inclusive, well-governed society, fending off the Liberals' attacks on our national broadcaster. We have stood up against changes to cross-media ownership laws and the consolidation of traditional media under the conservative media barons like Murdoch and Rinehart.

Our Labor values have not changed, but our approach to engagement must evolve. I doubt whether I will stop my lifelong habit of listening to ABC 666 in the mornings, because I value the quality of the ABC's coverage of local stories. But I also know that a majority of Canberrans are not listening to the radio or reading the *Canberra Times*. That is why we need to continue to engage in new ways, in other ways, as well. That is not about ignoring older Canberrans, but it is about not ignoring younger audiences. To suggest that the Chief Minister has contempt for older people is overreach. He is simply seeking to engage with all audiences and not ignore the channels that younger people engage with.

We will not be lectured on older Canberrans by those opposite. Your party's actions speak much louder in your approach to older people. Cuts to pension indexation by your party, pensioner concessions, axing the \$900 seniors supplement, resetting deeming rate thresholds, cutting the pension to 370,000 pensioners, axing the energy supplement to two million Australians, taking away the pension supplement and refusing to adjust the deeming rates for pensioners are the sorts of things that your party is doing. Yet you come in here and try to suggest that we and the Chief Minister have contempt for older people.

Mrs Jones: We did not suggest it at all. He did.

MR STEEL: He did not. This is the approach that we see from those opposite, particularly the Leader of the Opposition, coming in here with no-confidence motions and censure motions with no evidence at all. Meanwhile, our government is supporting greater concessions for older Canberrans and investing in an age-friendly city. It is entirely unremarkable that at the same time we are engaging with older Canberrans we are doing the same with younger Canberrans.

I support the Chief Minister's apology today. I think that this censure motion demonstrates the constant overreach from those opposite when it comes to motions in this place.

MR PARTON (Brindabella) (11.15): Wow, it has been remarkable, hasn't it? It has been remarkable from the moment it actually got into the media, but I think it has become even more remarkable today.

I rise to speak in support of this censure motion against the Chief Minister. I speak as a former journalist, Madam Speaker. I speak as one who first appeared in print as a newspaper journalist in 1979 at the age of 13. Like most journalists, I know that I was drawn to the space because I wanted to share as much information as I possibly could with as many people as I possibly could. To me, that is the essence of journalism. Journalism is not a glamorous line of work. For the most part, it does not pay well. The hours are often odd and unstructured. But most journalists that I know are so enamoured of their job that they do not complain much about the extra hours they do, often unpaid, as they try with all their might to sift through all of the information and to present the truth.

I have mentored dozens and dozens of people in the broadcast industry. There are a number of them who I have strongly advised not to pursue journalism. I have said, "No, don't go down that path." Why? Because it is such a hard slog, because the pay is pretty ordinary, and because you do not get much thanks. But you certainly would not expect that you would be getting the Chief Minister of the territory coming out and declaring that he hated you.

I take my hat off to the journalists of this city, because I know what they do and I know how they do it. The Canberra Liberals appreciate the work that journalists are doing. That includes the moments when the press is critical of us. It is about enabling the public with knowledge, shining a light on things that would have remained in the dark had they not pointed the torch in that direction. The truth, it must be said, Madam Speaker, is not kind to everyone. There are always those whose lives would be much more comfortable if the truth was never revealed. But the public of Canberra have a right to know the truth, and in many instances that would not occur without hardworking journalists.

How dare the Chief Minister make such an all-encompassing statement about an entire profession simply because they dared to do their job! I cannot believe the hypocrisy from this man who lives by the mantra of inclusion. He does not judge

people by their colour, creed, religion, sexuality or gender, but he can judge an entire profession because they dare to disagree with his vision. How dare the Chief Minister declare not only that he hates journalists but that this vindictiveness towards them is so strong that he wishes with all of his heart that their major employer, for a great chunk of these journalists, would go belly up so that they can be unemployed! Wouldn't we have a party then? Wouldn't we celebrate that? These people would be unemployed and we would not have to worry about them doing their job. What a charming message from the Chief Minister: "I hate you and all of your work colleagues, and I cannot wait for the day that you are unemployed." Wow!

The Chief Minister would be surprised—maybe he would not be—by the number of calls that I received personally from journalists in the 48 hours after his infamous comments were made public. People were ropeable. A couple of them were in tears as to their unfair public humiliation at the hands of the political leader of the ACT. How could a man who had never even met them, such a high-ranking political official, hate them with such a passion that he was prepared to stand in a room of people and say, "I hate journalists?" How could a man who preaches inclusion be so hateful and full of bitterness to an entire profession?

The main reason, as we all know, is that the Chief Minister sees himself as the king in this town. He won the election, so he believes he has the divine right to do and say whatever he pleases—and how dare anyone question him. Indeed, anyone who is courageous enough to question him will find themselves on the outer, bullied into silence, because nobody can question the Chief Minister.

A free and independent press is a cornerstone of democracy. It helps promote political debate. It keeps government accountable to the people. A free press is also crucial for credible elections. It fosters the free exchange of ideas and provides information on the election process. The strength of a democracy is often determined by the strength of its media.

When dictators take hold, the very first thing they do is shut down the media. I am going to quote American Senator John McCain from only a few months ago. He said:

If you want to preserve democracy as we know it, you have to have a free and, many times, adversarial press.

He went on to say:

... without it, I am afraid that we would lose so much of our individual liberties over time. That's how dictators get started.

He could have been talking about our Chief Minister. Of course, he was talking about Donald Trump. But that is how dictators get started. It is "My way or the highway. I have my vision, and everyone else can"—I cannot really say that.

To all of the journalists who are listening or reading these words, my message to you is simple: don't take the Chief Minister's words personally; his outburst was much more a reflection of his personality than of you and your work. In fact, I think you

should wear his outburst as a badge of honour. If this thin-skinned leader is so annoyed with you, I would suggest it means that you are doing a fine job. So, please, take this attack and use it as motivation to work even harder. If you need to be critical, be critical, whether it be of us or them. Do your job to the best of your ability; face the bullies bravely; do not take a backward step. And know that even when you are critical of me and my party, we will respect you for doing your job.

This Assembly should send a very strong message to the Chief Minister that his words were unacceptable.

MR RAMSAY (Ginninderra—Attorney-General, Minister for Regulatory Services, Minister for the Arts and Community Events and Minister for Veterans and Seniors) (11.22): Madam Speaker, I rise having listened carefully to try to find some places in the speeches by those opposite that I could agree with. I managed to find some quite early on, and then it went downhill after that.

Let me quote a couple of areas of clear agreement. The Leader of the Opposition said that the seniors in Canberra are a growing demographic. We would agree with that. He also said, “They have made an enormous contribution to our society.” We would agree with that. Not only would I agree with that, having been given the privilege, under this Chief Minister, of having the responsibility of being Minister for Veterans and Seniors, but we as a government agree with it.

Let me quote the Chief Minister. At the Gold Award presentation last week, he said, “This is a cause for celebration. We are the longest lived, we are the healthiest, we are the most educated and we are the most engaged community in Australia.” That was a celebration of our seniors. Far from there being a condemnation, this Chief Minister values, supports and has entrusted across this government the work to make sure that all people are valued.

We have talked too often about and should move beyond this area of seniors being a challenge in our community. I have heard that at times when the opposition have spoken about the difficulties that are being faced and the challenges that are being faced. We have to move past that. We have to move past understanding seniors as a challenge. Seniors are a great asset to our community. They not only contribute economically and from a broader community point of view but are great mentors and role models.

We in this city have the Senior Australian of the Year, and we affirm and celebrate his role this year. Last week, we joined in celebrating people receiving the Gold Awards whose lives in Canberra have made a marked positive contribution. It would seem as though only the shadow minister for seniors was out at the seniors expo and Seniors Week last week. Let me tell you that that is certainly not the case. Not only was I at a number of events; so, too, was the Chief Minister, celebrating and affirming the role of seniors in our community. It is no challenge but a great celebration that we have.

To affirm the place of one group of people in society does not imply the condemnation of another group of people in society. To say that we need to listen more carefully, more coherently, to people who may not engage as much with

mainstream media does not mean that there is any level of disrespect for people who do. We have an ongoing way of listening.

During Seniors Week I was pleased, following on from the Chief Minister's launching of Seniors Week at the Chief Minister's concert on Tuesday, that people at that concert, both the Tuesday morning one and the Tuesday afternoon one, and throughout the week, and now people throughout the community, were and are able to engage in a survey as we continue to listen for our seniors' views.

One of the things we are asking is: how do you gain the information that you wish to gain? Why do we ask that? Because, unlike the opposition, we do not clump all the seniors together and say, "This is the way they think; this is the way they hear; this is the way they communicate." It is a matter of valuing all people individually and in the role that they play.

This government, under this Chief Minister—and it has my support wholeheartedly as part of that work—is seeking to demonstrate how we can continue to build an age-friendly city. That is happening in a number of ways under this particular budget. We have already extended the trial of the flexible bus service. We have provided free off-peak transport to seniors. We are providing skills support for people who, in their senior years, continue to wish to be employed. We are working over and over again. My Ministerial Advisory Council on Ageing is leading work in relation to elder abuse so that all people can be valued, all people can know that they belong and all people can have an opportunity to participate in this community strongly and positively.

It is something that the Chief Minister is strong with; it is something that the Chief Minister has asked and encouraged me to work with. And it is something that the opposition is deliberately turning a blind eye to. It is deliberately closing its eyes and deliberately not understanding that you can affirm all ages and not at the same time condemn seniors. There seems to be this black-and-white, us-and-them thinking that is constantly promoted by those opposite. But, as they narrow things down, as they seek to diminish the role of our seniors by clumping them together and saying, "This is the way they think," they are doing a disservice to and disrespecting our seniors, which we in this government will not do.

MR GENTLEMAN (Brindabella—Minister for Police and Emergency Services, Minister for the Environment and Heritage, Minister for Planning and Land Management and Minister for Urban Renewal) (11.27): The opposition's motion should not be supported. It is a stunt and it is not even original. It comes from the playbook of Tony Abbott and his brand of negative politics. It is politics that Canberrans utterly reject. They do not want a backward-looking city, one that is built on fear, division and negativity. They want a strong, vibrant city, one that is growing, a city that is sustainable and prosperous, and a city that is powered by 100 per cent renewables, with world-class health care and education. We want to be the place that finds the solutions that make a better city, a better nation and a better world, and that is exactly what this Chief Minister is doing. That is what every member of his team is delivering as well.

We should not agree to the original motion because it goes against everything Canberrans want. As the Chief Minister has made clear, this government wants to talk to all Canberrans, and we will do that through social media, new methods of communication, direct communication, and, I stress, through traditional media. This is good government. It is about being genuine about informing Canberrans and it is about consulting them.

We are genuine about wanting to engage better, to try new ways of reaching people, and particularly those who do not usually have a voice in public debate. It is no secret that there are many people that cannot always take part in engagement activities. We want to reach those people. If the opposition see something wrong with this then they are simply not fit to govern. They can stick to their echo chamber of hard-right conservatism.

We should not agree to Mr Coe's motion because residents of our city deserve better from the opposition. This Leader of the Opposition stands in stark contrast to the Chief Minister. There is no bigger champion of Canberra and our region than our Chief Minister. Under his leadership Canberra has been recognised by *Lonely Planet* as one of the top three cities in the world to visit. We have seen record tourism numbers, growth in international flights and our economy is booming.

We are looking after our people by investing in schools, hospitals and emergency services. We are the world's most livable city, with a natural environment that is second to none. The Chief Minister is a leader who has a vision for our city and a plan to get there.

Canberrans do not want cheap stunts like this from those opposite. They want what the government is delivering under a united team led by this Chief Minister. They want a team and a government that is governing for all, and that is what we are doing.

MR COE (Yerrabi—Leader of the Opposition) (11.30): As each speaker contributed to this debate, each speaker on the other side tried to dodge the core issue, which is the spite that Mr Barr demonstrated. Unfortunately, it is not just spite as a one-off; it is spite on an ongoing basis. The bitterness and vindictiveness are pretty much out of control.

As Mr Parton said, these comments that were made a couple of weeks ago were not just off the cuff. It was a "meet the buyer" event. If it was off the cuff, that shows the absolute sham that that "meet the buyer" event was, because they did not actually plan for this procurement exercise. But the fact that they would say that they look forward to the demise of the *Canberra Times*, the fact that they would actually articulate that they look forward to the shutting down of a major publication in Canberra, a paper that has served the ACT for 100 years or so, as being a great day for Canberra, I think speaks to Mr Barr's true motivation.

Mr Ramsay talked about all the things that the government does; obviously, none of those actions is actually sincere, because the personal and private views of the Chief Minister are contrary to that of the government. If we are actually going to get some

integrity in this place, if we are actually going to have Mr Barr's private views reflected in his public life, are we going to see all support for seniors chucked out of the window? They have already started on the concessions. Are we going to see all the other benefits or thankyou's that we give to seniors taken away? Obviously, Mr Barr does not think they are worthwhile. Obviously, Mr Barr does not think that that cohort is worthy of this government's or this Assembly's time.

Mr Gentleman tried to, in effect, say that this is a non-issue; it is a stunt. Anybody who has tuned in to media in the past week would suggest that it is not a non-issue. Anybody who has read letters to the editor, anybody who has looked at social media and anybody who has heard talkback radio, be it here or elsewhere, would know that this is not just about flying under the radar and something being concocted by the Liberals. This has struck a nerve with thousands of Canberrans.

The reality is that the Assembly does not really cut through into most people's lives. The debates we have here—the motions, the bills, the publications—often have a narrow audience. People are busy living their lives. But this issue has had cut through. It has had cut through like very few issues do. The reason it has cut through is that it has struck a nerve. It has struck a nerve with Canberrans that what the Chief Minister said actually encapsulates the Chief Minister they know—a Chief Minister who is increasingly becoming arrogant, a government that is distancing itself from mainstream Canberrans and a government that is not seeking to represent the people who pay the bills.

It is significant. That is why I am a little bit surprised by the approach that the Chief Minister took, as well as by the fact that they would want to lengthen this debate by having numerous other speakers give an equally pathetic “sorry but not sorry”. In actual fact they sort of gave a half-defence of the comments. They gave a defence of reasons why you might not like journalists, why you might sort of hate journalists, or why it is fair to have a go at seniors.

It shows that the coalition between Labor and the Greens is not actually about bettering Canberra; it is about self-propulsion. It is about themselves. It is about their hunger and determination to hold on to power. So when you have that motivation on top of the first minister saying that they hate journalists, that is a pretty bad cocktail. That is a cocktail that, in other jurisdictions, in other countries, has gone very bad, very quickly.

That is why press freedom is important. That is why the Canberra Liberals will always stand up for media freedom in Australia and in Canberra. That is why it is so important that we have the *Canberra Times* operating in the ACT. And we should not dance on their grave should that paper fall away in a few years, as the Chief Minister hopes.

To paraphrase what Chris Uhlmann said, is his government actually going to get any better if there is not scrutiny? Is his government actually going to get better if the *Canberra Times*, the ABC or the radio stations do not report on it? It is quite the opposite.

The Chief Minister also went on radio and said that one of the great examples of transparency is the fact that the Dickson deal was made public. The only reason that the Dickson deal was made public was because I did a title search. I went into Dickson and did a title search. That is hardly publishing it on a website. That is hardly coming into this place and saying, “By the way, I gave four million bucks to the Tradies Club.” That is what happened.

The only reason that became public is because of a title search—one of the most obscure ways you can get information. It was not because there is a transparent government. It was not because the Chief Minister came into this place and said he had something to report. It was not because they had a strategy beforehand and made it clear that they would go through a procurement process to purchase this property. They tried to do it secretly and they got found out. And there is a lot more water to flow underneath that bridge in the coming weeks and months.

There is a very good reason why Andrew Barr would privately and personally have a view that he does not want journalists in Canberra, and that is because he does not want the truth told. He does not want the light shone into his administration, as Mr Parton said. This government have a lot to fear from transparency. That is why they are dragging the chain with regard to ICAC. That is why they do not make it public when they buy property in town. That is why they have all of these shady deals that nobody seems to know about until deep questions are asked and deep FOIs are requested.

There are many things that need to be revealed about this government, but when the leader of that government tells future journalists, journalists in training and current journalists that he hates them, that paints a very sorry picture, a very grim picture, for this jurisdiction.

It is disappointing that the Greens once again will do one thing in public and another thing in here. That is why we need journalists. We need journalists to actually expose that sort of behaviour, because we need integrity in politicians. We all need to be held to account: all of us; we in the opposition and those parties in government, too. It is not good enough to tell constituents one thing and do something totally different here in the Assembly. That is exactly what Ms Le Couteur and Mr Rattenbury do on a daily basis.

While Mr Rattenbury may be shackled to this government, and while Ms Le Couteur may be shackled to this government, they in fact put those shackles on. They are the ones who put themselves on that side of the chamber. You would think they would use an opportunity like this to create some artificial distance between themselves and the Labor Party. You would think this would be one of those rare opportunities when they could say, “We’re not really like Labor.” But they are not strategic enough to even identify that, because they have outsourced their strategy, outsourced their policy and outsourced their ethics to Andrew Barr. It is not good enough, and I think the Canberra community is finding out exactly what lack of integrity and credit this government have.

I am disappointed that the censure motion will not get up today. That is very clear but it is no surprise. On behalf of the thousands of Canberrans who were offended by Andrew Barr's comments, I think we have done the right thing by bringing it forward today.

Question put:

That the amendment be agreed to.

The Assembly voted—

Ayes 13

Noes 10

Mr Barr	Ms Orr	Miss C Burch	Mr Milligan
Ms Berry	Mr Pettersson	Mr Coe	Mr Parton
Ms J Burch	Mr Ramsay	Mr Hanson	Mr Wall
Ms Cody	Mr Rattenbury	Mrs Jones	
Ms Fitzharris	Mr Steel	Mrs Kikkert	
Mr Gentleman	Ms Stephen-Smith	Ms Lawder	
Ms Le Couteur		Ms Lee	

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Original question, as amended, resolved in the affirmative.

Petitions

The following petition was lodged for presentation:

Mitchell light rail stop—petition 6-18

By **Ms Fitzharris**, from 4,560 residents:

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

This petition of certain residents of the Australian Capital Territory draws to the attention of the Assembly that: **The planned Lysaght/Flemington Road light rail stop was removed from construction without adequate consultation with business owners and rate payers of the precinct.**

Your petitioners therefore request the Assembly to: **Request on our behalf to reinstate the light rail stop planned for Mitchell.**

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.

Pursuant to standing order 99A, the petition, having more than 500 signatories, was referred to the Standing Committee on Environment and Transport and City Services.

Ministerial responses

The following responses to petitions have been lodged:

Bus routes in Tuggeranong—petitions 19-17 and 26-17

By **Ms Fitzharris**, Minister for Transport and City Services, dated 27 February 2018, in response to a petition lodged by Mr Parton on 28 November 2017 concerning rerouting buses away from Anketell Street, Tuggeranong.

The response read as follows:

Dear Mr Duncan

Thank you for your letter of 28 November 2017 regarding petition Nos 19-17 and 26-17 about rerouting buses away from Anketell Street, Tuggeranong.

Transport Canberra does not support the proposal of immediate and permanent rerouting of buses away from Anketell Street as proposed, as this would negatively impact the reliable delivery of public transport services through the Tuggeranong Town Centre.

I am pleased to inform you that representatives from Transport Canberra have had preliminary discussions with members of the Tuggeranong Community Council regarding this proposal. Whilst confirming the position that scheduled services will not be rerouted as proposed, this meeting did open up a welcome dialogue between the directorate and the community regarding the situation and aspirations to improve the amenity of the area.

Transport Canberra and City Services officials will continue to work closely with the Tuggeranong community to discuss longer term options for improved public transport provision within the Town Centre, ensuring that public transport can contribute positively to the growth and revitalisation that benefits the entire community.

Thank you for raising this matter. I trust the information provided is of assistance.

Lake Burley Griffin and surrounds—petition 30-17

By **Mr Gentleman**, Minister for the Environment and Heritage, dated 1 March 2018, in response to a petition lodged by Ms Lee on 30 November 2017 concerning heritage protection for Lake Burley Griffin and surrounds.

The response read as follows:

Dear Mr Duncan

Thank you for your letter of 30 November 2017 regarding petition No. 30-17 lodged by Ms Lee MLA on behalf of certain Australian Capital Territory residents.

I understand that the petition draws to the attention of the Assembly the following:

- lack of Heritage protection for Lake Burley Griffin and all its surrounding lakeshore landscapes;
- repudiate as unacceptable the infill of part of West Basin's lake waters and the appropriation for private development of ACT public parks and open spaces surrounding Lake Burley Griffin, particularly West Basin, for either residential or commercial development; and
- rejects the Government's right to proceed any further with these and related proposals.

Heritage protection of the Lake area relates to matters that are the subject of nominations to the National or Commonwealth Heritage Lists and are in the jurisdiction of the Commonwealth and the Australian Heritage Council. As such, the National Capital Authority (NCA) developed the *Lake Burley Griffin and Adjacent Lands Heritage Management Plan* in 2009, in accordance with the heritage management principles and requirements for management plans set out in the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* to define the Lake's heritage values and how to protect them. During the process of developing the plan a draft was available for two months for the public to make comment.

The plan includes a range of conservation policies and recommendations to conserve, interpret and manage the heritage values of Lake Burley Griffin and Adjacent Lands to ensure that the future use and enhancement of the Lake is informed by the heritage values, by promoting a holistic approach to the future management of the Lake as a cultural landscape. The developments to the area were informed by the plan and approved by the NCA.

A copy of the plan can be found at: <https://www.nca.gov.au/heritage-management-plan/lake-burley-griffin-and-adjacent-lands-heritage-management-plan-0>.

Canberra is a growing modern, vibrant city. It has changed significantly in its first 100 years, and particularly over the past 10 years. As it has grown it has kept true to the vision the original designers, Walter Burley Griffin and Marion Mahony Griffin, while reflecting the evolving nature of a modern city and the people who call it home. This vision, and their planning legacy, is enshrined in the National Capital Plan (NCP) which is administered by the National Capital Authority, a Commonwealth authority. The plan sets out the development controls and requirements for defined areas, including West Basin.

At the centre of that original vision was Lake Burley Griffin. The lake is an important and iconic part of Canberra and its character. Its 40km waterfront with many and varied parks and public areas make it one of the key features that make Canberra such a beautiful city and wonderful place to live and visit.

The Griffins' original plan intended the city's grid structure and form would continue down to the lake in West Basin, ultimately connecting the city centre and lake. To achieve this vision, the planning for West Basin involves the

reclamation of a small portion of the lake bed to adjust the edge to the Griffins' intended, formal structured alignment.

The majority of West Basin is currently carpark but the ACT Government is committed to transforming it into a precinct where people come to meet, celebrate and have fun.

That transformation includes a new public park on the West Basin headland. The next stage is the reclamation of a small area of lake bed to create a formal lake edge and boardwalk. A future final stage will see the development of a 55 metre wide public promenade which will include purpose built pavilions for cafes and tourist facilities, playgrounds and water play areas. The West Basin waterfront currently consists of three hectares of surface parking but when redeveloped it will have four hectares of public park and promenade.

Mixed-use land release is also proposed in West Basin between the promenade and the city, with a range of retail, residential and recreational spaces to provide a vibrant precinct, supported by a wide range of amenities and public infrastructure.

Detailed planning for the West Basin estate, comprising the mixed-use land release, has not yet started as the ACT Government's priority is delivering the public waterfront and how to best resolve connectivity issues between the City and Lake Burley Griffin presented by Parkes Way. The ACT Government intends to broadly deliver the West Basin precinct as outlined in the National Capital Plan and The City Plan. These plans provided the concept planning and permit a range of building heights in the West Basin precinct, with taller buildings towards the city centre (up to 25m) and lower buildings closer to the waterfront promenade (no more than four storey).

The ACT Government will continue to progress planning of this area in order to realise the Griffins' vision, and in a manner consistent with the National Capital Plan. The detail of these plans will be open to public consultation.

Torrens shops playground—petition 31-17

By **Ms Fitzharris**, Minister for Minister for Transport and City Services, dated 16 March 2018, in response to a petition lodged by Mrs Jones on 30 November 2017 concerning a proposed upgrade of the playground at Torrens shops.

The response read as follows:

Dear Mr Duncan

Thank you for your letter of 30 November 2017 regarding petition No 31-17 lodged by Mrs Giulia Jones MLA, regarding proposed upgrades to the Torrens playground.

The ACT Government invested \$2.7 million in 2016-17 in recognition of the important role play spaces have in fostering healthy communities. The investment included upgrades to four prioritised playgrounds located in Florey, Gowrie, Gungahlin and Evatt and installation of three natural play spaces in Barton, Tuggeranong and O'Connor.

The ACT Government manages over 500 playgrounds across Canberra, including three in Torrens. 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.

The most recent playground audit found that the equipment in the three playgrounds located at Torrens Place, Parsons Street and Horrocks Street in Torrens meet Australian safety standards and are in good condition for use. Hence, there are no current plans to upgrade the playgrounds in Torrens.

The request for sun protection for the playground has been noted and will be considered as part of any future shade sail installations. Shade sails are generally installed in large, centrally located play spaces across Canberra where the frequent visitation rates and longer visits show that they will benefit the greatest number of children.

Thank you for raising this matter. I trust the information is of assistance.

Mitchell light rail stop—petition 6-18

MS FITZHARRIS (Yerrabi—Minister for Health and Wellbeing, Minister for Transport and City Services and Minister for Higher Education, Training and Research) (11.44), by leave: I would like to address the Assembly today on the petition I have tabled on the Mitchell light rail stop. I have sponsored this petition on behalf of the Mitchell Traders Association. They should be commended for the strong and productive engagement they have undertaken with local businesses, the local community and government since they formed last year. I, as a local member and as the minister, my office and the Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate have met with the association and its members on a number of occasions. I have been impressed by their energy and focus in promoting local businesses and advocating strongly on behalf of their members.

Firstly, I would like to address some of the concerns raised by the association and others that a light rail stop at Mitchell was removed from construction. As I have previously advised the Assembly, considerable consultation was undertaken during the early planning stages in 2014 to identify suitable stop locations for stage 1.

The government conducted rigorous analysis that included current and projected demand along the route, various technical assessments, access to stops and connectivity with local communities. The government also consulted with the community to seek feedback on potential stop locations. There were many put forward for stage 1 of light rail. During this process, the ACT government facilitated consultation which considered the potential for a light rail stop at many locations along the route, including a number at Mitchell. This consultation ran from June to August 2014 and recorded over 16,500 interactions with the local community and stakeholders.

The community was asked to provide feedback through a variety of channels, including through online surveys, direct mail to homes and businesses along the light

rail corridor, social media, public information sessions held in various locations around Canberra and a temporary information centre in the city open for the duration of the consultation period. The community provided strong feedback on the proposed options for stop locations along the route, with over 70 per cent of those completing the survey stating they would not use a potential Mitchell stop at Lysaght or Sandford streets. Of those who advised that they would use these stops, almost 80 per cent said they would use them only once a week.

Through this feedback and analysis of the range of other stops considered along the light rail route, it was determined that a light rail stop in Mitchell at Sandford Street was not warranted at the time, due to the relatively low patronage. It was not included in the final design and the considerable public consultation and debate on the project following the initial consultation. There are, however, two other stops located in Mitchell, one at the intersection of Well Station Drive and Flemington Road, 1.4 kilometres from Sandford Street; and one at EPIC, 1.2 kilometres from Sandford Street.

Mitchell is currently serviced by four bus routes on weekdays and three bus routes on weekends. This is a relatively high service level compared to other light industrial areas of Canberra. Average daily passenger movements are 212 on a weekday and 52 on a weekend. For context, there are around 130,000 passenger movements in total each day on the Transport Canberra bus network.

In late October 2014, further community feedback, media reports, the outcomes in the environmental impact statement on the light rail consultation and the release of the light rail stage 1 business case all clearly identified that a light rail stop in Mitchell at Sandford Street was not supported as part of stage 1.

I acknowledge the feedback from Mitchell traders and from the association in particular that, for a variety of reasons, they either did not know about or chose not to engage in the consultation process at the time. Indeed, some businesses have opened in Mitchell since that early consultation.

I think all of us in this place acknowledge that there was enormous public debate about light rail. There was also considerable opposition to the project, which some members of the community have informed me shaped their views on whether light rail was going ahead. That is a shame. It clearly is going ahead. We will continue to learn some of the lessons from the consultations we undertook for light rail, the most consulted on and scrutinised project, we believe, that this government has ever undertaken.

We acknowledge that Mitchell is a growing area and will be positively impacted by the growth of Gungahlin. It will also be the new home of light rail, housing our state-of-the-art light rail depot. As a result, we have ensured that a future stop can be constructed, by doing that work now as part of stage 1, effectively future-proofing the stop. It is the only additional stop along the stage 1 route that has received this treatment. This future-proofing work includes track alignment and underground communication and utility services work, and will allow for the development of a Mitchell stop at Sandford Street to be constructed in the future.

As I said to the Mitchell Traders Association representatives last week when I met with them to receive the petition, I really do thank them for their advocacy and working with the government in our efforts to make this light rail stop a reality. It is a shame we did not have this petition back in 2014 when the stop locations were finalised. Having said that, I can confirm that we are committed to establishing a stop at Sandford Street in Mitchell. It is a question of when, and I have given my undertaking that I will seek the earliest opportunity to operationalise that stop.

While it has been commented that it seems an easy thing to do now, the structure of the light rail contract means that it is not that straightforward, which is why the government planned and consulted extensively before finalising stop locations in 2014 and the finalisation of the contract. Revising the contract now to build a new light rail stop would impact on delivery of the project and incur significant additional costs. While it is and will remain something that we will keep front of mind, we will take a responsible approach to this matter, as Canberrans would expect us to do.

I recognise that businesses in Mitchell and their customers want certainty as to when the stop will be built. I want them to know that we will keep them updated and informed on this process so that there is no confusion about when it may happen. And, while I cannot give this certainty today, I want to assure them that we will work through the details and look for the earliest opportunity.

The formation of the Mitchell Traders Association has enabled the government to work closely with Mitchell businesses to address strategic business issues in the area and capitalise on opportunities so that we can work together to strengthen the Mitchell trading precinct. I thank them very much for this.

The ACT government will continue to work with Mitchell businesses on issues related to light rail, city services and public transport and to other issues they may seek to raise with us. Canberra Metro is also in contact with Mitchell businesses, and the Canberra Business Chamber has offered ongoing support through the light rail business link program for any additional practical measures during the construction phase.

Thanks again to the Mitchell Traders Association, particularly their president, Anthony Manning, and their secretary, Julian Kusa, for the opportunity to table this petition today. I look forward to future discussions with them and their members on the future of light rail through their growing precinct.

Leave of absence

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

That leave of absence be granted to Mrs Dunne for this sitting week to attend a CPA Executive Committee meeting.

Justice and Community Safety—Standing Committee Scrutiny report 15

MRS JONES (Murrumbidgee) (11.52): I present the following report:

Justice and Community Safety—Standing Committee (Legislative Scrutiny Role)—Scrutiny Report 15, dated 13 March 2018, together with the relevant minutes of proceedings.

I seek leave to make a brief statement.

Leave granted.

MRS JONES: Scrutiny report 15 contains the committee's comments on six bills, three pieces of subordinate legislation and four government responses. The report was circulated to members when the Assembly was not sitting. I commend the report to the Assembly.

Economic Development and Tourism—Standing Committee Report 2

MR HANSON (Murrumbidgee) (11.53): I present the following report:

Economic Development and Tourism—Standing Committee—Report 2—*Report on Annual and Financial Reports 2016-2017*, dated 27 February 2018, together with a copy of the extracts of the relevant minutes of proceedings.

I move:

That the report be noted.

This is the third report of the Standing Committee on Economic Development and Tourism. On 26 October 2017, 2016-17 annual reports, or sections of annual reports, were referred to the standing committee. That included the ACT executive; Director of Territory Records; government policy reform; coordinated communications and community engagement; urban renewal—city to the lake project; economic development strategy and program design; innovation, trade and investment—Innovate Canberra; ACT construction occupations; Access Canberra; arts engagement; VisitCanberra; events; ACT Government Procurement Board; economic management; financial management; procurement and capital works; government accommodation, property services and venues; and the Cultural Facilities Corporation.

The committee held two public hearings and heard from 24 witnesses from the relevant directorates and agencies. Members may be aware that during the course of one public hearing there were incidents involving exchanges between the Chief Minister, appearing as a witness, and me as the chair. This resulted in exchanges of correspondence with the Speaker and also lengthy written advice from the committee secretary and the Clerk. This advice and correspondence are attached to the report. I suggest that members read that advice.

Forty-two questions were taken on notice during the hearings; 94 questions were placed on notice after the hearing. Answers are available on the committee's web page. The committee has made six recommendations. On behalf of the committee, I would like to thank the members of the government and their directorate staff who appeared and for their contribution to this inquiry, and their timely return of answers to questions on notice.

I would also like to thank the committee secretary, the other members of the committee and those other MLAs who appeared to ask questions. I commend the report to the Assembly.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Economic Development and Tourism—Standing Committee Report 3

MR HANSON (Murrumbidgee) (11.55): I present the following report:

Economic Development and Tourism—Standing Committee—Report 3—*Inquiry into a new Convention Centre for Canberra*, dated 7 March 2018, together with a copy of the extracts of the relevant minutes of proceedings.

I move:

That the report be noted.

On 21 February 2017, the committee, noting that the proposal to construct a new convention centre for Canberra had attracted tripartisan support in the Assembly, resolved to inquire into and report on the proposal to construct a new convention centre in Canberra. The committee received 10 submissions, held five public hearings and heard from 11 witnesses from a range of stakeholders.

The National Convention Centre provides a valuable service to Canberra but it does have significant limitations, particularly around the ability to hold more than one event simultaneously and to host banquets. Efforts to promote construction of a new convention centre date back to the Carnell government. The key proposal under discussion in recent years has been the Australia forum.

The committee undertook this inquiry in the hope that it would assist all parties in moving the process forward. The committee has made 10 recommendations. Our first recommendation is that stakeholders in a new convention centre in Canberra acknowledge that the Australia forum concept is unlikely to be constructed in its proposed form. While there is much to admire about the Australia forum proposal, the committee sets out in its report some of the reasons why the inspirations for the Australia forum are unlikely to be achieved.

The committee recommends some steps to advance the process towards a new convention centre, including reserving the City Hill site, continued engagement with the federal government and producing a revised functional requirement in the design

brief. The committee acknowledges that it will be some time before a new convention centre could be commissioned and so recommends the continued maintenance of the existing centre and investigation of possible temporary solutions to meet the need for banqueting and exhibition facilities.

On behalf of the committee, I would like to thank all of the witnesses and submitters for their contribution to the inquiry. I also thank the National Convention Centre for the tour of that facility that they provided. I would like to thank the secretary of the committee again for the work that he has done. I would also like to thank the other members of the committee for their very bipartisan approach to what I think is a very important debate in Canberra. I commend the report to the Assembly.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Education, Employment and Youth Affairs—Standing Committee Report 2

MR PETTERSSON (Yerrabi) (11.58): I present the following report:

Education, Employment and Youth Affairs—Standing Committee—Report 2—Report on Annual and Financial Reports 2016-2017 and University of Canberra 2016 Annual Report, dated 6 March 2018, together with a copy of the extracts of the relevant minutes of proceedings.

I move:

That the report be noted.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Planning and Urban Renewal—Standing Committee Report 5

MS LE COUTEUR (Murrumbidgee) (11.59): I present the following report:

Planning and Urban Renewal—Standing Committee—Report 5—Report on Annual and Financial Reports 2016-2017, dated 14 March 2018, together with a copy of the extracts of the relevant minutes of proceedings.

I move:

That the report be noted.

This is the fifth report for the Ninth Assembly of the Standing Committee on Planning and Urban Renewal. Like all the other standing committees, we have looked at the annual and financial reports. This for us included parts of the Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate, the Environment and Planning Directorate and the late Land Development Agency. I must say that it was particularly confusing

as the agency is no longer in existence. Sometimes it was quite hard to work out who actually had responsibility for things.

The committee made 12 recommendations. Most of them concerned communications in some way or another. Recommendations 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9 and 10 concerned communication about planning issues from the government to the community. I would like to highlight, particularly as the relevant minister is in the chamber, the importance of clear and accessible community consultation on and communication about planning issues.

Of course, on behalf of the committee I would like to thank all the ACT government ministers, their directorates and the agency officials for attending. I would like to thank the committee secretary, Annemieka Jongsma, and my fellow committee members. I commend the report to the Assembly. I move:

That the report be noted.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Public Accounts—Standing Committee Report 2

MR PETTERSSON (Yerrabi) (12.01): I present the following report:

Public Accounts—Standing Committee—Report 2—*Report on Annual and Financial Reports 2016-2017*, dated 20 March 2018, together with a copy of the extracts of the relevant minutes of proceedings.

I move:

That the report be noted.

Today I table the report of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts inquiry on annual and financial reports 2016-17. Mr Assistant Speaker, as you will be aware the scrutiny work of the committee extends across a number of important areas of government.

Areas touched upon in the report's recommendations have included revenue management in connection with changes to stamp duty and rates and their impact, in recommendations 1 and 2; superannuation liability in connection with governance arrangements for the independent advisory board for the superannuation liability fund, in recommendation 3; regulation of the provision of utilities to consumers in connection with arrangements for refunds where there are interruptions to electricity supply, in recommendations 3 and 4; lifetime care and support in connection with appropriate methods to administer a scheme with a very small number of participants, in recommendation 6; insurance for government agencies in connection with ensuring that agencies pay only as much as required to fund insurance requirements and end the practice of ACTIA making capital returns to government, in recommendation 7; management of software licences by Shared Services in connection with bringing

to completion a project to ensure effective tracking and management of all software licences used by government, in recommendation 8; terminology regarding workforce diversity, proposing that the ACT government dispense with the term “different religions” in characterising its workforce, in recommendation 9; apprenticeships and traineeships in connection with providing such support as would prevent further decreases in opportunities in these areas in the ACT, in recommendation 10; attraction and retention incentives and the principles used to negotiate these incentives being advised to the Assembly, in recommendation 11; Shared Services agreement between Icon Water and ActewAGL in connection with tabling the current version of this agreement in the Assembly by the end of the 2017-18 year, in recommendation 12; and the ACT Ombudsman asking the Speaker of the Assembly to swear in the current Ombudsman to place beyond doubt the formal aspects of his appointment to the current role, in recommendation 13.

Mr Assistant Speaker, these recommendations relate to important functions of government. I commend the report to the Assembly.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Economic Development and Tourism—Standing Committee Statement by chair

MR HANSON (Murrumbidgee) (12.04): Pursuant to standing order 246A, I wish to make a statement on behalf of the Standing Committee on Economic Development and Tourism relating to statutory appointments in accordance with continuing resolution 5A.

I inform the Assembly that during the period 1 July 2017 to 31 December 2017 the standing committee considered three statutory appointments to the Cultural Facilities Corporation Board. I table the following paper:

Economic Development and Tourism—Standing Committee—Schedule of Statutory Appointments—9th Assembly—Period 1 July to 31 December 2017.

Planning and Urban Renewal—Standing Committee Statement by chair

MS LE COUTEUR (Murrumbidgee) (12.05): Pursuant to standing order 246A, I wish to make a statement on behalf of the Standing Committee on Planning and Urban Renewal relating to the ACT government’s response to the committee’s inquiry into billboards. On 26 October 2017 the Standing Committee on Planning and Urban Renewal tabled its report on its inquiry into billboards. The ACT government response to the report was tabled in the Assembly on 22 February 2018.

The committee notes that the ACT government response agreed in principle to each of the 14 recommendations contained in the committee report. However, the committee is disappointed that the ACT government response does not commit to implementing any of its recommendations and is seemingly unclear about related regulatory arrangements. This lack of commitment to regulatory reform is of concern to the

committee, particularly given the high level of community commentary on this issue and the level of community involvement during this inquiry.

In this context the committee wishes to highlight the first and what it felt was the key recommendation contained in its report. This overarching recommendation requested that:

... the ACT government respond to the clear expression of community views throughout this inquiry with a review and potential update of the Signs General Code (ACT), Public Unleased Land Act 2013, Planning and Development Act 2007 and associated regulations and Codes of Practice. This review is to be completed by the end of 2019.

In its response to this recommendation the government indicated that the matter was complex and that a coordinated approach across government is required. However, it was not apparent that it intended to move forward to resolve these complexities or to take up the opportunity to meet community expectations. Whilst it is acknowledged that the Minister for Planning and Land Management stated in his tabling speech that an interdirectorate working group will be established to review relevant legislation, regulations and government policies relating to outdoor advertising signage in the ACT, the committee notes with concern that there is no formal commitment to this course of action.

The committee therefore strongly encourages the ACT government to reaffirm to the Assembly and the ACT community its intention and commitment to undertake a review of the current legislation, regulations and codes that apply to signage in the ACT and that it puts on record a definite time frame for this review to be undertaken.

MR GENTLEMAN (Brindabella—Minister for Police and Emergency Services, Minister for the Environment and Heritage, Minister for Planning and Land Management and Minister for Urban Renewal) (12.08), by leave: I thank the committee for its inquiry into billboards. As the government response made clear, we agree in principle to the committee's recommendations. In agreeing in principle we acknowledged we would need to consider the most appropriate way to do a review given that regulatory settings around billboards are complex and the need for an across-government approach. I note and acknowledge the comments from the committee chair today. The committee did a comprehensive job of examining the issue and the inquiry has made a very valuable contribution to the debate. The government acknowledges and respects the considerable amount of community interest the committee canvassed.

The government have unambiguously stated that we will review billboards. As a media release I issued on February 22 makes clear, billboard rules will be reviewed. The release noted that the ACT government response to the recent inquiry into billboards will see a review undertaken to look at billboard use, including the overview of the regulatory settings and the rules around outdoor advertising across Canberra. I will quote from the media release:

... there was strong feeling about this issue across the Canberra community and that this review will be focused on regulatory inconsistencies and working out a clear way forward.

“There has been significant input into the committee’s inquiry into this issue, and I thank the community for their interest. The ACT Government accepts the recommendation of the committee to conduct a review of these rules and regulations” ... “It is clear that there is no appetite from the community - or from the ACT Government - for Canberra to become Times Square. However it is also clear that the current regulatory settings for billboards and outdoor advertising signage in the ACT are overly complex, they have been for a long time and are in need of review.

“There is already outdoor advertising in Canberra that some might describe as billboards, so we definitely need to make the rules clearer. We also need some sensible regulation around digital and moveable advertising.”

The exact details of this review are still being determined. However, I reiterate that the government is committed to holding the review into the issue, and the government will report back to the Assembly with more details about the review when they are confirmed.

Statement by chair

MS LE COUTEUR (Murrumbidgee) (12.10): Pursuant to standing order 246A, I wish to make a statement on behalf of the Standing Committee on Planning and Urban Renewal relating to petition numbers 10-17 and 11-17. The petitions were received by the Assembly on 10 May 2017 and referred to the committee under standing order 99A. The petitions concern proposed public housing developments in Holder and Chapman.

The committee previously made a statement to the Assembly on 8 June 2017 in which it indicated that the committee would consider its response to the petitions following the presentation of the minister’s response to the Assembly and in the context of its housing inquiry.

The committee notes that the minister’s response to the petition under standing order 100, indicates that the public housing renewal task force will continue to work with the community to resolve their concerns and will ensure that any development in these suburbs will meet the required standards for construction.

The committee also notes that its housing inquiry was discontinued in November 2017. Following consideration of the petition and the minister’s response the committee has determined that it will not be holding an inquiry into the matter at this time.

Statement by chair

MS LE COUTEUR (Murrumbidgee) (12.12): Pursuant to standing order 246A, I wish to make a statement on behalf of the Standing Committee on Planning and Urban Renewal relating to petition number 29-17. The petition was received by the Assembly on 30 November 2017 and referred to the committee under standing order

99A. The petition requested the Assembly to retain existing green space in Hughes, Deakin and Garran and to design an integrated plan for the Red Hill natural environment, raising concerns about the potential for inappropriate development in the area.

The committee notes that the minister's response to the petition under standing order 100, refers to a resolution passed by the Assembly on 25 October 2017 which halts Territory Plan variations adjoining the Red Hill nature reserve until an integrated plan has been prepared for the nature reserve and surrounding areas.

The minister indicated that he has requested the Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate to prepare an integrated plan that addresses the Assembly resolution and considers the cumulative effects of development in the area. He also indicated that community groups, environmental groups, key stakeholders and the general public will be consulted as part of this process.

Following consideration of the petition and the minister's response, the committee has determined that it will not be holding an inquiry into the matter at this time

Public Accounts—Standing Committee

Statement by deputy chair

MR PETTERSSON (Yerrabi) (12.14): Pursuant to standing order 246A, I wish to make a statement on behalf of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts relating to certain Auditor-General's reports.

At its private meeting of 28 February 2018, the Standing Committee on Public Accounts resolved:

- to inquire further into Auditor-General's Report No. 3 of 2018, *Tender for the sale of block 30 (formerly block 20) Section 34 Dickson*.

It also resolved:

- that it would note, and not inquire further into, Auditor-General's Report No. 8 of 2017, *Select ACT Government agencies' management of public art*;
- that it would note, and not inquire further into, Auditor-General's Report No. 7 of 2017, *Public Housing Renewal Program*;
- that it would note, and not inquire further into Auditor-General's Report No. 6 of 2017, *Mental Health Services - Transition from Acute Care*;
- that it would note, and not inquire further into, Auditor-General's Report No. 5 of 2017, *Maintenance of Selected Road Infrastructure Assets*;
- that it would note, and not inquire further into, Auditor-General's Report No. 4 of 2017, *Performance information in ACT public schools*; and
- that it would note, and not inquire further into, Auditor-General's Report No. 9 of 2016, *Commissioner for International Engagement - position creation and appointment process*.

In relation to Auditor-General's report No 3 of 2017, *2015-16 Financial Audits—Computer Information Systems*, the committee noted that it had previously resolved to

inquire further into the report, but now resolved to note, and not inquire further into, the report.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural integrity in schools

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) (12.15): Madam Speaker, I would like to acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land, the Ngunnawal people, and I would also like to acknowledge all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who have come to call the ACT home. Their positive contribution to all aspects of the local community cannot be overstated. I would also like to specifically acknowledge the contribution that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people make to our schools. Whether they be school leaders, teachers, school support staff, students, families or community leaders, they all contribute to the rich culture and diversity of our schools.

Today I rise to talk about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education in ACT public schools. During the last Assembly, I talked about how the community have been telling us about their experiences with education in this city. The importance of schools being student centred is a key theme for these conversations.

Alongside the future of education conversation, the government has given focus to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education. The ACT government has recently reviewed funding allocations, policies and resources provided to schools to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education.

The Education Directorate has developed a new approach driven by cultural integrity that is strength based and promotes high expectations and connection with community and culture. It is also well aligned with the distinct cultural rights recognised in the Human Rights Act and supports the government delivering culturally appropriate services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples that respect their role in protecting, maintaining and nurturing culture, including language and knowledge, kinship ties, spiritual practices and beliefs.

The ACT can pride itself on taking a lead role in putting into practice a strength-based, non-deficit approach to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education. This is what it means to pursue reconciliation in action.

The government is implementing a new direction that requires all ACT public schools to build and strengthen cultural integrity. Cultural integrity describes the environment a school creates to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and to welcome and engage their families and communities. It exists in an environment that values and celebrates Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures, languages and knowledge systems. Every school's story in the community is rich. As such, cultural integrity will look different in each school.

Schools are changing the way they think about how the government provides Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education. It is no longer simply about expectations on students to meet a benchmark; it is about how schools and the system change their practice to open up the best opportunity for these students to learn.

In practice, building cultural integrity means schools engaging closely with their Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and communities; curriculum and ways of learning that embed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander content and perspectives; school leaders who celebrate the achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples; and schools that have high expectations for their Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. This approach is firmly rooted in current leading practice, academic literature and consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in our city.

The evidence strongly suggests that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students enjoy greater success in schools that are welcoming, that are reflective of their culture and community, and in which relationships support a high bar. This is cultural integrity.

In 2017 the Education Directorate worked closely in schools to prepare them for the new direction in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education, and to promote a cultural integrity toolkit that has been designed to support schools to develop their own strategies to build cultural integrity.

Workshops and professional learning have taken place for school leaders across the system. There is widespread enthusiasm for delivering Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education in a way that goes to the heart of meeting the needs and aspirations of students. Teachers and school leaders are sharing ideas and committing themselves to continuous improvement. They are building on the work undertaken to embed local Ngunnawal knowledge and culture across all subject areas and year levels. ACT public schools are making great use of local resources such as the Ngunnawal plant use guide and *Footprints on our Land*, a film about the life of local Ngunnawal elder Aunty Agnes Shea.

It is important that all students learn about the environment and culture of Ngunnawal land. This is a big part of teaching with cultural integrity. The ACT government is committing to meeting the needs and aspirations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. Schools have been provided with a range of resources to help them to build cultural integrity. This includes a self-assessment tool which schools can use to identify areas for improvement, monitor their progress and engage with families and the community to develop a deep understanding of what success looks like.

Over the past year, the Education Directorate has looked at its programs to ensure that the government's policy intent can be achieved in every classroom. The directorate has released information about what cultural integrity might include and provided opportunities for school leaders to learn and have in-depth conversations about what cultural integrity looks like in their schools and the difference it can make for students and families.

During 2018 schools will be supported to make self-assessments about where they are on the cultural integrity continuum and implement strategies to strengthen ideas identified as needing improvement. Consistency and purpose will ensure that ACT public schools are all working together to create a system which is focused on creating an environment where there are high expectations and clear pathways for students to meet their aspirations.

Already, great examples of cultural integrity and practice are emerging. The way that teachers are embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives in the curriculum is to be commended. There is real value in students being able to see themselves in what they are learning and relate to the stories and practices displayed in the classroom.

The school environment can make a big difference to how students and their families feel welcomed. Schools that have placed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island artwork, books and representations in their buildings can see the difference that it makes. You only need to see the Warrumbul Centre at Campbell High School to understand the benefits of working with students in ways that speak to them. Using curriculum and resources that are relevant to their lives speaks to their interests and maintains high expectations for their achievement.

Absolutely there is still progress to be made. No-one is trying to deny that schools can always do better. But this policy shift will set ACT public schools decisively on the right path. The future of education community conversation has so far been successful in providing the government with more information on how it can improve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education. It has highlighted the importance of community and family engagement and has drawn out a broader community desire for more learning about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, languages and perspectives.

Cultural integrity will provide a clear vision for what our community is trying to achieve and establishes a commitment to move away from deficit discourse towards striving for a better future.

Our schools are working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and families instead of treating them like subjects. I am proud to say that all ACT public schools will be prioritising learning about and celebrating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, knowledge, systems and cultures. The ACT community will be stronger as a result. Madam Speaker, I present the following paper:

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural integrity in ACT public schools—
Ministerial statement, 20 March 2018.

I move:

That the Assembly take note of the paper.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

International Women's Day 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) (12.24): Madam Speaker, as the Minister for Women and the Minister for Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence, I am happy to once again mark International Women's Day by providing a statement to the Assembly outlining the work undertaken this year to improve the status of women and girls in the ACT.

Since the first formal International Women's Day in 1911, much progress has been made towards gender equity through the dedicated and determined efforts of women, communities and governments. Although women have the right to vote and access to equal pay for the work they do, they continue to experience barriers and challenges to fully and equally participating in our community.

The theme of this year's International Women's Day, "Press for progress", is an important reminder that on current projections Australia is still over 200 years away from gender parity, according to the World Economic Forum's 2017 global gender gap report. It highlights that now more than ever there is a need to press forward.

The ACT government is working hard to break down barriers and create pathways for women and girls to achieve their dreams and ambitions. Employment and economic security are critical. Women on average will retire with less superannuation and fewer savings and are less likely to be home owners. They often carry the majority of the responsibility for unpaid domestic work and unpaid care for either younger or aging family members.

In the ACT public service, women are still paid less than their male counterparts, with a gender pay gap of 3.1 per cent, a figure which has been reduced by half a percent from June 2016 to June 2017. This presents a much better picture than the ACT gender pay gap, which has risen this year by 1 per cent to 12.6 per cent, and the national gender pay gap, which currently sits at 15.3 per cent. The volatility of these figures shows us that it is imperative to progress ongoing initiatives in order to make real and lasting change and that, if we do not, things can quickly slip backwards.

The ACT women's plan 2016 to 2026, which I launched and tabled here in August 2016, outlines our commitment to support women to reach their potential, contribute to innovation and ideas and take up leadership positions. The women's plan has a particular emphasis on improving outcomes for women who are vulnerable or experiencing discrimination, including women with disability, women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, older women, women heading single-parent families and women who are socially isolated.

All ACT government directorates, and indeed the wider community, share the responsibility for working to achieve gender equality. The 10-year plan is being implemented through three-year action plans. I am happy to provide you with an update on some of the outcomes achieved in the first year.

Since the release of the first action plan, 2017 to 2019, two gender equity events have been hosted to engage with women, community organisations and government representatives. The first, “A case for change”, was held on 30 October 2017 and was co-hosted by the YWCA Canberra. This forum brought together 52 leaders from government, the women’s sector and business to identify barriers and opportunities to advance the culture of respect and equal opportunity. A second forum, “Sharing stories of success”, was held recently, co-hosted by the Ministerial Advisory Council on Women.

Across government there is significant work being delivered that is changing the lives of women in the ACT. In the health space, the ACT government funds Post and Ante Natal Depression Support and Information Inc, well known in the community as PANDSI. This wonderful organisation provides support, education, information and referral services for families in Canberra experiencing prenatal depression or anxiety. As part of the 2017-18 budget, additional funding was provided in the form of a pledge to support the annual PANDSI cake-off event by matching money raised dollar for dollar up to a maximum of 25,000 per annum.

In order to better support the health needs of women from a range of cultural backgrounds, ACT Health has completed 12 community cultural profiles. The profiles will assist healthcare workers to better understand and appreciate possible cultural impacts on health in culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

In the sporting sector the government has established an important partnership with HerCanberra to deliver a HerCanberra active web portal. Launched in October 2017, the portal connects a large network of Canberra women and girls, with articles related to sport and physical activity, event information and a directory of active opportunities. Work is also underway to develop female-friendly infrastructure guidelines to support the development of new and the modification of existing facilities to better support the needs of female participants. The ideas leading to these new initiatives were developed from conversations that I had with girls and young women from Canberra schools in recent years.

A gender equity and education advisory group has been established, with representation from all education sectors, and further research will be undertaken to look at the extent to which gender perception in schools impacts the wellbeing of female students. The ANU has been engaged to undertake research into the current and emerging mental health issues for women and girls in the ACT. In consultation with the Office for Mental Health and ACT peak bodies, the design proposal is complete, with project work to begin shortly. This year the government has further promoted the use of women’s safety audits at events run by the ACT government, and we will continue to expand the reach of these orders to ensure that private events are also further considering the safety of women and vulnerable Canberrans.

Directorates are also working to recruit women in historically male-dominated roles. For example, the ACT Emergency Services Agency has developed a women in emergency services strategy, which focuses on attracting, recruiting, developing and retaining women. Its aim is to increase the number of women in the services and support more women to gain leadership roles. Specifically this has placed a focus on recruiting more women through the ACT Fire & Rescue community based recruitment processes. Since June 2016, 34 new firefighters have been employed, with nearly a quarter being women. This is the first step towards the fifty-fifty gender balance target the government has set itself in this area.

Improving women's safety has been a major area of focus throughout the year. The ACT government is committed to the safer families reforms to address domestic and family violence through a number of important initiatives funded through the safer families levy. Over the past year a co-design approach to developing a family safety hub was undertaken. This will lead to future decisions by the government on the next important phase of the hub. The government is well placed to progress implementation over the coming months. The detailed insights gathered during the process included the need for innovation in the design and testing of solutions for service hubs and new pathways in safety to meet the diverse needs of our community.

The ACT government is nearing the final stages towards the introduction of additional family violence training for front-line workers. This training will complement the existing training that front-line workers already access, work to better address gendered violence and violence against women and, importantly, establish better frameworks and capacity across the human services system.

Even though men are victims of violence, the vast majority of victims of domestic violence are women. Recent national research shows that the societal messages to our girls and boys continue to normalise gender-based violence and victim blaming. A number of directorates are taking steps to obtain White Ribbon accreditation. In doing so, the ACT government has shown its support for those who have experienced or are experiencing domestic violence. For example, in May last year, ACT Fire & Rescue launched its White Ribbon pumper fire truck with the message "There's no excuse for domestic violence", to raise awareness about and communicate the lack of acceptance of domestic violence in the ACT community.

The Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate undertook a volunteer *Backyard Blitz* style working bee for the local women's refuge, Beryl Women Inc, in November 2017. Additionally, Transport Canberra established a system to provide free public transport for victims of domestic and family violence. These may seem like small things but they make the issue of domestic and family violence visible. They send a strong message to the community, to victims and to perpetrators that domestic and family violence is not acceptable.

The first action plan has a strong commitment to improving gender equality in the workplace. The government hopes to model best practice and encourage workplaces across the ACT to follow suit to implement and engage in strategies promoting gender equity.

Many in our community are also pressing for progress through clear actions to articulate their own commitment to gender equality. This month, in honour of International Women's Day, the YWCA released its Canberra report card on gender equality. This report card signalled our progress and areas of future focus in delivering on our plan to make Canberra a more gender-friendly city.

In addition to these progress indicators, the government was able to provide them with additional detail on where work has begun in the areas of contemporary procurement practices to promote gender equity; strategies for the development of gender equity tools and resources for contractors and organisations; exploring the idea of external accreditation or citation with relevant national bodies; early work regarding elder abuse policy; and facilitating better data on the number and nature of sex discrimination complaints in the ACT.

I welcome the report card, which is a clear demonstration of the YWCA's critical support for the government's priorities and the work being undertaken to drive real change. As I have said many times in this place, this is not something the government can do on its own. It requires the general community, businesses and non-government organisations to help drive this change to promote equality.

The ACT government continues to support women in leadership through increasing female representation on boards and committees. As at October 2017, the ACT had the largest percentage of women holding positions on government boards and committees, at 45 per cent, exceeding the national average of 42.7 per cent reported in June 2017. This result is not accidental; rather, it is a product of tangible measures taken by the ACT government to achieve 50 per cent female representation on all government boards and committees.

In 2016 I introduced guidelines requiring all triennially funded sporting associations to meet 40 per cent female representation on boards and committees by 2020. Two years out, most organisations are on track to achieving this target. To support diversity in board leadership, the ACT government will soon launch the ACT diversity register, which will provide an online platform to support, encourage and promote the participation of women and of people with diverse experiences on boards and committees.

Additionally the ACT government has funded a range of women's services and organisations to provide women with targeted and tailored support in order to improve the wellbeing and status of all ACT women. This includes \$160,000 to support women to return to work, and \$180,000 to invest in innovative projects that lead to positive outcomes for women and girls.

In closing, I take the opportunity to acknowledge some of our fabulous women in the ACT. It was great to present the winners of this year's awards at our International Women's Day celebration earlier this month. The number of nominations that were received this year is a testament not only to the contributions and success of the nominees but also to our community's desire to see them rewarded for their efforts. At the awards night I also launched the ACT women's honour roll, which acknowledges

and celebrates outstanding achievements of women in Canberra. This launch marks 30 years of self-government. The ACT women's honour roll includes all past female recipients of a number of awards since 1988.

The ACT government is making significant strides in moving closer to gender equality. I encourage every individual, business, government directorate, community organisation and community group in the ACT to consider how they can contribute to making our goal of gender equality a reality.

I present the following paper:

Status of women in the ACT—International Women's Day 2018—Ministerial statement, 20 March 2018.

I move:

That the Assembly take note of the paper.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Sitting suspended from 12.37 to 2.30 pm.

Questions without notice

Land—Dickson purchase

MR COE: My question is for the Minister for Economic Development. Minister, and Chief Minister, why did your directorate and the government at large purchase the CFMEU headquarters, which is owned by the Tradies?

MR BARR: For the purposes of social and affordable housing.

MR COE: Chief Minister, did the transactions associated with the Dickson land swap transfer \$2.6 million in benefits from the ACT government to the CFMEU-controlled Tradies group?

MR BARR: The Auditor-General pointed to a risk of that, and that was on the basis of the valuation of one of the blocks being at \$45,000. I do not think that anyone believes that a 7,000 square metre block in Dickson is worth only \$45,000. I think there are opportunities to ensure that that risk does not eventuate.

MS LAWDER: Just to be clear, Chief Minister, is the Auditor-General correct when she says the ACT government lost up to \$2.6 million as a result of the transactions in the land swap deal?

MR BARR: I do not think that the Auditor-General said that. The Auditor-General said that there was a risk, and the government will need to respond to that, together with the Auditor-General's report.

Land—Dickson purchase

MS LAWDER: My question is to the Chief Minister and Minister for Economic Development. Chief Minister, why did the director-general of economic development agree to major concessions in the RFT for the Tradies building?

MR BARR: That is a question you would need to direct to the former director-general.

MS LAWDER: Chief Minister, were you or your office advised of the concerns of the ACT Government Solicitor before the deal with the Tradies club was concluded?

MR BARR: I do not believe so, no.

MR COE: Chief Minister, why is there apparently no documentary evidence of how the risk of non-compliance with the Planning and Development Act was reviewed by the D-G and mitigated by the directorate of which you were the responsible minister?

MR BARR: That is a matter that is subject to some consideration and investigation within the directorate concerned.

Health—contraception

MS LE COUTEUR: My question is to the minister for health and relates to access to contraception. Minister, for how long do people typically have to wait to access long-term reversible contraception in the public health system?

MS FITZHARRIS: I thank Ms Le Couteur for the question. I will take it on notice.

MS LE COUTEUR: I fear that this will also be on notice then: how long and at what cost in the private health system?

MS FITZHARRIS: I could not comment on that. That would be a matter for the private health system.

Land—Dickson purchase

MRS JONES: My question is to the Chief Minister and Minister for Economic Development, and it is in relation to the Dickson land swap. Minister, the Auditor-General found that:

The Economic Development Directorate did not achieve an open, transparent and contestable sale process for Block 30 Section 34 because of weaknesses in how it managed the tender process.

Specifically, the land swap transaction endorsed by the former Director-General is materially at odds with the RFT, the terms and sale process approved by government, and was achieved through a process that lacked probity and transparency.

As the responsible minister, why did you not ensure that your directorate achieved an open and transparent sale process for block 30 section 34?

MR BARR: The cabinet's intent was very clear, and it is outlined in the Auditor-General's report. I would remind Mrs Jones of the Government Procurement Act, and the government procurement regulations and guidelines, which make a very clear distinction between the role of ministers and the role of delegates and tender evaluation panels. I would hope that most members would agree that it is preferable that ministers play no role in tender evaluation processes.

MRS JONES: Thank you, minister, for that patronising reply. Why did you fail to ensure that the land swap transaction was consistent with the RFT and the terms of sale process approved by government?

MR BARR: Again, I remind the member to read the government procurement legislation, regulation and guidelines. It is not my responsibility. I am not the delegate; I do not make the decision in this regard.

MR COE: Minister, when were you first aware of the government's intention to purchase the CFMEU headquarters owned by the Tradies in Dickson?

MR BARR: I will take that date on notice.

Tourism—statistics

MR STEEL: My question is to the Chief Minister. Chief Minister, can you please update the Assembly on the latest tourism statistics for the ACT?

MR BARR: I thank Mr Steel; yes, I can. Last week Tourism Research Australia released new data that showed that the ACT had experienced a 17 per cent increase in international visitors over the past 12 months. That extra number of visitors contributed a further \$105.5 million to the ACT economy, on top of the spend in the previous year. The record international visitor increase took the numbers to nearly 243,000 for the year ending December 2017. Those 243,000 visitors spent a lot more: up 23.3 per cent to a new record level of just under \$560 million. That 23.3 per cent increase was well above the national average. It is noteworthy that these increases, of nearly 17 per cent in visitors and 23.3 per cent in spend, contrast with a six per cent increase for both categories at the national level.

MR STEEL: Chief Minister, how is the ACT government supporting this growth?

MR BARR: We will continue to work with the tourism sector, particularly those in the transport sector, to make it cheaper and easier to get to Canberra. Members would be aware of the significant work that has been undertaken in partnership with Canberra airport. It is terrific that from May we will have two international airlines flying daily into Canberra, arguably two of the best airlines in the world. We will continue our focus on low-cost domestic aviation and on working with Virgin and Qantas on improving in particular capital city services.

I have written to the re-elected Tasmanian Premier seeking to work with him on re-establishing a Canberra-Hobart direct service and, with Tasmanian tourism booming in the same way that ACT tourism is booming, I think we have a positive case to put to the airlines in that regard.

We will also keep working with the New South Wales government to improve the Canberra-Sydney rail line. We will continue to invest in events and we will continue to partner with the commonwealth, particularly our national institutions, to promote the world-class cultural tourism events that they stage in our city.

MS CODY: Chief Minister, how does this growth affect the broader economy?

MR BARR: I thank Ms Cody for the question. The economy continues to significantly outperform its long run averages and, indeed, other states and territories. Gross state product grew by 4.6 per cent in the last fiscal year measured. Tourism is a key contributor to that growth. It not only contributes through the hospitality sector but also drives construction activity through refurbishments, new builds underway and what is very clearly a strong pipeline of new hotel development in our city. Tourism is also a significant contributor to youth employment, and the growth of the tourism sector has seen youth unemployment drop in our city. As an export product, tourism contributes significantly to growing the wealth of our city.

Land—Dickson purchase

MR WALL: My question is to the Chief Minister and Minister for Economic Development. Chief Minister, why have you failed to accept ministerial responsibility for the major governance failures in the Economic Development Directorate that occurred regarding the Dickson land swap?

MR BARR: I have not and I have taken a series of steps to address those matters.

MR WALL: Chief Minister, to be clear, are you saying that some responsibility for the shortcomings lies with the public servants involved in handling the \$2.6 million deal with the Dickson Tradies?

MR BARR: Under ACT government procurement rules, those matters are delegated to officials, because politicians should not be involved in procurement matters.

MR COE: Minister, have any public servants been reprimanded as a result of how this deal was managed?

MR BARR: I believe that some public servants who were involved no longer work for the ACT government. I think that matter is on the public record. In relation to others, that will be, I think, a matter for the director-general of the directorate that now employs those individuals.

Land—Dickson purchase

MR MILLIGAN: My question is to the Minister for Planning and Land Management. Minister, in response to the Auditor-General's report on the CFMEU land swap, you said on 22 February 2018, "It puts the matter to bed." You also sent the head of your directorate to face media questions rather than answer the questions yourself. Minister, why did you claim that the Auditor-General's report put the CFMEU land swap deal to bed, given the serious failures in governance identified in the Auditor-General's report?

MR GENTLEMAN: I thank Mr Milligan for his question. It was directly in relation to the questions put to me at the time. I did feel that those had been answered and that that had put the matter to bed.

MR MILLIGAN: Minister, why did you fail to answer questions from the media after the report was released?

MR GENTLEMAN: I answered several questions from the media; in fact, I went in front of the cameras to answer questions in regard to the Auditor-General's report.

MR COE: Minister, do you stand by your comments that the matter has been put to bed? Did you discuss the government's response to the A-G's report—that is, the direct response to the A-G's report, as opposed to the one that is published after the report—with the CFMEU before the A-G published?

MR GENTLEMAN: I did not discuss the government's response with the CFMEU and I stand by my earlier comments.

Chief Minister—communications strategy

MISS C BURCH: My question is to the Chief Minister. Chief Minister, in the whole-of-government communications and engagement strategy, part of the approach is "stimulating and supporting public discourse". Chief Minister, how does saying that you hate journalists and that you are over mainstream media stimulate and support public discourse?

MR BARR: On one level it may have stimulated debate on the matter a little, ironically. I guess it would be fair to say that there has been more attention drawn to the government's intent to communicate broadly than was the case before. But I do not think that I need to elaborate any further on the extensive comments I have made in this place already.

MISS C BURCH: Chief Minister, why does the communications and engagement strategy fail to include traditional media as a "deliberative engagement method" for informing the public?

MR BARR: I think that it is taken as a given, that the government continues to engage with the traditional media.

MR PARTON: Chief Minister, given your comments today and even your answer to that previous question, will you be amending the communications and engagement strategy to include traditional media as a deliberative engagement method?

MR BARR: I will consider that.

Molonglo Valley—recreation facilities

MS CODY: My question is to the Minister for Sport and Recreation. Minister, you recently announced the start of works on the new Stromlo aquatic centre. Could you update the Assembly on how the government is delivering this commitment in the growing Molonglo community?

MS BERRY: I am very happy to update the Assembly and Ms Cody on the major government commitment for aquatic sports in Molonglo and in Canberra more broadly. For an inland city—

Mr Gentleman: Madam Speaker, I raise a point of order. The minister is trying to answer a question important to the Assembly and Mr Coe continues to interject. I ask that he be asked not to interject.

Mr Coe: Madam Speaker, on the point of order, the Chief Minister explicitly said that he was not responsible and, under the rules of question time, there has to be a minister directly responsible. To that end, I wonder how the Deputy Chief Minister is in fact responsible.

Mr Barr: Madam Speaker, on the point of order, if the question to the minister had been, “How was the procurement process determined, and what role did you have in the procurement process?” there would clearly have been a different answer. But the decision to invest in such a facility was one made by government. The government—

Mr Coe interjecting—

MADAM SPEAKER: Mr Coe!

Mr Barr: The cabinet submission was quite clear in relation to the government’s intent on that matter and on this. I believe that the Leader of the Opposition’s interjections and his point of order are out of order.

MADAM SPEAKER: There is no point of order. It is clearly government policy to develop an aquatic centre at Stromlo. I ask the minister to continue her response.

MS BERRY: The government owns and subsidises public pools because our community gets the best value out of them. Stromlo will be the next great aquatic centre in Canberra. As members will recall, funding was committed through the 2016-17 ACT budget to deliver a 50-metre pool and associated programs, such as learn to swim, at the Stromlo Forest Park.

Following community consultation and the tender process, a design and construct contract has now been executed and work will begin soon. The first phase of the project will entail further site and soil investigations, bringing utility services to the site and finalisation of the design. Phase two of the project will be the construction of the facility itself. To get to this point, a considerable amount of time was expended and work undertaken with the local community to identify the types of infrastructure and programs that they will want to see included in the project.

I am pleased to say that the government has been able to expand on the original scope of the project and build some significant inclusions based on what aquatic sports and the surrounding community told us.

MS CODY: Minister, on that, how is the community input being incorporated into the final project?

MS BERRY: The ACT government undertook an eight-week community engagement process in December 2016 and January 2017 when more than 700 submissions were received and 10 meetings held with key sporting and community groups. As I said, this consultation sought to discover what additional facilities should be included at the Stromlo leisure centre on top of the 50-metre pool and learn-to-swim pool. The government also met with nine community, sport and recreation groups to determine what they needed at the Stromlo leisure centre to accommodate them.

Based on the feedback from the community consultation process, the ACT government amended the Stromlo leisure centre to include a splash park, gym or health club, leisure waterpark with a beach entry and toddlers pool as well as a seating capacity of 500. This responded directly to the top priorities which came through in consultation and, given the amount of feedback, I am confident that this is an excellent part of the community's views. It is great that the community has been so engaged with the process and that the government has been able to respond to the feedback on these additional facilities.

It is also important confirmation that the Molonglo and Woden communities are looking forward to seeing this facility built. This anticipation flags high patronage and the government certainly wants to repeat the success of the Gungahlin pool in that regard.

MR PETTERSSON: Minister, what sporting opportunities will this offer people from across Canberra and further afield?

MS BERRY: The construction of the pool is an early step for the Stromlo Forest Park area in becoming a sport and recreation precinct nestled in the Molonglo Valley. We will be looking at a range of additional facilities for the area, including accommodation in the park for interstate visitors. A cycle track and sports ovals are also to be considered in the future.

Of course, as members will know, the Stromlo Forest Park master plan will ensure that this area is kept on track to provide great facilities for future residents and visitors to the area. Stromlo Forest Park boasts world-class mountain bike trails, a running track, equestrian trails, spectator stands and parts of the container village that have been relocated from West Basin.

The 50-metre pool will have a constant depth of two metres for 30 metres and the movable pool boom moves 30 metres so that it can accommodate an international standard men's and women's water polo field. It will also be able to host swimming competitions and will have fittings for dive blocks so that it can host short-course swimming competitions.

There are two large doors adjacent to the 50-metre pool to accommodate triathlon transition into the pool, with a transition zone outside the 50-metre pool hall—something that I know is of interest to Ms Cody. The large doors and concourse space will also allow for temporary seating to be brought in to host larger events. The 50-metre pool can also accommodate underwater hockey and canoe polo.

The government will shortly be commencing detailed feasibility planning for the establishment of an accommodation facility within the park to provide the many interstate park visitors with opportunities to stay close to the action.

Crime—motorcycle gangs

MR HANSON: My question is to the Attorney-General. Attorney-General, I refer to the *Canberra Times* front page report that states:

A man shot in Chifley early Monday in a suspected bokie-related attack sought medical assistance at a service station.

Acting superintendent of criminal investigations Shane Scott said the incident was “brazen and targeted.” ... Given it was 6.30 am, the potential for people to be out and about in that area is quite high,” he said. ... “Several vehicles were damaged in the shooting.”

Attorney-General, do you have an update on this latest incident?

MR RAMSAY: I thank the shadow attorney-general for his question, noting that updates from Policing would primarily be a matter for the Minister for Police and Emergency Services, not me. I do not have an update on that matter.

MR HANSON: Attorney, have you received information on whether other bokie gangs are moving into the ACT, notably the Finks?

MR RAMSAY: Not in relation to that matter, no.

MRS JONES: Attorney, will your government reconsider introducing consorting or organised crime control laws, given that the bokie war continues to endanger the community?

MR RAMSAY: I thank Mrs Jones for the question. Criminal organisation control orders—anti-consorting laws, as they have been somewhat inaccurately nicknamed by the opposition—have been, obviously, well looked at. One thing that I do not know that the opposition has heard yet, so let me say it again, is that the reason that they are not being considered, that they are not being taken any further by this government, is the clear evidence that they are ineffective. This is not a government that chooses to implement laws which the police have said will have no effect.

We are happy to look at the wisdom that has occurred in other jurisdictions. Other jurisdictions have made it clear that these particular laws do not work. The New South Wales Ombudsman has said that these laws should be repealed. They have not been implemented in other jurisdictions around Australia. When we were looking at Mr Hanson's bill, one of the things that was made very clear was that the police had said that those particular laws would not provide them with an effective tool. This government will not legislate just for the sake of legislating for ineffective tools.

Health—nurse-led walk-in centres

MR PETTERSSON: My question is to the Minister for Health and Wellbeing. Can the minister please provide an update on the progress of the Gungahlin walk-in centre and when it will open?

MS FITZHARRIS: I thank Mr Pettersson very much for the question. Indeed I am very pleased to provide an update on the progress of the Gungahlin walk-in centre, which will open later this year, in the third quarter. In the 2017-18 ACT budget the government committed capital funding of \$2.925 million to deliver our third walk-in centre, for Gungahlin.

The new walk-in centre will be an extension of the existing Gungahlin community health centre and will be approximately 240 square metres of new construction that will include four patient treatment spaces and support infrastructure. It will feature a high ceiling corridor, to let natural light into the building, as well as easy access from the nearby public car park.

This year we have seen the approval of the development application and finalisation of the building design by the project architect, May Russell. The designs were based on the successful design of the Belconnen walk-in centre which, members will know, has been operating since July 2014.

The head contractor, Manteena, was engaged in September last year and work commenced on 16 February this year. I was very pleased to attend a sod turning with Mr Pettersson and Ms Orr on 23 February and look forward to the centre opening later this year.

MR PETTERSSON: Can the minister provide the most recent information on how walk-in centres are being used and the most common health issues that are treated at these centres?

MS FITZHARRIS: As members know, walk-in centres are popular in our community and provide free access to healthcare services, particularly after hours and on weekends. We have seen patient presentations growing at about eight per cent over the past year.

Commonly, people visit walk-in centres for treatment for minor illness and injury, including wound dressings, upper respiratory tract infection—a cold—minor musculoskeletal injuries, wounds, lacerations and skin abrasions, ear conditions, and sore throats.

ACT Health have been trialling other health services that the walk-in centres could offer on a more ongoing basis, including the removal of plaster casts for patients where medical review is not required—this commenced in September last year—and trialling the provision of additional sexual health outreach clinics for people at high risk of sexually transmissible infections and blood-borne viruses in both the Tuggeranong and Belconnen walk-in centres, which commenced in February this year.

Planning is underway to commence a 12-month trial of an experienced physiotherapist at walk-in centres. This is expected to commence later in 2018. We are also considering ways to enhance the existing model of care by introducing screening possibilities.

MS CHEYNE: Minister, what are the key benefits of walk-in centres?

MS FITZHARRIS: I thank Ms Cheyne for the supplementary. As members know, walk-in centres can help to reduce the costly demand on our acute hospital system, in particular through ensuring accessible primary health-care services. Walk-in centres are staffed by advanced practice nurses and nurse practitioners. They provide an alternative for fast access to health advice and one-off treatment for minor illnesses and injuries.

ACT Health walk-in centres complement existing medical services; they do not duplicate them, nor do they compete with them. They provide care for people in instances where they do not need the particular skills of doctors or more expensive medical facilities.

Walk-in centres have a strong social licence to operate and deliver value to the public because they ensure that health services are more accessible; they have short wait times; they are free; and they offer opportunistic health promotion at each consultation. They are also a credible alternative to ED attendance for minor injury and illnesses.

Currently, some walk-in centre clients report difficulty accessing GPs, in particular bulk-billing GPs, and also accessing them outside of business hours. Access for clients is enhanced as the walk-in centres are open every day of the year from 7.30 am to 10 pm.

Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders—child protection

MRS KIKKERT: Madam Speaker, my question is to the Minister for Disability, Children and Youth. Minister, you recently told both ABC Radio and the *Canberra Times* that one of the key factors driving up the territory's rising rate of child protection reports about Indigenous children is "racism in the community". Since the rate of notifications has more than doubled over the past 10 years, does that mean that Canberra has grown more racist under successive Labor-Greens governments?

MS STEPHEN-SMITH: I thank Mrs Kikkert for her question and for her interest in the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in the out of home care system, something, of course, that is of significant concern and interest to the government, to the extent that we have established a review into Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children who are engaged with the child protection system. That review is being overseen by a steering committee entirely comprising Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

My comments on the radio, of course, were in context, as you would expect. I was reflecting on the views that have been expressed to me by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and families, including professionals in this space, who do consider that at times their families have been judged differently from other families in the community. They do feel that these judgements amount to a different interpretation—I use the word "racism"; I will say that. I did not mean by that deliberately racist activity; I mean by that what we understand as something that is in the culture where we see things through our own cultural lens. I was reflecting on the views of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people that have been put to me; that they feel that they are judged through a cultural lens where people do not necessarily understand the cultural perspective that they come from.

MRS KIKKERT: Minister, is the high over-representation of Indigenous children in the territory's out of home care system also influenced by racism? You mentioned that you have been given certain allegations by the community that there has been racism involved. How is the government dealing with that issue?

MS STEPHEN-SMITH: I thank Mrs Kikkert for the opportunity to talk more about the review of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children involved in the out of home care system. The ACT government is, of course, very concerned about over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in the statutory care system and is taking action to reduce that number while maintaining a focus, as of course we do, on keeping children and young people safe, which is the number one priority of the child and youth protection service.

The Community Services Directorate has implemented a range of initiatives which focus on addressing the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people in the system. On 15 June last year, as I said, I announced a review into the circumstances of each Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child and young person involved in the child protection system, including those in out of home care. That review, as I mentioned earlier, called "*Our Booris, Our Way*", will

focus on systemic improvements needed to address disproportionality in the ACT. That review, as I have mentioned, is being overseen by a steering committee of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Mrs Jones: A point of order.

MADAM SPEAKER: A point of order?

Mrs Jones: Madam Speaker, it is about relevance. Part of the question was—

Ms Stephen-Smith: Part of the question?

Mrs Jones: Yes. If you will let me finish my point of order, you will hear what it is that I have to say.

MADAM SPEAKER: Can you please get to it, Mrs Jones.

Members interjecting—

Mrs Jones: I am glad we all hold each other to the same standard.

MADAM SPEAKER: Mrs Jones, your point of order, please.

Mrs Jones: Yes, I would like to finish my point of order; thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER: I am waiting for it.

Mrs Jones: Okay, good. Part of the question was whether the territory's out of home care system is influenced by racism. I thought it was a very important part of the question, which maybe was not heard; certainly it has not yet been addressed in the question. So the point of order goes to relevance.

MADAM SPEAKER: The other part of the question was: what actions have been undertaken?

Mrs Jones: Yes.

MADAM SPEAKER: The minister is going directly to that.

Mrs Jones: No, that was not the only part of the question.

MADAM SPEAKER: Minister, you have 38 seconds left.

MS STEPHEN-SMITH: Thank you, Madam Speaker. In relation to Mrs Jones's point of order, I would point her to my response to Mrs Kikkert's first question, which did in fact cover that issue. In relation to the question that Mrs Kikkert actually asked, I would go on to say that the child and youth protection service have developed a 12-month family group conferencing pilot program specifically for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families. The aim of the family group conferencing is to provide

families with the opportunity to develop effective family plans that will keep their children safe at home. This restorative practice seeks to divert families away from Children's Court processes and ensure that all members of a child's family are contacted and encouraged to be involved in the decision-making process about their children's situation.

MR MILLIGAN: Minister, is the government receiving a greater or smaller number of reports about Indigenous children that could be considered vexatious or without foundation?

MS STEPHEN-SMITH: I re-emphasise that all child concern reports are serious and that I have never, ever made any allegation that child concern reports are vexatious in any way. We do not consider them in that way at all. All child concern reports that are received by the directorate are taken seriously and are treated in that vein.

Government—city and gateway strategy

MS CHEYNE: My question is to the Minister for Urban Renewal. Minister, can you inform the Assembly about the city and gateway framework recently released for community consultation?

MR GENTLEMAN: I thank Ms Cheyne for her interest in consultation with the community and in the government's work there. I was very pleased earlier this month, alongside the CEO of the National Capital Authority, to launch the draft city and gateway urban design framework. The draft framework represents a shared view on the future development of the Northbourne Avenue corridor from the ACT Federal Highway border through to the shores of Lake Burley Griffin.

The draft framework proposes to bring together the dual planning controls of the ACT government and the NCA to plan for the right balance of development that encourages growth through densification while enhancing the open space and the landscape for which Canberra is well known.

The ACT government and the NCA have already worked closely on the development of the light rail along Northbourne Avenue, ensuring that the project revitalises the city, improves transport options and delivers a vision that is consistent with the National Capital Plan and the Griffin legacy.

The draft framework is designed to guide future planning controls, development and urban renewal along the gateway corridor into the city centre, to enable more people to live and work close to sustainable transport options, services and infrastructure while preserving the best of the bush capital.

MS CHEYNE: Minister, how can interested members of the community have their say on this important framework?

MR GENTLEMAN: Community engagement on the draft framework provides the community with the opportunity to participate in a conversation that sets the tone, quality and future character of Australia's capital city. As travellers cross the border

and move from the bush to the city, they will experience our vision for the future, one of a city that respects environmental values and celebrates our national character.

The community's input to the city and gateway framework in its development phase has been important and influential, and further input is welcome on the draft framework from 1 March to 27 April this year. We would like to hear your views on the draft framework and whether the urban renewal vision, principles and directions reflect what we have heard during the stage 1 community engagement.

Getting this overarching draft framework right is important as it coordinates and informs several implementation initiatives. The framework will inform future changes to the dual planning controls of the National Capital Plan and the Territory Plan, and any infrastructure upgrades throughout the city and gateway corridor.

Interested members of the community can give their feedback at the your say website, where they can find a copy of the draft framework, as well as the stage 1 engagement report and a helpful frequently asked questions page. Furthermore, the EPSD directorate has been holding a series of meet-the-planner sessions, with the next taking place this Thursday from 11 am to 2 pm at the Latin America Plaza in the city.

MS LE COUTEUR: Minister, will there be consequential ACT-led consultation in this area? I am particularly thinking in terms of Downer and Watson, where the government has previously said that RZ1 would stay. If this proposal is for six storeys next to Northbourne Avenue, will there be ACT government-led consultation about subsequent changes?

MR GENTLEMAN: I thank Ms Le Couteur for her question. Yes, she is correct. There will be government-led consultation, through the ACT government but, of course, acting with the NCA at the time. It is a very important question that Ms Le Couteur asks about what we are going to do in relation to the corridor where it meets the Downer precinct. I look forward to her input during that process.

Education—enrolment projections

MS LEE: My question is to the Minister for Education and Early Childhood Development. Minister, in your answer to question on notice 895 you advised that the Education Directorate undertakes student enrolment projection modelling but that no reports are prepared using that information. Why are no reports prepared using student enrolment modelling?

MS BERRY: I do not have a copy of the question on notice that I responded to on me today but I do say that the directorate works very hard within the information that it is provided to ensure that planning for schools and school capacity takes place in a way that meets the needs of our community.

MS LEE: Minister, what information did your directorate use to create its report titled *ACT Public School enrolment projections 2013-2017* and what is that report's purpose?

MS BERRY: I will take that question on notice.

MR WALL: Minister, for what purpose does the directorate undertake student enrolment projection modelling if not to prepare reports and insights for government?

MS BERRY: Amongst other things, it is provided to provide insights to government on school capacity and for planning for new schools. To say that it does not is not true.

Housing—housing choices

MR PARTON: My question is to the Chief Minister. Chief Minister, on 20 February, on RiotACT, you foreshadowed the end of new suburbs in the ACT and said that we must accept high-rise dwellings as the dominant housing option. In contrast, the Winton report survey data in your minister's housing choices paper demonstrates Canberrans' overwhelming preference for separate dwellings and not multistorey units. Chief Minister, why are you sounding the end of opportunity for those aspiring to own a stand-alone house in Canberra by forcing them into 20-storey towers?

MR BARR: There are a number of sub-questions there. The first and most important point to make is that the assertions from Mr Parton are not correct. It is a statement of fact that the territory will run out of land. We are a defined area, and we have a limited amount of land available. The government clearly has—

Mr Coe: Everywhere in the world, in fact.

MR BARR: Indeed. It is not a problem just for the ACT, but it is perhaps more acute here, given the relative size of our jurisdiction.

The government does have three areas of greenfield land release that are underway, or will be: Molonglo, the balance of Gungahlin, and the Ginninderry development in west Belconnen. Beyond that, there are some further opportunities in the Molonglo Valley. But there will come a point where the city will not—

Mr Coe: When?

MR BARR: I do not know exactly when that point will be, but we certainly need to start having a conversation, don't we, about that point. And we also, in my view, certainly need to put greater value on the bushland that surrounds our city and not just assume that every single bit of it will be built on. Part of that—

Mr Coe: Why do you keep buying it?

MR BARR: We keep buying it for environmental offset reasons under the EPBC Act, because when you develop one area you have to offset somewhere else. That is the reality of urban development in this city. A very simple point is that we need to continue our urban intensification process as well, because we do not want to build on every square inch of bushland surrounding our city.

The other point I would note for Mr Parton's benefit is this: look at the existing housing stock as well. There are more houses than units by a considerable number. *(Time expired.)*

MR PARTON: Chief Minister, why are you ignoring the Winton report survey data in the housing choices paper?

MR BARR: I am not. Again I would point Mr Parton to the simple fact that there are more than 100,000 houses in Canberra and about 25,000 apartments. The existing housing stock is predominantly single, detached dwellings and will remain that way, I would imagine, for most of our lifetimes.

Mr Parton: I don't know, the way you are going.

MR BARR: Very good, very droll, Mr Parton. Nevertheless the fact remains that there are, by a significant factor, more single, detached dwellings. But we are not making any new land. So we will, if we are going to accommodate an increasing population, which is going to happen—go back 20 or 30 years when this city was 100,000 fewer people or go back 40 years when it was half the size that it is—you certainly do need to plan for the future. That future will involve, in the foreseeable future, continued greenfield land release but that will ultimately have to come to an end because we will run out of land.

MISS C BURCH: Chief Minister, why are you pre-empting the outcomes of your minister's housing choices discussion paper by saying that Canberrans will just have to accept a lot more higher density housing?

MR BARR: I am not; I am just pointing out a few pretty obvious facts: there will come a time when we run out of land.

Multicultural affairs—policy framework

MS ORR: My question is to the Minister for Multicultural Affairs. Minister, what is the ACT government doing to achieve its vision for an inclusive and cohesive community, as outlined in the ACT multicultural framework 2015-20?

MS STEPHEN-SMITH: I thank Ms Orr for her question and her interest in this topic. Tomorrow is Harmony Day, and the theme for Harmony Day is "everyone belongs", a reminder that the different cultures that make up our diverse community are all valuable and all contribute to the rich fabric of our community. It is therefore an appropriate time to consider how this government supports and recognises the community's respect, understanding and appreciation of cultural diversity.

To achieve our vision for an inclusive and cohesive community, the ACT government is undertaking a number of activities under the ACT multicultural framework 2015-20, as Ms Orr noted. The framework has three key objectives: accessible and responsive services; citizenship, participation and cohesion; and capitalising on the benefits of cultural diversity.

In response to the first objective, the government is working to make online services more accessible, provide culturally appropriate materials and support the provision of translated and plain English materials.

Since 2001 the ACT participation (multicultural) grants program has played a significant role in increasing participation and inclusion across our multicultural community. This is in response to objective No 2. Over time, it has funded more than 3,000 projects to support local multicultural communities to celebrate and share their culture.

The National Multicultural Festival is, of course, another example of community members and government working together to deliver a successful event that acknowledges and celebrates diversity in our community.

When it comes to capitalising on the benefits of cultural diversity, we know that a diverse workforce is good for business. We also know that new migrants, particularly refugees and asylum seekers, can face barriers to finding employment, due to lack of local experience. That is why we continue to support the work experience and support program, to support Canberrans from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds to improve their confidence and skills, and develop important networks to find work, and why we have committed \$1.4 million over four years to increase workforce participation and English language skills.

MS ORR: Minister, how is the ACT government ensuring that culturally and linguistically diverse communities have their say on issues that are important to them?

MS STEPHEN-SMITH: I thank Ms Orr for her supplementary question. Of course, the government is committed not only to listening to but also to working with the Canberra community to respond to the needs and priorities of all Canberrans. That is why we continue to reach out directly to our diverse community to engage and consult in ways, and about issues, that matter to them.

For example, in the lead-up to the housing summit hosted by the Deputy Chief Minister, there was a very well-attended workshop focused on the housing experiences of multicultural Canberrans, with wide representation from individuals and service organisations, as well as a range of community leaders leading the discussion with that community.

Last year the new Multicultural Advisory Council met for the first time. The council was established to provide a platform for Canberra's culturally and linguistically diverse communities to identify issues that are important to them, to have their issues heard, and to work more closely with the ACT government to address the issues that are important to them.

Later this year the council will take a leading role in developing and hosting a multicultural summit. The summit will enable the ACT government and the Canberra community to identify strategies to reduce social isolation and inequality, improve economic opportunity and strengthen social norms that promote safety and harmony.

I look forward to the consultations that will be held in the run-up to the summit and I would encourage all culturally and linguistically diverse Canberrans to participate and, indeed, all MLAs to become involved in those consultations. The lead-up to Harmony Day gives us a great opportunity to promote and celebrate the United Nations International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.

In doing that, we all get out into the community. We talk to members of our diverse multicultural community. That is another way we engage, both in government in opposition, with our community. As the Chief Minister said earlier today, there are many ways of doing that, whether that is via street stalls, knocking on doors or going to community events and listening to people where they are.

MR STEEL: Minister, how can we all work to promote tolerance, inclusion—

Opposition members interjecting—

MADAM SPEAKER: “A” for effort in seeking the call, Mrs Kikkert, but I ask Mr Steel, who was in my line of sight and was on his feet, to repeat the question.

MR STEEL: Minister, how can we all work to promote tolerance, inclusion, unity and respect for diversity in our community?

MS STEPHEN-SMITH: I thank Mr Steel for his supplementary question, and Mrs Kikkert for her good effort in trying to get one in. Harmony Day, as I have said, is an opportunity to promote and celebrate our diversity. As individuals, through our words and actions, we can ensure that our community is inclusive and that it opposes racism, prejudice, intolerance and the demonisation of culturally and linguistically diverse communities wherever we see those things.

As a government we are committed to providing opportunities for all Canberrans to celebrate their unique cultures through events such as Chinese New Year; Harmony Day, as I have mentioned; Ramadan; Diwali; Holi, which was celebrated this weekend; World Refugee Day; and, of course, the National Multicultural Festival. It is always rewarding to attend these events, seeing how communities pass on traditions, culture, language and knowledge to younger generations and indeed share these with the broader community. As a community we have a lot to learn from one another. This is one core message of “Everyone belongs”, the theme of Harmony Day.

This year, for the first time, we will also be celebrating Reconciliation Day on 28 May, marking the anniversary of the 1967 Australian referendum and the beginning of National Reconciliation Week. This is an important way of promoting tolerance, inclusion and unity with our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.

Collectively our community celebrations and events help to promote the ethos of multiculturalism and social inclusion by highlighting messages of cohesion, interfaith collaboration, tolerance, respect, harmony and cultural awareness, and by collectively strengthening our resolve to oppose the things that divide us such as racism, prejudice and intolerance.

I encourage all Canberrans to reflect on the message of Harmony Day and to look for ways in which they can further participate in and support our diverse communities.

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

Papers

Madam Speaker presented the following papers:

Auditor-General Act, pursuant to subsection 17(5)—Auditor-General’s Report No 4/2018—2016-17 Financial Audits—Computer Information Systems, dated 28 February 2018.

Ombudsman Act, pursuant to section 21—Ombudsman complaint statistics—Quarterly report for the period 1 October to 31 December 2017, dated 6 March 2018.

Protocols for the operation of pairs to encourage and support Members who are nursing mothers or who have carer responsibilities—Ninth Assembly.

Standing order 191—Amendments to:

Building and Construction Legislation Amendment Bill 2017, dated 27 February 2018.

Crimes (Fortification Removal) Amendment Bill 2017, dated 27 February 2018.

Crimes Legislation Amendment Bill 2017 (No 2), dated 27 February 2018.

Firearms and Prohibited Weapons Legislation Amendment Bill 2017, dated 26 and 27 February 2018.

Lakes Amendment Bill 2017, dated 1 March 2018.

Monitoring of Places of Detention (Optional Protocol to the Convention Against Torture) Bill 2017, dated 26 and 27 February 2018.

Revenue Legislation Amendment Bill 2017 (No 2), dated 26 and 27 February 2018.

Work Health and Safety Legislation Amendment Bill 2017, dated 1 March 2018.

Legislation Act, pursuant to subsection 228(1)—Schedule of relevant committees to be consulted in relation to appointments made by Ministers to statutory offices—Ninth Assembly—Amendment, dated 19 March 2018.

Mr Barr presented the following papers:

Auditor-General’s Reports—No 10/2017—2016-17 Financial Audits—Overview and No 11/2017—2016-17 Financial Audits—Financial Results and Audit Findings—Letter to the Auditor-General from the Chief Minister, dated 18 January 2018.

Public Sector Management Standards, pursuant to section 56—Engagements of long term senior executive service members—1 September 2017 to 28 February 2018.

Independent Integrity Commission—Select Committee Report—government response

MR BARR (Kurrajong—Chief Minister, Treasurer, Minister for Economic Development and Minister for Tourism and Major Events) (3.23): For the information of members, I present the following paper:

Independent Integrity Commission—Select Committee—Report—Inquiry into an Independent Integrity Commission—Government response.

I move:

That the Assembly take note of the paper.

I am pleased to table the government's response to the select committee report as required by standing order 254A. The government response was provided to you, Madam Speaker, and you arranged for its out-of-session circulation to members of the Assembly on 26 February 2018.

As members are aware, on 31 October the select committee tabled its report recommending that the government establish a standing ACT anti-corruption and integrity commission to investigate, expose and prevent corruption and foster public confidence in the integrity of the ACT government. The committee made 79 significant, wide-ranging recommendations relating to the ACT integrity framework, jurisdiction, scope and power, accountability, independence, staffing and resourcing, legislative application and other issues.

The government is committed to establishing an integrity body with a mandate to investigate significant and serious allegations of fraud and corruption, public administration and to strengthen public confidence in government integrity. The establishment of an integrity body is, indeed, an election commitment and is included in the parliamentary agreement for the Ninth Assembly.

The government's position on each of the select committee's 79 recommendations is set out in our response. In summary, the government agrees or agrees in part to 25, agrees in principle to 11 and notes 43 of the recommendations.

There is a need for such a body to be truly independent. This is why the government supported the view that the head of the new integrity body will be an officer of the Legislative Assembly appointed by the Speaker. We are working on draft legislation which will be referred to an Assembly committee, as requested by the Assembly committee, before being presented formally to the Assembly this year. I would like to thank the select committee for its comprehensive report which is guiding the establishment of the integrity body.

MR RATTENBURY (Kurrajong) (3.26): I will speak briefly to this government's response because there is clearly a lot of discussion left to go on this matter. The committee presented a very extensive report with a large number of recommendations. This certainly moves this issue forward. I would like to be clear at this point, in my

role as the chair of the committee, and with one of the recommendations being that the committee be re-established to look at the draft legislation, and I would like to inform the house that I actually excused myself from cabinet for the government response to be considered. That will be noted in the cabinet summaries when they come out. But that was seen as an appropriate response in light of the work still to be done on this.

The other comment I would like to make is that the recent discussions have highlighted, I think, the pressing nature of getting on with this. It is a complex piece of legislation. The committee did recommend that the legislation be in place by the end of this year and I think that even with all the goodwill in the world that will still be a pressing timetable. It certainly speaks to the need for the government get on with this and for the legislation to be drafted as quickly as possible. I know members of the committee are keen to re-form the committee to have a look at the legislation when it is ready and to seek to get this done as quickly as possible.

One of the issues that have come up is retrospectivity. I think this is an interesting one on which the committee did form a view, and I think it is important to understand that, when we talk about retrospectivity in particular—and I do feel there are different understandings of this around—the committee was not recommending that any previous offences be changed or the conduct that was previously not legal would be found illegal. That is not what is meant by retrospectivity on this occasion but, rather, that it is simply giving the integrity commission the ability to look at matters that took place in the past. I think that is quite an important distinction that may have been lost in some of the translation and I think it is worth clarifying that for the purposes of the conversation.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Developing a new housing strategy

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

What We Heard—Developing a New Housing Strategy for the ACT—Summary report of the ACT Housing and Homelessness Summit, dated February 2018, pursuant to the resolution of the Assembly of 1 November 2017, concerning housing affordability and homelessness funding

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

Leave granted.

MS BERRY: On 28 July 2017 I launched a seven-week public consultation to inform the development of the new ACT housing strategy with the towards a new housing

strategy, an ACT community conversation discussion paper, as a starting point. The consultation culminated in the inaugural ACT housing and homelessness summit, our Canberra, our home, held on 17 October 2017. This collaborative and productive event delivered on the commitment in the ninth parliamentary agreement to convene a homelessness summit in 2017, bringing together all key stakeholders to develop innovative proposals to combat homelessness. The discussion paper sought feedback from the industry and community about four main goals: reducing homelessness, strengthening social housing assistance, increasing affordable rental housing and increasing affordable home ownership.

We received hundreds of individual comments throughout the consultation period and at the summit. Over this period more than 125 organisations participated in 26 workshops, 166 online surveys were completed, 129 people attended six community drop-in sessions and 80 submissions on the discussion paper were received. In addition almost 200 stakeholders participated in the summit.

The summary report, *What We Heard—Developing a New Housing Strategy for the ACT*, brings together all the feedback provided by the community during this extensive conversation and reflects it back to the community and participants to show them that we have listened to what they have told us. The summary report reflects the government's first steps in collating the feedback provided into key themes. The summary report brings together different and at times competing ideas. It reflects the complexity of the issues involved with addressing housing affordability and the challenge that faces the government in trying to reconcile and address them. We are now working through these ideas, analysing them, researching them further and thinking about which ones can work well in the ACT and could be included in our new housing strategy.

I would like to take the opportunity now to thank all those who contributed to the community conversation and I look forward to sharing our further analysis with the community and the Assembly as we move forward towards the release of the new housing strategy in 2018. I commend the summary report to the Assembly.

Canberra Institute of Technology—freedom of information request

Paper and statement by minister

MS FITZHARRIS (Yerrabi—Minister for Health and Wellbeing, Minister for Transport and City Services and Minister for Higher Education, Training and Research) (3.31): For the information of members, I present the following paper:

Freedom of Information Act, pursuant to section 39—Notice provided to the Ombudsman—Canberra Institute of Technology—Freedom of Information request—Decision not made in time, dated 28 February 2018.

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

Leave granted.

MS FITZHARRIS: Today I table a notice provided to the Ombudsman by the Canberra Institute of Technology, as required under the new Freedom of Information Act 2016, section 39(1)(c), when a decision on an application for access to information is not made within the time allowed in the act.

An application under the FOI Act was received by CIT on 3 January 2018 for access to a range of documents. Unfortunately, the FOI request was not processed on immediate receipt, as it was sent to an unattended mailbox. Consequently, a decision on the release of the requested information was not made in the time allowed under section 40 of the act or extended under section 41 or section 42 of the act.

CIT provided this notice to the Ombudsman on 28 February 2018. CIT has acknowledged this oversight and has taken actions to ensure that this will not happen again. CIT, like all government agencies, is committed to the principles of the FOI Act, and in particular to ensuring the right of individuals to access all government information that falls within the act. CIT has now processed the FOI application.

Papers

Mr Rattenbury presented the following papers:

Road Transport (Safety and Traffic Management) Act—

Road Transport (Road Rules) Regulation 2017—Subordinate Law SL2017-43—Revised explanatory statement.

Road Transport (Safety and Traffic Management) Regulation 2017—Subordinate Law SL2017-45—Revised explanatory statement.

Mr Gentleman presented the following papers:

Subordinate legislation (including explanatory statements unless otherwise stated)

Legislation Act, pursuant to section 64—

Animal Diseases Act—

Animal Diseases (Endemic Diseases) Declaration 2018—Disallowable Instrument DI2018-34 (LR, 1 March 2018).

Animal Diseases (Exotic Diseases) Declaration 2018—Disallowable Instrument DI2018-33 (LR, 1 March 2018).

Blood Donation (Transmittable Diseases) Act—Blood Donation (Transmittable Diseases) Plasma Donor Form 2018 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2018-28 (LR, 26 February 2018).

Board of Senior Secondary Studies Act—

Board of Senior Secondary Studies Appointment 2018 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2018-35 (LR, 8 March 2018).

Board of Senior Secondary Studies Appointment 2018 (No 2)—Disallowable Instrument DI2018-36 (LR, 8 March 2018).

Children and Young People Act—Children and Young People (Death Review Committee) Appointment 2018 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2018-19 (LR, 15 February 2018).

Civil Law (Wrongs) Act—Civil Law (Wrongs) Professional Standards Council Appointment 2018 (No 4)—Disallowable Instrument DI2018-29 (LR, 26 February 2018).

Heritage Act—

Heritage (Council Chairperson) Appointment 2018 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2018-17 (LR, 26 February 2018).

Heritage (Council Deputy Chairperson) Appointment 2018 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2018-18 (LR, 26 February 2018).

Heritage (Council Member) Appointment 2018 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2018-11 (LR, 26 February 2018).

Heritage (Council Member) Appointment 2018 (No 2)—Disallowable Instrument DI2018-12 (LR, 26 February 2018).

Heritage (Council Member) Appointment 2018 (No 3)—Disallowable Instrument DI2018-13 (LR, 26 February 2018).

Heritage (Council Member) Appointment 2018 (No 4)—Disallowable Instrument DI2018-14 (LR, 26 February 2018).

Heritage (Council Member) Appointment 2018 (No 5)—Disallowable Instrument DI2018-15 (LR, 26 February 2018).

Heritage (Council Member) Appointment 2018 (No 6)—Disallowable Instrument DI2018-16 (LR, 26 February 2018).

Long Service Leave (Portable Schemes) Act 2009 and Financial Management Act—

Long Service Leave (Portable Schemes) Governing Board Appointment 2018 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2018-22 (LR, 19 February 2018).

Long Service Leave (Portable Schemes) Governing Board Appointment 2018 (No 2)—Disallowable Instrument DI2018-23 (LR, 19 February 2018).

Long Service Leave (Portable Schemes) Governing Board Appointment 2018 (No 3)—Disallowable Instrument DI2018-24 (LR, 19 February 2018).

Medicines, Poisons and Therapeutic Goods Regulation 2008 and Medicines, Poisons and Therapeutic Goods Act—Medicines, Poisons and Therapeutic Goods (Medicines Advisory Committee) Appointment 2018 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2018-26 (LR, 20 February 2018).

Nature Conservation Act—

Nature Conservation (Listed Migratory Species) Action Plan 2018—Disallowable Instrument DI2018-27 (LR, 22 February 2018).

Nature Conservation (Lower Cotter Catchment) Reserve Management Plan 2018 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2018-20 (LR, 20 February 2018).

Public Place Names Act—Public Place Names (Watson) Determination 2018—Disallowable Instrument DI2018-30 (LR, 1 March 2018).

Public Trustee and Guardian Act—Public Trustee and Guardian (Investment Board) Appointment 2018 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2018-21 (LR, 22 February 2018).

Race and Sports Bookmaking Act—Race and Sports Bookmaking (Sports Bookmaking Venues) Determination 2018 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2018-37 (LR, 8 March 2018).

Road Transport (General) Act—

Road Transport (General) Application of Road Transport Legislation Declaration 2018 (No 3)—Disallowable Instrument DI2018-25 (LR, 22 February 2018).

Road Transport (General) Application of Road Transport Legislation Declaration 2018 (No 4)—Disallowable Instrument DI2018-31 (LR, 1 March 2018).

Work Health and Safety Act—Work Health and Safety (Work Safety Council Employer Representative) Appointment 2018 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2018-32 (LR, 1 March 2018).

ACT children and young people’s commitment 2015-2025 Ministerial statement

MS STEPHEN-SMITH (Kurrajong—Minister for Community Services and Social Inclusion, Minister for Disability, Children and Youth, Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs, Minister for Multicultural Affairs and Minister for Workplace Safety and Industrial Relations) (3.33): Thank you for the opportunity to provide the Assembly with a progress update on the implementation of the ACT children and young people’s commitment 2015-2025. The first ministerial statement was delivered in March 2017, and I am pleased to provide the Assembly with further information on progress made.

The commitment is a high-level strategic document that sets the vision for a whole-of-community approach to promoting the rights of children and young people aged zero to 25 years in the ACT. It was developed through extensive consultation with children, young people, community agencies and key areas within the ACT government. The commitment identifies six priority areas that influence the work we do across the ACT government and wider community to create strong communities which support children and young people. I am pleased to report on these priorities today.

The first priority is implementing policy that enables the conditions for children and young people to thrive. We know that well-designed policy supports the creation of strong communities and families and addresses the social determinants of wellbeing for children and young people. A good example of well-designed policy is the award-winning blueprint for youth justice in the ACT 2012-22. The blueprint is a 10-year evidence-based strategy aimed at improving outcomes for young people who are involved or at risk of involvement in the ACT youth justice system.

I have spoken about the successes of the blueprint in this place many times and will be tabling a further update shortly. From the point of view of good policy, though,

I note that we are not resting on our laurels. We continue to implement improvements and to work with partners across the sector, through the blueprint taskforce, to take stock of our progress and identify further opportunities to improve outcomes for young people who are in contact with or at risk of engagement with the justice system.

Another example I would like to highlight is the Education Directorate's safe and supportive schools policy. This policy is committed to providing positive and engaging environments where children and young people feel connected, respected and valued, where they can achieve success and fully engage in their education. It includes addressing bullying, developing positive behaviour support plans and other mechanisms to create a safe and supportive environment.

The second priority is to provide access to quality health care, learning and employment opportunities—all important considerations to ensure children and young people are given the best chance to succeed in life.

In the area of mental health, the ACT government has announced significant investment in new and expanded services that will benefit young people, including implementing the Black Dog Institute's lifespan suicide prevention programs; expanding the size and range of services within the Centenary Hospital for Women and Children, which is planned to include a dedicated child and adolescent mental health unit; and expanding early intervention programs for primary school children to provide identification and treatment for children at higher risk of developing mental illness.

The child and adolescent mental health service—CAMHS—includes community teams who provide office-based assessment, treatment and clinical management for children and adolescents aged up to 18 years who are experiencing moderate to severe mental health difficulties. CAMHS also provides specialist mental health services, including an educational and living skills day program, dialectical behavioural therapy program, and weekend mental health assessments for children and adolescents aged five to 17 years who present to the emergency department or who are already admitted to the paediatric ward. Additionally, CAMHS provides a specialist outreach program for adolescents and young adults who are experiencing first onset psychosis.

The child development service delivers a universal access model which uses a comprehensive intake service and drop-in clinics to identify and meet the needs of children with developmental concerns. The child development service also provides outreach to children who find it difficult to access the service in Holder.

In the area of learning and employment pathways, an example of how we are working to improve outcomes for children and young people can be demonstrated through the kickstart program. This program is designed to re-engage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people in school and set them on pathways to successful lives.

This government is committed to ensuring that all children and young people are provided with the support they need to access learning opportunities and meaningful education. We are seeing the positive impact of employing speech pathologists, occupational therapists, physiotherapists and allied health professionals to work

closely with schools over the past 18 months. Workforce capacity has been strengthened to ensure we meet the specific needs of children and young people, including those with a disability.

The third priority is to advocate for the importance of the rights of children and young people. Children and young people's rights are key if we are to provide the platforms from which children and young people can grow and reach their potential. In this area we have developed a charter of rights for young people in Bimberi Youth Justice Centre, in consultation with the ACT Children and Young People Commissioner, the Human Rights Commission, young people in Bimberi and those who provide services to the centre.

I firmly believe that every child and young person has the right to a high quality education that will set them up for lifelong success. This is being achieved through the development of a continuum of educational support model that will be implemented in ACT public high schools from 2018 to support the engagement of all students, including those at risk of disengaging.

The fourth priority is to keep children and young people safe and protect them from harm. The safer families package continues to address family violence by delivering more services in new ways, bringing family violence out of the shadows and ensuring that those experiencing it get the help and support they need.

Research is being used to inform the establishment of an innovative family safety hub in the ACT which will play a critical role in protecting our children and young people from the long-term and insidious consequences of family and domestic violence. In addition, the Domestic Violence Prevention Council will next month convene an extraordinary meeting focused on addressing the needs of children and young people affected by family violence.

ACT public schools also contribute to the development of skills and attitudes necessary to build positive and respectful relationships, with social and emotional learning approaches now a required part of every school's curriculum.

Another important part of the ACT government's commitment to keeping children and young people safe and protected is the complex but absolutely critical work done by child and youth protection services. Child and youth protection services continues to work collaboratively with organisations commissioned under A step up for our kids to enable them to provide trauma-informed and therapeutic responses to children, young people and their families in the statutory system.

The fifth priority is to build strong families and communities that are inclusive and support and nurture children and young people. Positive community connections are strong predictors of a successful life. If we get it right early, we have an opportunity to set children and young people up to lead fulfilling, healthy and happy lives. Child and family centres are a one-stop shop supporting families during the early years of their children's lives. The kids and families school holiday program invites current and new clients into the centres by offering a range of free, child-centred activities at a time of the year that can be challenging for families with limited resources.

Libraries continue to provide access to learning resources and programs for children and young people and work with partners to offer learning opportunities. For example, Libraries ACT has worked collaboratively with the child and family centres to run tracks to reconciliation, a collaborative event organised during National Reconciliation Week, and deadly digital—group programs including Koori kids aged eight to 12 years and Koori leadership for young people aged 12 years and over in the west Belconnen area.

The child, youth and family services program continues to deliver holistic, wraparound services for children, young people and their families. This program funds a range of providers to deliver youth engagement services, with a focus on outreach.

An outreach approach provides an opportunity for vulnerable young people to access a youth worker in their community who can support them to improve skills in goal setting, decision-making, coping, confidence, safe behaviours and choices. For example, a number of funded providers have come together to offer a sports program at Harrison School every Monday afternoon during the school term, delivered under an early intervention and prevention focused model of engagement. This form of engagement provides a soft entry point to support services where young people are engaged in an activity they enjoy in a fun, safe and flexible environment.

The final priority area of the commitment is to include children and young people in decision-making, especially in areas that affect them, ensuring they are informed and have a voice. Youth InterACT is the ACT government youth participation strategy which encourages participation by young people in the community, providing opportunities for young people to contribute to discussions on youth issues and to participate in government policies and programs on matters concerning young people.

One practical way this is achieved is through the Youth Advisory Council, which aims to give young people an opportunity to take a leading role in participation and consultation activities on issues affecting their lives. A great example of involving young people in decision-making was the engagements undertaken in 2017 by the Community Services Directorate, in partnership with the Youth Advisory Council, on the future of Youth Week in the ACT. The Youth Advisory Council conducted five consultations at Campbell and Lyneham high schools, Gungahlin College, the ANU campus and the UniLodge. A total of 65 young people were consulted and a further online survey was undertaken.

As a result of seeking the views of young people, we have committed to supporting Youth Week in the ACT, despite the commonwealth ceasing funding for this event nationally. We are also delivering ACT Youth Week grants to promote youth participation and encourage young people to develop, implement and facilitate youth-focused projects in the ACT community during ACT Youth Week.

As demonstrated by the diverse examples highlighted today, the ACT government is well positioned to achieve positive, long-term results that will continue to improve

outcomes for children and young people not only for this generation but for generations to come. I present the following paper:

ACT Children and Young People's Commitment 2015-2025—Progress update on the implementation—Ministerial statement, 20 March 2018.

I move:

That the Assembly take note of the paper.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Women's and girls' sport

Discussion of matter of public importance

MADAM ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Ms Lee): Madam Speaker has received letters from Ms Cheyne, Ms Cody, Mr Hanson, Ms Lee, Mr Pettersson and Mr Steel proposing that matters of public importance be submitted to the Assembly. In accordance with standing order 79, Madam Speaker has determined that the matter proposed by Ms Cheyne be submitted to the Assembly for discussion, namely:

The importance of sports grants for supporting women's and girls' sport in Canberra.

MS CHEYNE (Ginninderra) (3.44): I am delighted to be able to speak today about the importance of sports grants for women and girls in the ACT. Let me start by painting the scene for you: the average salary of a male AFL player in this country is \$265,179 a year. Our top tier female AFL players earn \$20,000 a year. Australia's elite male soccer players are living quite comfortably on an average salary of \$100,000 per year. Our women's league players are not so lucky; they will be working second and maybe even third jobs to stay afloat, with soccer only netting them \$17,400 a year.

Some of our stars do at least get enough to live off, with women in cricket recently having a big win, pushing their salaries from \$79,000 to \$179,000 in a new deal. There is still cause to pause for a moment, though, when you see how much the male cricket players are earning—\$278,000. That is an additional \$100,000 per year for doing the exact same job. For female dominated sports the situation is just as grim. An average player on the Australian netball team receives \$43,000 per year, even though the Diamonds have won 10 world championships since 1963 and finished runner-up the other three times.

Sadly, the pay gap we see in sport reflects the different value that has historically been placed on men's and women's sport. The issue extends far beyond whether our elite sportswomen are getting paid enough, which they are not. By undervaluing elite sportswomen, a very public message is sent that sport is a man's domain. It discourages women from pursuing sport at a professional level, since it is unlikely to be a financially viable full-time career option. In turn, important opportunities to promote sport and recreation for all women are missed. We all know the social,

physical and emotional benefits of sport. It is a health imperative that people of every gender include sport and recreation as part of their everyday lives. If we want to achieve this we need to make sure all women and girls feel at home on the sports field.

The ACT government recognises the importance of this issue, and that is why I am so happy to bring it to the attention of the Assembly today. We are working hard to lift the profile of women's sport and encourage all women and girls to get active, to bridge this obvious gap. One of the ways we are doing this is through sporting grants. We have set a clear agenda to promote and support women in sport by improving the inclusive nature of sporting environments and strengthening the focus on female participation and leadership. We are working at the local, elite and governance levels to ensure women are represented in our sporting community.

A key action within this agenda has been the provision of grants to the sector to drive gender equity in sport. The importance of this funding is simple—we are seeking to give organisations what they need to be successful in ensuring equality for all. The grants are provided with a view that benchmarks are reached, resource equity becomes the norm and organisations are strengthened by equality in leadership, participation and in the provision of places and spaces to play.

Some of the examples of grants we are providing are: \$5,700 to ACT Basketball to investigate the decline in female participation particularly after the ages of 15 and at the social senior level in the ACT; \$4,500 to ACT Softball to invest in female coaches within the sport; \$4,500 to Capital Football to increase the number of female coaches at the grassroots level in the ACT and \$4,700 to invest in female match officials; \$10,000 to Netball ACT for athlete, coach and umpire development; over \$9,500 to Pedal Power ACT to increase women's participation in cycling and invest in female coaches; and \$10,000 to Tuggeranong Netball Association to attract players from communities who are not well represented in the sport, such as the Muslim or the refugee communities.

Funding for these initiatives has only recently been announced, and we will follow their progress over the year. A condition of the funding is that research and insight reports from the various projects will be provided to government and inform future government investment. We want to have the biggest impact we possibly can in attracting Canberra women to local sport and recreation activities.

While many of these funding initiatives are only hitting the ground in 2018, our grants funding can also be used as a lever to influence other important outcomes. In September last year the minister for sport wrote to all sports currently receiving triennial funding to inform them that funding from 2020 would be linked to improved governance arrangements, particularly a minimum female board representation of 40 per cent. This accords with the Australian Sport's Commission's mandatory governance principals.

More diverse representation around the board table can ensure that differing perspectives are considered in the decision-making process and the needs of female participants are not brushed aside. We are already seeing positive progress from our local sector in moving towards this target, with 46 per cent of these triennially funded

organisations as at 2018 now at 40 per cent, with only 24 per cent now having less than 30 per cent female representation.

Our commitment to equality in sport extends even further: we have also dedicated funding and scholarships to reward and encourage elite sportswomen; we are building female friendly sporting infrastructure; and we are creating online environments to bring women and girls together to create sporting communities, which I expect other colleagues might emphasise today. In short, our eyes are open to the importance of the role of sport and recreation in fostering healthy and happy communities.

We are determined to change attitudes towards women and girls in sport and we are building on the groundswell of community interest and action to achieve this. Through these grants and these other initiatives we will continue to encourage the sporting world to welcome women and girls into the fold at all levels of play and governance for the benefit of all.

MR MILLIGAN (Yerrabi) (3.51): I am thrilled today to have been provided the opportunity to speak about an issue close to my heart—that is, the importance of sports grants for supporting women’s and girls’ sports in Canberra. Some of you may know a little bit about my background prior to entering politics: I was a business owner, a family man and an active member of the community. I have taken a keen interest in numerous community groups and initiatives. But at the heart of who I am is an avid sports person, and I firmly believe that sport is the glue that binds and holds a community together.

Sport provide opportunities for socialisation, network building and, of course, it has physical and mental health benefits. It provides a solid foundation for communities and helps to bring people together. But, most of all, it can be a lot of fun. No matter what your sporting interest is, how elite, talented or passionate you are, there should always be a place for you to participate in sport. This may be through traditional organised sport at a local club or sporting association, or through a loosely organised group or activity that maximises the many opportunities to enjoy the outdoors here in the nation’s capital.

I am extremely passionate about providing local grassroots sport with the required level of support to foster opportunities to benefit members of our community. I am passionate about ensuring equal opportunity for both girls and boys to access sporting opportunities. What I am talking about here does not necessarily equate to financial resources. One of the many areas where I have seen this government fail is the lack of investment in infrastructure and facilities for sporting clubs and recreation across Canberra.

During my childhood I was lucky enough to grow up in a very active, country community. Everyone was involved in some level of sport or recreation—girls, boys, men and women. Sport really was at the heart of the community, sports such as tennis, cricket, football, and other interest groups and hobbies such as local theatre, craft, fishing and camping, or organised groups such as guides, scouts and, of course, the CWA.

Aside from the variety and options available to the community, the best part was that there were very few boundaries to participation. It did not matter where you had come from, how much money you had or your social status—the community just made sure that you had the necessary resources to get involved and take part.

Here in Canberra, with the average registration fee costing parents well over \$200 and playing costs ranging from \$10 to \$20 per week, sport is becoming more and more out of reach for the average family. This is where I would like to see the government contribute more to Canberra by making sports affordable. It opens up opportunities for more girls and women to shine on the sporting field.

This brings me to the important area of government grants. This government often spruiks the funding and grants it provides for the community. On this side of the chamber we support the effective and efficient use of public funds. This includes resourcing sport and recreation while also providing additional grants to encourage groups that are sometimes underrepresented, such as the Indigenous community or girls and women in sport.

I find it very interesting that today the government has brought this issue to the chamber when, of the \$2.4 million available for the sports and recreation grants program, only \$49,155 went to the women's sport and recreation and leadership program. This represents a two per cent investment by this government in girls' and women's sport pursuits at a local grassroots level. Yes, it may be fashionable to stand in this chamber and talk about the importance of grants for supporting women and girls in sport in Canberra, but what the community needs from this government is less talk and more action.

The state of our local sporting grounds and facilities adds to this tragedy. Sports like rugby and cricket often have to use substandard grounds that lack even the basics. Of note is a local club in my electorate of Yerrabi, the Hall Bushrangers. This club have been trying without success to get their ground maintained, with the bigger goal of having adequate facilities built—things like toilets and change rooms so that their emerging women's rugby team can train, play and participate alongside the men, and lights so they can train at night and feel safe doing so.

This is the stuff that local clubs need. Get the basics right so that more Canberran women and girls can participate. Whilst it is great to see sport and recreation receive recognition in this chamber, this government does not deliver. Being in opposition provides me the opportunity to give local sporting clubs a voice. I can write letters, ask questions, attend briefings, and I can make the government explain their actions. Equally, at a strategic level, I am able to meet with sporting associations and bodies, hear their stories and understand how they are trying to influence government.

Unfortunately, I am not able to change the way the government resources local sport and recreation and therefore am unable to address the mere two per cent of funding provided to the women's sport and recreation participation and leadership program. But what I can do today is call out the government and highlight that their attempt to portray themselves as a hero for women's sport is flawed. The real heroes are out in

the community and what they need is not complicated—they need investment to do what they do best. I implore the government to start listening to the needs of local clubs. This will go a long way to encouraging girls and women in sport.

MR RATTENBURY (Kurrajong) (3:57): I am pleased to take the opportunity to speak about the importance of sports grants for supporting women's and girls' sport in Canberra. In recent years the profile of women's sport has been increasing tremendously, and that has been very rewarding. Certainly the ACT government, over the years, has been a good supporter of women's sport. I certainly know that in my time as the minister for sport some of our female teams were particularly successful and had a particularly high profile.

There is a great history in Canberra: Canberra United has been a foundation member of the W-League since its formation in 2008. It is the only squad not to be affiliated with a men's club in Australia, and that shows a successful women's club can stand in its own right. Of course, they have been very successful, playing finals eight times, finishing the season on top of the ladder three times and being grand final champions on two occasions.

When it comes to successful Canberra women's teams, we cannot go past the Capitals. They first competed in the WNBL in 1986 and competed in nine grand finals, winning seven titles, which are both WNBL records.

We just saw the GWS Giants, with a strong Canberra connection, just miss out on the grand final for this coming weekend in the AFLW. Disappointing to see the Giants go down at the end, but it was great to see them kicking off in Canberra. A number of Canberra players were on the team—three, in fact—in the recent victory over the Western Bulldogs, and we have our fingers crossed for them for next season. The beautiful thing about football is that there is always next season.

On the weekend we saw the Brumbies Women take part in the very first game of Super W women's rugby. I know they had a tough game on the weekend and the result was not what they were hoping for, but it is great to see the Brumbies represented in that new competition. I know the Canberra Raiders are looking at having a team in the new NRL women's competition. That will not be in the first season, but I know it is on the radar for the future. Of course, the local women's rugby league competition remains strong and is continuing to grow. There is a fine tradition of female rugby league in Canberra.

I mention these various sports to demonstrate the fact that they are very vibrant, growing and getting increasing amounts of coverage, all of which I think are very positive for women's sport. When it comes to funding and financial equity, though, it is clear that that is not the case. Ms Cheyne highlighted average salaries as one way of demonstrating that. I did some research and was interested in the way the ACT's community contribution scheme from clubs has been directed when it comes to women's sport. Under that program clubs are given an incentive to contribute to women's sport, being allowed to claim \$4 for every \$3 of actual contributions, so an incentive has been put in place, which I think is a positive thing.

In 2014-15, 31 clubs claimed an aggregate total of \$333, 790 as contributions related to the development of women's sport, of which 58 per cent were monetary donations and 42 per cent were in-kind contributions. On the face of it, that is a good contribution. However, the total donations to women's sport were less than the amount claimed for utility bills in the broader sport and recreation category and less than 15 per cent of the amount claimed for wages in that category. Contributions to women's sport made up less than four per cent of all community contributions in 2014-15 and just three per cent of all contributions in 2015-16. This is a disappointing figure and could well be considered in the government's review of the community contribution scheme so that grassroots community support for sport is more evenly distributed across men's and women's sporting activities.

Clearly the extra incentive of being able to claim \$4 for every \$3 of actual contributions has not been enough. There is obviously a historical component to this, but it is time that historical component was addressed. I urge the clubs to have a look at this as well and to reconsider their funding formulas, particularly as we are seeing such high participation. If we look at soccer in the ACT, huge numbers of young women are playing that particular sport. Then, of course, there are the female-dominated sports like netball, and hockey is another strong female sport. There are plenty of opportunities out there to fund women's sport, and it would be great to see some reconsideration there.

Mr Milligan mentioned the women's sport and recreation participation and leadership program and his comments were that it was not receiving a lot of money. I was pleased to read about this as a new initiative. I think it is a positive initiative and one that I hope will produce significant results. Comments have already been made about what that is seeking to achieve, but it is a positive initiative in terms of looking at ways of encouraging girls and women either back into or into sport in the first place.

We are at a really exciting time for women's sport. Young girls particularly but also older women in some cases are coming back to sport, and that is a very positive sign that we are breaking down some of the stereotypes that have existed around women's sport. I am very encouraged, and I think the funding area is one area that not only the government but also corporate sponsors need to look at. I have touched on the example of the clubs. There is some real equalisation to be done in coming years. I look forward to seeing that progress and seeing more equality when it comes to both sponsorship and pay for our female participants in sport and recreation across the territory.

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) (4.04): I am happy to have the chance to talk about the importance of sports grants to support women and girls in Canberra and about what the government has been doing to even up the playing field, so to speak, when we are talking about equal chances across the sporting spectrum.

Many will recall that during the 2016 ACT election the Labor Party made a number of election commitments to strive to get more women and girls back into sport. Since the election, of course, these commitments have been turned into programs on the ground through initiatives funded in recent budgets. The very idea of providing sporting grants to women and girls works hand in hand with the work we are doing right now across Canberra to create more opportunities, more fairness and to drive true equality.

The government's agenda is an equality agenda. In my portfolio areas alone we are doing vital work in education, housing, women's policy, family safety policy and sport and recreation policy. All of the work in these areas is seeking to drive fairness and equality right across the city. As the government has developed its approach to this work that I have just mentioned—in education, sport, housing and women's policy—it is obvious to me that when we listen to the ideas coming straight from those who are impacted, straight from the members of our community, we can better develop an agenda that will make a real difference on the ground.

In many past statements in this place I have spoken repeatedly about the government's commitment to achieving gender equality. Of course, again today I reaffirm that commitment. What I have said many times is that this is a challenge that needs to be taken on by every part of government, in private enterprise, in the community and in the home. I would argue that it needs to be embraced by all sides of politics.

This year the government, together with the Ministerial Advisory Council on Women, will get stuck into further implementation of the women's plan. We will continue our work that allows us to reach out to many champions for gender equity, both men and women, to keep this work on track and continue to show the national leadership that is desperately needed.

After two years of particular emphasis in the prevention of domestic and family violence and in the sports portfolio, the government continues to make further strides in this important work. In the sport portfolio, 2018 is the year that we will see delivery on a range of commitments that the government has made towards gender equity. My focus as minister will be on further improvements to sporting amenities to make them safe and inclusive for everyone. I have just recently announced a series of new grants for this purpose.

At the national level, the ACT has been pushing hard for the need to agree on clear targets for growing participation and promoting gender equity in sport. This might seem unimportant to some people in this place, but it does give all of us across the country the chance to strive to do better around gender equality in sports. I will continue to do my best, through my portfolios, to contribute to this work.

I spent much of my first year, in 2016, talking with the sports community about the needs that they had. We would all agree that Canberra sporting clubs are full of community champions and volunteers who make a great contribution to this city. These are also people with great ideas about equity and inclusion and how sport can be used even more to grow these things.

The government spoke extensively with women and girls and men and boys in shaping gender equity commitments. People at all levels of sport shared the view that we should take action on creating a greater profile and more online space for female sport. From that evolved a commitment to partner with HerCanberra, the new online platform. It was great to launch this new initiative late in 2017.

What the government's investment has enabled is the promotion and sharing of local female sporting content like never before. HerCanberra has a large and growing audience, including in the key age areas where participation needs to grow. Each investment the government makes, each program and facility which is funded, contributes to the ultimate goal of better health, inclusion, participation and equity through sport.

Data tells us that, overall, females are more active than males in the ACT. However, it is important that we drill down deeper into this. When participation is broken down across age groups, young women from 15 to the mid-20s are less active than their male counterparts. Across the board, fewer women participate in sport, with a preference shown for more recreation and fitness-related activities such as walking and gym sessions.

Some key achievements already on the board include full funding for all election commitments related to gender equity in sport. This includes four-year funding agreements with both the Canberra Capitals and Canberra United; a further \$1 million for programs which work to encourage and empower women and girls at all levels of sport over the next four years; \$500,000 for female friendly sports infrastructure; \$400,000 in incentive funding for sports to lead in gender equity; and \$100,000 for a new female sport online hub at HerCanberra, which I recently launched.

The recent announcement of the 2018 sport and recreation grants program included more than \$49,000 allocated to eight separate initiatives through our designated women's sport and recreation participation and leadership program. This is a new program. It has never been done in the ACT before. I look forward to seeing the outcomes of that funding. Further programs are still under consideration.

These initiatives will roll out this year and include support for female coach development in Softball ACT and Capital Football, an inclusive netball project with the Tuggeranong Netball Association targeted at refugee and Muslim women, and participation programs through Pedal Power to educate and equip women from newly arrived communities to engage in cycling for transport and recreation.

I am looking forward to seeing what is next in this space. We will keep talking with the community and embracing the ideas as they are put to us. This government will continue to champion equality through the spectrum of community participation in sport. I thank Ms Cheyne for raising this matter as a matter of public importance and I thank Canberra's amazing sports community for the work that they do each day to make sure that these goals are a reality.

MS LAWDER (Brindabella) (4.10): I rise to mention a couple of grants in the women's sport area that I think are very good. In my electorate the capital assistance program gave some funding to the Tuggeranong Netball Association to upgrade their toilets. It does not sound like a very exciting project, but I can assure you that it is. Down there at the Calwell playing fields and the Tuggeranong netball courts, up until now there have been two toilets for what is usually about 1,500 women and girls on a Saturday morning.

This is clearly inadequate. There are very limited change facilities. Girls usually get changed in the main area of the building there. What often happens on netball mornings is that the men's toilet in the building is used also as a women's toilet. Men have to go over to the public toilets on the soccer fields, which hopefully have been opened by the rangers. They get locked each night and opened each morning. If they are not opened by the rangers it leaves the men caught short, so to speak.

Some time ago—it was midway through last year—I wrote to the minister asking about the possibility of an upgrade to the toilets and was told that there was no plan at that time. I think I wrote in July last year. But they have been successful in gaining funding through the capital assistance program. I know that president Jonathan Toze and the committee of the Tuggeranong Netball Association are very excited and pleased to be able to progress better toilet or ablution facilities down there at the Calwell playing fields.

The Tuggeranong Netball Association are very well known for a number of programs, including their reconciliation action plan and their Indigenous netball work. But they have also started this year the netball inclusion project. They had a come and try day just recently. The Tuggeranong participation netball competition had a come and try day on 17 March, just last weekend. People with disability, male and female, were invited to come along to the Tuggeranong Netball Association to try out the game of netball.

That is being run with the assistance of a grant from the department. I commend them for funding that particular program. This participation netball competition will run through the winter season and will enable the support and participation of people of all abilities. It is another good inclusion project. I commend the Tuggeranong Netball Association for seeking funding to start this project.

I understand that it could be one of the first of its type in Australia. They are very excited about it. The addition of more toilet facilities will be another good addition to the facilities down there. Again, congratulations to the committee of the Tuggeranong Netball Association for their foresight in applying for these grants. I look forward to seeing the result of the funding that they have received.

MS CODY (Murrumbidgee) (4.14): I thank Ms Cheyne for bringing this MPI—the importance of sports grants for supporting women's and girls' sport in Canberra—to the chamber today. As I am sure everyone in this place is very aware, I love sport, but I particularly love supporting women's and girls' sport.

While Ms Cheyne's MPI and the speeches from my colleagues Ms Berry and Mr Rattenbury have highlighted the wonderful opportunities this Barr Labor government has provided to women and girls in the sporting realm, I want to highlight some local stories of women's sport that I have been fortunate enough to be involved in.

Firstly, as Mr Rattenbury already has, I would like to congratulate the women who played for the Brumbies in Saturday's Super W rugby match against Queensland at GIO Stadium.

Ms Berry: It was the inaugural.

MS CODY: Yes, it was the inaugural. I am just getting to that bit, minister. For those of you that missed it, unfortunately the Brumbies women went down 42-5. I was unable to get out to the match, but many of my friends and family made it out to watch this very first Super W game in Canberra. I look forward to getting along to other games over the remaining season.

One of the women who played in Saturday's match for the Brumbies is a woman I have known for many years. In fact, I was fortunate enough to play with her for the Royals quite some years ago. It was great to see Louise continuing to have a fabulous career in rugby, including still playing for Australia.

The Super W competition means that Rugby Union has become the latest of Australia's major football codes to launch a women's competition. This follows in the footsteps of the longstanding W-League, the AFLW and women's rugby league. With a stronger local competition and access to professional development, the Australian women's rugby union team, the Wallaroos, will be a stronger team moving into the future.

But even though we celebrate the growing professionalism of women's sport, it is important to note that the women playing in the Super W competition are not being paid, not one cent. Ms Cheyne has also highlighted the disparity between men's and women's paid professional sports. While their male peers, even those in their rookie or reserve season, may be earning impressive amounts, women who play rugby union professionally, who train and uphold the values of their clubs, do so without compensation.

This is a sobering reminder of the sacrifices women make to play sport professionally. This is why delivering and improving existing support and grants programs to sporting women and their clubs must continue into the future. I urge those here today to get behind a team, to join a club and to watch the games live at the wonderful grounds we have here across Canberra.

Another matter of importance I wanted to raise today relates to the announcement last month by Minister Berry of a grant to extend Circuit Mark Webber. I am thrilled that this government is investing in diverse sporting activities in Canberra. The recently announced \$200,000 grant from the ACT government to upgrade the track at the

Mark Webber circuit will transform the existing track into one that meets national and international standards.

The improvements to the track, including increasing the track to 1,100 metres, will mean that Canberra racing kart drivers will be able to take part in a greater range of events and compete at a much higher level. For those unfamiliar with this particular sporting venue, it is where some of Canberra's fastest young drivers, some as young as seven, take on the circuit and compete for national honours.

On Sunday I had the honour and privilege to head out to the Mark Webber circuit to watch some of our wonderful locals mix it up with some other juniors, and those not so junior, to race against kart drivers from across New South Wales. Many of those racing were young girls. They were ripping up the circuit and often reaching speeds close to 130 kilometres per hour. I have been meeting with many of these girls who compete regularly for the Canberra Kart Racing Club.

Often these girls have chatted with me about the difficulties they have in competing and finding professional support as they get older and the competition gets more aggressive. It extends even to finding racing suits to fit them as they grow and develop more. All the suits are made for boys and for men.

During some of the conversations I held with these women and girls they invited me to participate in a bit of a race at the Power Kart Raceway in Fyshwick. Can I remind you all that these girls, many of them far too young to be near the steering wheel of a car on the road, really put me to shame? Not only did they beat me; they beat me by four laps and 10 seconds. These girls are as young as nine. They are amazing and they compete with men and boys in their own age groups. There is no difference. They all compete together. It was a lot of fun racing those little karts at the Power Kart Raceway. I hope to do it again with the girls soon.

While we are here, talking about the continued support of women and girls in sport, I want to give a quick plug to my young friend and massive karting enthusiast Kiarra Jones, aged 12. Kiarra entered a national competition to attend the grand prix in Melbourne this weekend. As part of the competition, Kiarra wrote a short summary of everything she loved about karting and what motorsport means to her. I was thrilled that Kiarra was one of only 20 young girls from around Australia who will be attending the grand prix and joining the drivers on the track. Kiarra is hoping that by being involved in this year's grand prix she will have the opportunity to raise more awareness of women and girls in motorsport. Good job, Kiarra, and I hope you go well!

I would like to finish by talking about my experiences in the sporting realm. I have played sport since I was very small. Mr Milligan also talked about this. We are very lucky in the ACT not to have far to travel. One side of Canberra to the other is relatively close. But it still puts pressure on our parents, when we are young, to have to drive us from one end of Canberra to the other.

The government's continuing support for women and girls having more places to get changed when they reach those sporting fields is a wonderful initiative. I remember

often, when driving from one end of Canberra to the other, getting changed in the back seat of my mother's Ford Falcon station wagon because when I got to the ovals there were no girls playing in my soccer team. I also remember getting to the ice hockey centre at Phillip and having to wait until the boys finished training or playing so that we could then go in and get changed because there were not the facilities.

As Minister Berry has already expressed, being able to provide grants to women's and girls' sport here in the ACT means that we can continue to ensure that girls progress and continue to play sport as they grow and mature and that there are going to be fewer barriers. I commend the ACT government for all the work they do. I thank Ms Cheyne for raising this matter of public importance today.

Discussion concluded.

Courts and Other Justice Legislation Amendment Bill 2018

Debate resumed from 22 February 2018, on motion by **Mr Ramsay**:

That this bill be agreed to in principle.

MR HANSON (Murrumbidgee) (4.23): The Canberra Liberals will be supporting this bill. It amends numerous pieces of legislation, including the ACT Civil and Administrative Tribunal Act 2008, the ACT Civil and Administrative Tribunal Regulation 2009, the Children and Young People Act 2008, the Coroners Act 1997, the Corrections Management Act 2007, the Crimes (Sentence Administration) Act 2005, the Evidence Act 2011 and many others. I will not go through the full list. While it does encompass a substantial list of changes, they can be unified as attempts to improve and coordinate the statute book, especially in the running and operation of our courts and tribunals.

According to the explanatory statement, the amendments are made in response to submissions from the profession and from the courts themselves. Some are in response to reported judgements calling for changes. Upon consultation, we agree that this is the case, and that is why the Canberra Liberals will support the changes. I will, however, briefly identify some key aspects, including some brief notes that may benefit from ongoing observation and monitoring by the Assembly and by the profession.

Those include several changes to clarify the processes of ACAT. Of note in this instance is the amount payable in ACAT under an occupational discipline order and to include that the recovery of an expense by an owners corporation for a units plan can include reasonable legal expenses. I draw the Assembly's attention to some of the representations I received prior to seeing this bill that increased limits such as this may diminish the overarching intention that ACAT be a no-cost jurisdiction. It can give rise to an imbalance, with individuals representing themselves against an opponent with a full legal team. However, this is balanced by the fact that if the limit was set too low, parties would be forced into a far more complex and costly jurisdiction on minor matters. As I say, I bring this matter to the attention of the Assembly for noting and monitoring.

The bill includes changes to allow a coroner to authorise a person to conduct routine non-invasive examinations such as taking blood samples, bone tissue, body fluids and hair, subject to having regard to distress or offence to a person because of their cultural attitudes or spiritual beliefs. Taking medical samples can be a very sensitive area, engaging personal, cultural and human rights considerations. This is expressly recognised in the explanatory statement. These points are laid out in the explanatory statement for reference, and I will not repeat them, but anyone with an interest can refer. This is, again, an area worthy of ongoing monitoring.

Other changes in the bill are more mechanical in nature. The Evidence Act 2011, the Legislation Act 2001 and the Evidence (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1991 have clarified the process for ACT courts to take evidence and submissions allowing audiovisual links or audio links with other places in ACT proceedings.

The Judicial Commissions Act 1994 has been amended to: allow the ACT Judicial Council to delegate its early dismissal of complaints function to the judicial commission staff in a limited range of circumstances; clarify when a judicial officer is considered to have failed to comply with a request to undergo a medical examination; and amend the situations in which the ACT Judicial Council is required to report to the Attorney-General to support the independence of the Judicial Council.

There are changes to the Juries Act 1967 which include minor matters but also deal with the provision of reasonable support for jurors with a disability. We raised the issue of support animals with the Attorney-General's office, a matter which has received some publicity of late. We have been informed that this provision may include support animals; we will continue to look at this area as well as others we have raised.

Amendments to the Oaths and Affirmations Act 1994 have removed inconsistencies in the text for an oath or affirmation by a witness or interpreter and reflect the more modern form of the oath and affirmation in the Evidence Act.

The Supreme Court Act 1933 has been amended to expand the jurisdiction of the associate judge to include the Supreme Court when its jurisdiction is exercisable by a single judge.

There are other amendments, including to the Utilities Act, which has been amended to increase the compensation limit for ACAT consideration of energy and water complaints to \$25,000. Here I would raise the concerns about no-cost jurisdictions I mentioned earlier.

Again, as always, I would like to thank the professional bodies, in particular, the Bar Association and the Law Society, for their feedback on this bill. I thank the Attorney-General's office for answering a number of questions on issues that my staff, particularly Ian Hagan, had with this bill. As I said at the outset, we will be supporting this legislation.

MR RATTENBURY (Kurrajong) (4.29): The Courts and Other Justice Legislation Amendment Bill makes a range of amendments to legislation relating to the operations of the ACT courts and tribunals. The bill seeks to facilitate access to justice by introducing efficiency measures in relation to the structures and processes of the ACT courts and tribunals, including the operation of the ACT justice and coronial system. The bill is responding to issues identified by the courts, many of which are administrative and procedural in nature, as part of the government's regular review of justice legislation to ensure that the ACT has an accessible, fair and efficient justice system. I do not plan to discuss all of the changes, as they are largely positive and predominantly procedural, but I would like to make a couple of brief comments on a few particular matters.

The bill makes a series of amendments to the ACT Civil and Administrative Tribunal Act 2008, most of which are aimed at providing clarity in relation to certain procedures of the tribunal. This includes clarifying the process for the enforcement of orders made by ACAT in the Magistrates Court. This is in response to a judgement by Justice Refshauge in the case of *Kaney v Rushton* last year where His Honour noted that it would be preferable to put beyond doubt that the enforcement of ACAT orders is to happen through the established procedures under the Magistrates Court Act 1930. The bill introduces a new section to the ACT Civil and Administrative Tribunal Act which provides that a money order or non-money order made by the tribunal may be enforced by filing a copy of the order, sealed by the tribunal, along with an affidavit in support stating that the order has not been complied with in the appropriate court, usually the Magistrates Court.

The bill will also amend the Utilities Act to increase from \$10,000 to \$25,000 the maximum monetary amount of compensation which can be awarded at ACAT for energy and water complaints. The compensation limit has not been increased since it was set in 2001, and the new maximum amount will make sure that the tribunal is better able to address unfair conduct or poor service by energy and water providers in the territory.

Amendments to the Evidence (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act clarify the process for ACT courts to take evidence using audiovisual links or audio links. These amendments clarify that evidence by audiovisual links or audio links can be received from overseas. When considering whether evidence can be provided from a place outside the territory, including from overseas, the courts will weigh up the benefit of reduced costs and delay in the conduct of the proceedings with any impact on procedural fairness to the parties to determine whether it is in the interests of justice. Given the changing expectations in the world of being able to use this sort of technology, and the improvements in the technology, I think it is very appropriate to make this sort of amendment. I think we will see this sort of evidence-taking happening more frequently in the future, and the courts will be able to be more comfortable that it is an appropriate mechanism.

The bill makes amendments to the Juries Act to better support jurors in their important role. The Greens are particularly pleased to see that the bill will support the inclusion of people with a disability as jurors, ensuring that juries better reflect the

diversity of the Canberra community. People with a language difficulty or a mental or physical disability will no longer be considered not to qualify to serve as jurors. Rather, they will be able to claim exemption from jury duty. Furthermore, a person must be given the appropriate level of support. That support would enable a person to properly discharge their duties as a juror if that support can reasonably be given. This can include the provision of an interpreter, including an Auslan interpreter; assistance animals; and disability aids. The provision of this type of support is consistent with decisions of the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

The amendments to the Supreme Court Act will assist the court in better managing its case load by recognising the expanded role of the associate judge. It is well known that court processes can take a long time, and any effort to reduce court waiting times is, of course, welcome. This bill clarifies that the associate judge may exercise the jurisdiction of the court that is exercisable by a single judge other than for a trial on indictment or a matter before the court of appeal.

Similar to amendments to the Juries Act, amendments to the Oaths and Affirmations Act will ensure that court processes better reflect the diversity of Canberra's population. The bill provides that an oath can be adapted by a person taking the oath by, for example, naming a god in their religion rather than being obliged to say, "Almighty God" or "So help me, God". This will ensure that the court process is more inclusive and better recognises Canberra's multicultural and multi-faith community.

In conclusion, the Greens are very pleased to support this bill. We believe it will assist the courts in making their processes more efficient and also make the courts more inclusive and better reflect the diversity of the Canberra community.

MS CHEYNE (Ginninderra) (4.34): In a rapidly changing and interconnected world, with new technology, better social awareness and stronger relations between Canberra and the rest of the world, our justice system must be able to keep up. It must guarantee fair and timely outcomes, be more easily accessible and respect cultural differences and religious views.

This bill updates the legislation governing our courts so that we can better meet these standards. In addition to several changes that improve the efficiency of our court and tribunal proceedings, the bill makes a considerable effort to improve the system's fairness, cultural sensitivity and ability to protect individuals' human rights.

The amendments to the Evidence (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1991 are especially important. At present, the act allows ACT courts to direct a person to appear before the court via audiovisual links and audio links from another place within Australia. There is little guidance on whether ACT courtrooms are intended to do this with locations outside Australia.

The amendments in this bill confirm that ACT courts can take evidence and submissions from overseas in this way and clarify the processes for doing so. For example, it directs the court on how it should administer oaths and affirmations by audiovisual or audio links and how to deal with different international norms around giving evidence on oath or affirmation.

The ACT is opening up to the rest of the world. If we are to encourage the best administration of justice in such a globalised world, it is important that we facilitate a connection between the ACT courts and locations both within and outside Australia. Doing so will help avoid preventable delays and unfair outcomes in a situation where key witnesses are outside the ACT or overseas.

This bill also makes several amendments to the Coroners Act 1997. For example, one amendment allows the coroner to obtain the medical records of the deceased in any reportable death. Quite often the deceased person's medical records will be very detailed, especially where people have previously received considerable medical treatment. In such cases, coroners may be able to determine the cause of death by reviewing the deceased person's medical records without conducting an invasive autopsy. Losing someone you love is difficult and painful. Knowing that an autopsy is being conducted on their body can be traumatic. By eliminating the need for unnecessary invasive autopsies, this amendment attempts to reduce the distress caused to the family and friends of the deceased.

The bill also makes a considerable effort to safeguard individuals' religious and cultural rights. Different cultures and religions have varying beliefs, traditions and practices when it comes to death and how a body should be treated. Some cultures believe in the sanctity of keeping the human body complete. Others have no direct objection to autopsies but believe that organs must be returned to the body or that the funeral must not be delayed. For example, some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities believe that there should be restrictions on interfering with a deceased person's body.

In fact, in 2009 one Indigenous artist launched an injunction to stop an autopsy on her son. She believed that if the body was interfered with by foreign hand, her son's spirit would be prevented from moving forward. This bill takes such concerns into consideration. It provides that whenever coroners exercise a function or make a decision relating to an inquest, they must be more culturally sensitive. They must consider the benefits of reducing any distress that could be caused to the family of the deceased who, because of their cultural and spiritual beliefs, could reasonably be expected to be distressed or offended by the coroner's actions or decisions. This could involve asking a family member about how they could best respect the deceased person's attitudes and beliefs.

Continuing along this vein of protecting individuals' human rights, the bill amends the Juries Act 1967 to allow more people to participate in jury duty. Currently, those who are differently abled or have an insufficient grasp of the English language are not considered to be qualified to serve as jurors. The changes proposed in this bill allow such individuals to serve as jurors if they wish to do so. Instead of being discharged, a person who is eager to participate in jury duty but has a difficulty with the language or is suffering from a mental or physical disability will be provided with support that can reasonably be given. This may include an interpreter, including an Auslan interpreter, or an assistance animal, a disability aid or a support person. The bill also takes care to not pressure those who feel that they would not be equipped for such a task. If a

person with a language difficulty or a mental or physical disability feels they would be unable to partake in jury duty, they have the option of claiming an exemption.

Every year, thousands of Canberrans interact with the ACT justice system in a number of different capacities. The government must make sure that these interactions are efficient and effective and that the system embodies the key principles of our legal system: fairness, justice and equality before the law. The bill before the Assembly today makes several amendments that improve the clarity of existing legislation. Some of the amendments improve the competence, independence and efficiency of our legal system. Others enable more people to access the courts, improve the fairness of the outcome and improve the system's cultural sensitivity. These procedural changes to different limbs of our legal system contribute to this government's continuing efforts to support a court system that serves the needs of all Canberrans. I commend this 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) (4.40), in reply: I thank members for their contribution to this debate today and I am pleased to note that this bill has full support across the chamber. I am pleased to speak in support of the Courts and Other Justice Legislation Amendment Bill 2018. It makes amendments to 16 acts. The bill is part of the government's regular process of review and reform of justice legislation to ensure that the ACT has an accessible, fair and efficient justice system.

I would also like to thank all stakeholders who have participated in the consultation on and the preparation of this bill. The stakeholders have included the Director of Public Prosecutions, Legal Aid ACT, the Judicial Council, the Human Rights Commission, the Law Society, the Bar Association and, particularly in relation to this bill, the ACT courts and the ACT Civil and Administrative Tribunal, and I thank them for their collaboration in identifying and developing the amendments in this bill. As always, I want to place on record my appreciation for officers from the Justice and Community Safety Directorate for their work in the preparation of this bill as well.

This legislation will increase efficiency and remove red tape in court processes. It will help the courts and the tribunal to provide access to justice and it will support diversity and inclusion. The bill will increase efficiency in the ACT justice system and remove unnecessary red tape.

The amendment to the Evidence (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1991 clarifies and simplifies the process for ACT courts to take evidence during audiovisual links or audio links, including overseas and interstate. This sensible change was recommended to the government by Justice Penfold in the case of *R v Woutersz* last year. It will support the efficient conduct of trials by leveraging proven technology to allow the ACT justice system to be globally connected.

The bill also includes amendments to simplify and remove red tape from the jury management process in the Juries Act 1967. As an example, to issue a fine to a person who unlawfully failed to attend court in accordance with a jury summons, a judge currently has to issue a warrant requiring the sheriff to apprehend the person and the

person must then be brought in front of a Supreme Court judge. This process is an inefficient use of judge and sheriff time and, instead, the bill will make changes to allow penalty notices to be issued for breaches of jury responsibilities.

In addition, the legislation increases the efficiency of the ACT's coronial system through amendments to the Coroners Act 1997. For example, the bill includes amendments to reduce the rate of invasive autopsies by enabling a coroner to more easily and quickly make an order for examinations of a less intrusive nature, such as the taking of a blood sample or taking fingerprints. A coroner will also be able to obtain medical records from a person's medical provider and use them to finalise an inquest without undertaking a post-mortem examination.

Ensuring that invasive autopsies are only carried out when absolutely necessary will, in some cases, permit the quicker release of deceased persons to their families. The government is keenly aware that coronial processes can be distressing for friends or family members, and conducting these processes in a way that is both efficient and also sensitive remains a high priority.

The Coroners Act already contains a safeguard on post mortems which require a coroner to consider how to minimise distress or offence to a person because of their cultural attitudes or spiritual beliefs. These amendments will require a coroner to have these same considerations in mind when exercising any function or making a decision in relation to an inquest.

The bill contains reforms which help the courts and the tribunal to provide more effective access to justice for Canberrans. For example, in the Supreme Court case *Kaney v Rushton* last year Justice Refshauge underscored the need to clarify the process of enforcement of tribunal orders. The bill includes a series of amendments that respond to His Honour's judgement, including amending the ACT Civil and Administrative Tribunal Act 2008 to make clear that a tribunal order may be enforced by filing a copy of the order sealed by the tribunal, along with an affidavit in support stating that the order has not been complied with. This important clarification will reduce the potential for uncertainty and delay in the enforcement of tribunal orders and provide additional incentive to comply with them.

Another example of the bill helping ACT courts and the tribunal to provide access to justice for Canberrans is the amendment of the Utilities Act 2000, which increases the maximum monetary amount of compensation for energy and water complaints upheld by the tribunal from \$10,000 to \$25,000. The compensation limit has not been increased for 15 years. This new maximum amount will make sure that the tribunal is better able to redress unfair conduct or poor service by energy and water providers in the ACT.

I would like, finally, to discuss the amendments that support diversity and inclusion in legal processes. I am proud to live in a city as diverse as Canberra, and the ACT government is committed to supporting the inclusion of all Canberrans. All Canberrans should be able to participate in the ACT's legal processes, regardless of sex, ethnic origin, religion, language or disability status, and, with that goal in mind,

as has been well noted by other speakers, this bill introduces provisions to support the participation of people with disabilities or language difficulties as jurors.

The bill also supports diversity and inclusion with changes to how oaths and affirmations are administered to better reflect the ACT's diverse population. These changes relate not only to the courts but to any occasion where a person takes an oath or an affirmation. As an example, the text of an oath for a witness in the Oaths and Affirmations Act 1984 is currently as follows:

I swear by Almighty God that the evidence I shall give will be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.

Many Canberrans can happily take that oath. However, there are some Canberrans who may wish to take an oath but who are not comfortable with referring to "Almighty God". Therefore, the new oath text will allow a person to promise rather than swear and to refer to a god recognised by the person's religion. Where a person wishes to make an affirmation, they will be required to solemnly and sincerely declare and affirm.

In conclusion, the Courts and Other Justice Legislation Amendment Bill 2018 is an important piece of legislation that supports the administration of justice in the ACT. The government is committed to working in partnership with our courts and our tribunal towards our shared goal of providing accessible justice for all. Again, I wish to thank all our justice stakeholders for their participation in the process of developing this important amendment bill, and 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.

Workplace Legislation Amendment Bill 2018

Debate resumed from 15 February 2018, on motion by **Ms Stephen-Smith**:

That this bill be agreed to in principle.

MR WALL (Brindabella) (4.49): I rise to speak to the sections of the Workplace Legislation Amendment Bill 2018 that specifically relate to changes made to the Workforce Privacy Amendment Act 2016. I will defer to my colleague Miss C Burch, who will address on behalf of the opposition the aspects of this bill that relate to the public sector management amendments.

The first question that is in my mind when looking at this legislation is: why would we wind back legislation that has not yet been enacted? In 2016 we went through the process of having a bill developed by government, put through cabinet, brought into

the Assembly, debated, passed and brought into legislation—a fairly extensive process that also involved considerable community consultation and amendments. Yet, before many of these provisions have actually been enacted, we are now essentially repealing them.

The question that I am very keen to have explained is: does this highlight inadequacy in the consultation process? Is it evidence of poor governance on behalf of the current minister? Is it an illustration of poor governance on behalf of the previous minister or is it, as I wholly suspect, a matter of the government's agenda being run externally by UnionsACT?

My understanding is that the initial legislation came about after a review of the Workplace Privacy Act 2011 which was undertaken with the explicit purpose of identifying any need for legislative changes to improve the operation of the act. The act recognises the needs of an employer to reasonably and lawfully monitor their workplace, which in some cases is their own business. The changes made at the time took into account the potential need for employers to undertake surveillance outside the workplace. The minister at the time, Mr Rattenbury at that point, said:

This amendment reflects the review's finding that without a means to allow covert surveillance outside the workplace an employer's ability to defend legal proceedings against them may be adversely affected.

Nothing in the uncommenced sections of the original bill being amended in clause 5 of the bill that is before us today is alarming to me, and clearly it was not too alarming to the majority of members in this place who passed the legislation in 2016 or the vast majority of stakeholders who were consulted in 2016—other than one strident opponent to those clauses and elements of the legislation, being UnionsACT.

This can also be confirmed through Mr Rattenbury's words in this place on 7 April 2016. Again I quote the then minister, who said:

I note that not all stakeholders agree with the proposal to allow limited covert surveillance outside the workplace. Unions ACT does not agree and yesterday made media comments about the proposal. In my view, those comments were unfortunately quite misleading. They do not give an accurate account of the way that this will work in practice, the extensive safeguards in the bill or the involvement of the human rights commissioner in making sure the bill was of the highest standard in terms of its interaction with human rights.

For the benefit of the Assembly, let me provide some more detail about how this surveillance could occur outside the workplace. The amendment acknowledges that there are some circumstances where an employee engages in behaviour connected to their workplace that is unlawful and that an employer is justified in conducting surveillance on the employee. These circumstances would be very limited and must meet the strict requirements set out in the bill.

Those were the words of the then minister, Mr Rattenbury, in 2016. It does seem that one vocal stakeholder has got their way—that is, UnionsACT, who can rightfully claim a victory here, but at what cost? Is this not just another example of undue

influence over a government and the unions dictating a government agenda? Why was there a need to see this legislation implemented in 2016, yet an urgent need now to repeal it before these provisions are enacted?

The minister, in her directorate briefing, has not clearly articulated the basis for why this was a matter of urgency in 2016 and why there is urgency again now to remove it. If there was a case that clearly articulated why these kinds of provisions should be conveyed to employers in the ACT in 2016, what has substantially or structurally changed in the ACT economy and the employment sector that renders them no longer required in 2018? My fear, as I have already said, is that we now have a different minister with a much more sympathetic ear to the union movement and that they are again calling the shots.

It seems that, with the support of the crossbench, these provisions will be going through today, against the better judgement of much of the opposition, but we will not be standing in the way of them marching to the beat of whoever is calling the shots in this instance. As I said in my opening remarks, I will defer the elements of this bill that relate to the Public Sector Management Act to my colleague Miss Burch, who will address them and move an amendment going forward.

MISS C BURCH (Kurrajong) (4.54): I rise to speak to the elements of this bill relating to the Public Sector Management Act and will later move the amendment circulated in my name. The government's proposed amendments to the Public Sector Management Act, as they currently stand, have the potential to create financial hardship for hardworking current and former ACT public servants. The amendment I have circulated will significantly lessen any potential financial hardship resulting from government errors that are no fault of their own, by removing the ability for these laws to be applied retrospectively.

The ACT public service is home to diligent, skilled women and men who work hard for every dollar that they earn. ACT public servants have the right to be confident that their pay is correct and accurate at the time that they receive it. If the government makes a mistake in paying public service wages and salaries, those mistakes should be detected and corrected promptly.

It is a basic responsibility of government to ensure that public servants are paid fairly and accurately. It is not good enough for this Labor-Greens government to go back to public servants years later and tell them that they have a huge bill to pay back, all because of a government stuff-up. It is not fair to leave hardworking public servants in limbo, worrying that the government might come after them years later.

When we asked the government why amendments to the current legislation were necessary, we were told that this was in the name of good governance. If this is truly in the name of good governance, the government will have no reason not to support my amendment. If this is not, however, about good governance and is instead just another cash grab, I suspect this amendment will be voted down.

The government have not been up-front with the Assembly, nor with the public about whatever problem it is that they are trying to address with this bill. The existing act

already stipulates that overpayments must be repaid. The existing act says that arrangements for repayment must be agreed between the Head of Service and the public servant. The existing act says that repayment plans must be reasonable, having regard to all circumstances. This seems like a fair and reasonable approach in the face of government maladministration and error.

It is government maladministration and error that we are talking about in this bill. Of course, if overpayment has occurred due to the actions of the public servant—for example, due to fraudulent time sheets—the government has other means of recouping that money. I do not believe that it is necessary to punish hardworking public servants due to the failures and incompetence of this government.

The bill says that repayments must be made “regardless of when the overpayment was made”. How far back does this government intend to go in pursuing public servants over old debts incurred through its own incompetence? We continue to hear stories of small business owners being hounded over debts that this incompetent government has discovered years after the fact. These debt collection notices can cause significant financial hardship for small businesses. Is this government now going to do the same to its own hardworking public servants?

How does the Chief Minister plan to tell public servants that their pay is going to be cut or that they owe the government debt, so that the government can fix its own mistakes? Should retired public servants be worried that the Chief Minister and his heavies will be coming after their retirement funds?

This bill would extend to government rights and powers far beyond those extended to small business. If a small business employer overpays an employee because they incorrectly believed that the employee was entitled to that pay or because of a payroll error, they cannot simply take back that money. Instead, the employer and employee must discuss and agree on a repayment plan, as is the case here under the current legislation.

This bill would also extend to government rights and powers far beyond those extended to everyday Australians in our banking sector. If I make an internet banking transfer and I enter the wrong BSB—a mistake that I admit is of my own doing—and the money is no longer in the other person’s account, the bank will have to make “reasonable attempts” to get the money back. And if I only report the mistake seven months later, the money will only be returned if the other person agrees. Yet this government wants to penalise public servants in order to rectify its own mistakes and errors many years after the fact.

This bill calls for repayment plans to take into account a public servant’s entire financial circumstances. Will public servants be forced to hand over their personal financial records to the same government that mucked up their pay in the first place? This government has already begun going after public servants, demanding that they complete statutory declarations of total assets, liabilities, income and expenditure details, not only for themselves but for their entire households. Why should the privacy of public servants and their families be so violated, simply because the government has got their pay wrong?

We have asked the government how many overpayments have been made. They have no answers. They will not tell us how many times they have got it wrong. We have asked the government how much public money has been wasted on overpayments. They have no answers. They will not tell us how much money they have poured down the drain. We have asked the government how much money is yet to be paid back, and still the government has no answers. I call upon this government to be honest with Canberrans and tell us how much money has gone astray due to the government's sloppy record keeping and accounting practices. How many times must Canberrans continue to pay for the government's failures?

When we asked the government why amendments to the current legislation were necessary, we were told that this was in the name of good governance. Is the government telling us that good governance will begin with this bill? If good governance requires this legislation then what has the government been doing until now? After 17 years in power, has this government recently decided to try good governance? What kind of sloppy, inaccurate, poor payment practices is this legislation designed to hide? If this bill is truly in the name of good governance, and not an attack on current and former hardworking public servants, the Assembly will support my proposed amendment.

MR RATTENBURY (Kurrajong) (5.01): On behalf of the Greens, I am happy to support this bill. There are two key elements to this bill, as has been noted by the speakers from the opposition. The first provides a mechanism for public employers to recover payments from employees who have been overpaid, in the situation where the employee has not agreed to the employer deducting money from their salary. Currently, in this situation there is no way for the employer to recover the overpaid money as the Fair Work Act does not allow the employer to deduct money without the employee's permission.

Overpayments do arise in various circumstances. Miss Burch's colourful language aside, it can happen by accident or, for example, when an employee takes leave but does not inform payroll staff until after the fact. You can imagine a situation where an employer might propose a range of perfectly reasonable options, but if the employee refuses then the employer cannot recover the money.

The amendment will remove the requirement that any recovery action must be agreed between the employee and the Head of Service. However, before recovery can occur without employee agreement, the Head of Service has to have regard to several factors specified in the bill. These include consideration of the period in which the overpayment occurred, the circumstances of the overpayment, the gross and net amount of the overpayment, the public servant's financial circumstances and any other relevant circumstance. These are important considerations to protect the employee from unreasonable outcomes. For example, consideration of the employee's financial circumstances also includes consideration of hardship, such as family tragedy, serious illness or other serious or difficult circumstances.

As a practical example, I can imagine the situation of an employee who was impacted by the Mr Fluffy crisis, who was displaced from their home and was faced with the

costs and personal trauma that that caused to many people. They could have had a valid excuse to not agree to repay the money under these criteria during that period. It would be recoverable later, of course. Clearly, under this legislation there is discretion for the Head of Service to do this in a reasonable way that does not unfairly impact on people, whilst ensuring the integrity of the public purse.

On the other side of the equation it is important to note that this scheme is about recovering money and it helps to provide certainty and integrity in the management of public funds. Overpaid public service employees are paid with public funds and there is a responsibility to recover this money in a reasonable time—also, as I said, with due accord to people's personal circumstances so as not to create circumstances of hardship.

The second amendment in this bill will remove uncommenced provisions in the Workplace Privacy Act relating to employer surveillance. The uncommenced provisions would have allowed an employer to apply to the Magistrates Court for an authority to conduct surveillance of a worker outside the workplace. The change was recommended in a review of the Workplace Privacy Act. The act already allows an employer to apply to the Magistrates Court for an authority to conduct surveillance on an employee inside the workplace. The employer would need to demonstrate a reasonable belief that the employee was engaged in unlawful activity and that external surveillance was necessary. There were other significant safeguards in place and the Human Rights Commission was closely involved in developing the scheme to ensure that it was appropriately balanced with the right to privacy.

As I said, when taking the original decision to delay the commencement of these provisions, stakeholders nevertheless raised concerns about the provisions and we did reconsider. It is one of those circumstances where one should always be mindful of new information, and I think new information was presented in this circumstance. I decided it was appropriate to conduct a broader review of the whole civil surveillance space. There are many unresolved issues in the area of civil surveillance, as well as emerging issues related to new technology, and that was the context in which the provisions were deferred.

The review was intended to consider a range of issues, including the occurrence and use of surveillance in civil litigation claims in the territory; the extent of existing regulation of surveillance activities, including regulation of surveillance businesses; whether the Listening Devices Act 1992 should be expanded to capture video surveillance and electronic monitoring; the ability of existing legislation to respond to emerging surveillance technologies and practices, such as smartphones, fitness trackers, geotagging and drones; the possible need for a tort of breach of privacy; and the interaction of provisions regulating surveillance with other ACT legislation, including the Information Privacy Act, the Workplace Privacy Act and the Human Rights Act.

As I said the intention was to come up with a best practice model for regulating this rapidly evolving area of civil law. As members will recall, an expert consultant was contracted, who developed an issues paper, which is available on the JACS website. There were also public submissions.

I was satisfied with removing the uncommenced provisions from the act. I thought it made sense in the context of this broader government review of civil surveillance. That work is very important in continuing to look at this area of civil surveillance, reviewing the work that was started and making sure that we are keeping pace with technological developments and the new ways in which we are seeing people abuse the opportunities presented by those technologies. We need to ensure that the community's expectations about privacy and protection from undue surveillance are met and that we have the legislative provisions in the ACT to keep pace with a changing world. Having made those few remarks, the Greens are pleased to support this bill today.

MS STEPHEN-SMITH (Kurrajong—Minister for Community Services and Social Inclusion, Minister for Disability, Children and Youth, Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs, Minister for Multicultural Affairs and Minister for Workplace Safety and Industrial Relations) (5.07): I will not go through the provisions of the bill again, as they were covered in my presentation speech, by Minister Rattenbury and, to some extent, by Mr Wall and Miss Burch. I will, however, respond to some of the comments that Mr Wall and Miss Burch have made in this debate and, in doing so, indicate that the government will not be supporting Miss Burch's amendment when the time comes.

I will start with Mr Wall's comments. As Mr Wall noted, the Workplace Privacy Amendment Bill 2016 was debated and amended in this place in 2016. At that time one of the amendments made was to defer commencement of the provisions related to the surveillance of workers outside the workplace, in recognition that further work was required. This was in fact a decision of the Assembly. Mr Wall has talked about our trying to override, in this bill, decisions of the Assembly which previously passed. Well, the Assembly that previously passed this bill passed an amendment to defer the commencement of these provisions in recognition that further work was required.

Mr Wall also stated that it was not explained in the directorate's briefing why this deferral had taken place or, indeed, why we were now proposing to omit these clauses and not have them commence as scheduled in April. Mr Wall did not actually attend the briefing, and I am advised that his staff did not specifically ask questions in relation to this matter.

I have, however, previously provided advice in relation to who was consulted in the government coming to its decision. It did include a range of stakeholders, including the Work Safety Council, the Law Society, the ACT Bar Association, the ACT Insurance Agency and, of course, UnionsACT. These stakeholders all expressed a range of concerns about these provisions commencing in their current form. Hence a decision was made, on the basis of that wide consultation with relevant stakeholders, that the provisions should not commence in their current form in April. That is why we are currently moving this amendment. That was actually pretty well explained in my presentation speech. Mr Wall is being a bit disingenuous in claiming that it was not explained to him.

Moving to Miss Burch's comments, I could not agree more with Miss Burch that ACT public servants are diligent and committed and do absolutely fantastic work in the interests of all Canberrans. However, I am concerned about her amendment. I point out to her that, again, she has not approached my office or consulted us about the potential impact of this amendment. She said there are a range of questions that she has not received answers to. But, as far as I am aware, I am the minister with carriage of this bill and she has not approached me or my office to ask any of the questions that she said she had not received answers to. Perhaps she has asked somebody else. Perhaps she has asked the Chief Minister. We cannot find any questions on notice. But if she had approached my office we would certainly have endeavoured to provide as much information as she was interested in. Again, Miss Burch herself did not attend the briefing and, as far as I am aware, her staff did not ask these questions in the briefing.

I note in relation to the impact on staff of this matter that relevant unions have been consulted on the proposed arrangements, which are entirely in line with the current arrangements in the enterprise bargaining agreement, and the unions are supportive of the amendments we are proposing.

In the current Public Sector Management Act, section 246(1) states:

A public servant must repay any amount paid by the Territory to the public servant to which the public servant is not legally entitled.

In the bill before us, the proposed section 246(1) says:

A public servant must repay any amount paid by the Territory to the public servant to which the public servant is not legally entitled.

The proposed section 246(2) that Ms Burch proposes to remove states:

Subsection (1) applies regardless of when the overpayment was made.

It is a clarifying clause that clarifies that the existing clause in the existing act will continue to have effect after this amendment is made. That is required because the new act commences on the day after notification, so the old act becomes redundant. The Attorney-General is nodding. Am I right? Am I correct in my interpretation? I hope so. The proposed 246(2) in my bill makes it clear that the overpayment must be repaid under the current legislation and also must be repaid under the legislation as amended. A debt currently owed will continue to be a debt owed. That is all that that current subclause (2) states.

I am advised that the practical effect of Miss Burch's amendment would be to effectively remove that existing legislative requirement that a public servant repay amounts to which they are not legally entitled that have accrued prior to the notification of this bill. So Miss Burch's amendment is to some extent retrospective. In other words, all existing such debts would effectively need to be waived or written off unless public servants voluntarily choose to repay them.

So supporting the proposed amendment would mean that the government would not be able to recover a significant debt owed to the territory. It would continue to be difficult for the government to recover overpayments previously identified prior to the commencement of the bill if this amendment was agreed. Given Miss Burch's previous views about the importance of ensuring that taxpayers' money is guarded and spent well, I am surprised that she is retrospectively removing an existing requirement that public servants must repay any amount paid by the territory to which the public servant is not legally entitled.

On the financial impact of the bill if this was applied, to answer Miss Burch's question, based on the available data as at November 2017 there are approximately 258 instances where recovery has not yet commenced. But there will be some people who have more than one overpayment, as each overpayment is tracked separately. There will be some people in positions where an overpayment is more likely than in others, so there may be some instances where people have received multiple overpayments.

In summary, this bill does two things which are entirely common sense. On the privacy side, it maintains the status quo. Something that employers cannot currently do, employers will not be able to do. And that is, as I said, a result of significant consultation with a range of stakeholders who have an interest in this matter, who all have issues with the current wording in one way or another.

In relation to the Public Sector Management Act, the bill effectively clarifies in legislation existing arrangements in the enterprise bargaining agreement which were not previously reflected accurately in the legislation, which has made it difficult to come to agreement with some public servants about the repayment of an overpayment, a payment to which they were not legally entitled. On that basis, the government will not be supporting Miss Burch's amendment. If she has a further case to make in relation to that, I will respond in the detail stage.

I thank the scrutiny committee for its consideration of the bill. I note that it did consider human rights issues, especially around privacy, which Miss Burch mentioned. It found no concerns in relation to that and also did not raise any retrospectivity concerns in relation to this bill.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Bill agreed to in principle.

Detail stage

Clauses 1 to 3, by leave, taken together and agreed to.

Clause 4.

MISS C BURCH (Kurrajong) (5.17): I move amendment No 1 circulated in my name [*see schedule 1 at page 778*]. As I have mentioned, the government's proposed

amendments as they stand have the potential to cause hardship to both current and former ACT public servants. It is clear from the minister's statement that good governance is not going to prevail here today and that this is simply another cash grab by the Labor-Greens government.

This is not a question of good economic management. If that were the case, you would not be making such errors in the first place. This is instead a case of the government extending rights and powers to itself well beyond those extended to other employers. ACT public servants have the right to be confident that their pay is correct and accurate at the time that they receive it.

It is a basic responsibility of government to ensure that public servants are paid fairly and accurately. The fact that this sloppy government has put this legislation forward tells us that it cannot get even this basic function right. It is not good enough for the Labor-Greens government to go back to public servants years later to tell them that they have got a huge bill to pay back, all because of government stuff-ups.

Fairness is a word all too often brandished by those opposite. This bill in its current form is by no means fair. How is it fair to impose a repayment plan on public servants who have relied in good faith on the payments they have received accurately reflecting their entitlements? How is it fair that the government is to paper over its own failures of accountability by garnishing public servants' wages? How is it fair for the government to attack hardworking public servants to cover the government's own incompetence? And how is it fair for the government to extend rights and powers to itself well beyond those extended to other employers?

This is a lazy and incompetent government that cannot even fulfil its most basic payroll functions as an employer. It is a desperate government, scrambling to dig every penny it can out of the couch cushions to finance whatever is the latest in the long line of the Chief Minister's personal vanity projects. If this was an exercise in good governance, those opposite would be supporting my amendment today.

MR RATTENBURY (Kurrajong) (5.20): That was an extraordinary overreach of a speech, but I am impressed that Miss Burch was able to deliver it with a straight face. She did all this stuff about it being not fair, but I think it is equally not fair to let the rest of Canberra's taxpayers cop the bill. If there has been an administrative error, I think it is quite fair and appropriate that it be recouped in a fair and reasonable way. As I stressed in my opening remarks, this bill sets out a number of explicit details. It ultimately give the Head of Service a discretion as to how this bill operates in light of the personal circumstances of the individual.

The Greens will not be supporting Miss Burch's amendments because I think the system has been set up to be as fair as possible for people in circumstances where a mistake has been made. It is not ideal that those mistakes get made, but they do happen, and it is right to have an appropriate and transparent system for recouping that. It is worth noting that this is not about people who have left the public service. I think it is important to spell that out. If someone is no longer an ACT public servant, this legislation cannot apply to them.

It is very extraordinary that this is coming from the same party who have operated a federal robo-system of debt recollection from the poorest people in the community, who then have to wait hours on the line to even get to speak to somebody to work it out. I find it extraordinary. We should be sensible about this. I do not think we need these kinds of overreaching speeches in this place. We should just support this legislation and recognise the important safeguards—

Opposition members interjecting—

Mr Gentleman: I raise a point of order, Madam Assistant Speaker. It is almost impossible to hear the minister's speech with the out-of-control yelling from the opposition on the other side. I ask that they be brought to order.

MADAM ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Ms Cody): On the point of order, I remind members that all members sat in silence while members of the opposition were being heard. I implore you to pay the same courtesy to members of the government.

MR RATTENBURY: I simply observe that the Greens believe that there is a fair, carefully thought-out system in this legislation, and we will not be supporting Miss Burch's amendment.

MS STEPHEN-SMITH (Kurrajong—Minister for Community Services and Social Inclusion, Minister for Disability, Children and Youth, Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs, Minister for Multicultural Affairs and Minister for Workplace Safety and Industrial Relations) (5.22): Mr Rattenbury has made the further clarification that I was intending to. Just to be clear, the bill does not in any way cover former employees, and it is not the government's intention to pursue the recovery of funds from former employees. That is another matter that could have been clarified if Miss Burch had sought to discuss this with my office at any time since this bill was introduced.

I emphasise again that the current proposed clause 246(2) only relates to clause 246(1), which is exactly the same words as exist in the current act. A public servant is already required legally to repay any amount paid by the territory to the public servant to which the public servant is not legally entitled; it is just that we do not have the mechanism to do that if the public servant and the Head of Service cannot reach agreement on how that should be done.

As Mr Rattenbury has pointed out, the proposed replacement section is incredibly fair and balanced. The Head of Service will always try to seek agreement with a public servant about repayment arrangements and will only take these detailed and reasonable steps—which take into consideration any impact on the public servant's financial circumstances, any hardship that they may experience as a result of being required to repay—if they cannot reach agreement. I thank Mr Rattenbury for his comments. This is a very fair and reasonable way forward. As I have said, it is supported by the public sector unions. It does reflect the current arrangements in the enterprise agreement. I commend the bill to the Assembly.

Question put:

That the amendment be agreed to.

The Assembly voted—

Ayes 10

Miss C Burch	Mr Milligan
Mr Coe	Mr Parton
Mr Hanson	Mr Wall
Mrs Jones	
Mrs Kikkert	
Ms Lawder	
Ms Lee	

Noes 13

Ms Berry	Ms Orr
Ms J Burch	Mr Pettersson
Ms Cheyne	Mr Ramsay
Ms Cody	Mr Rattenbury
Ms Fitzharris	Mr Steel
Mr Gentleman	Ms Stephen-Smith
Ms Le Couteur	

Amendment negatived.

Question put:

That clause 4 be agreed to.

The Assembly voted—

Ayes 13

Ms Berry	Ms Orr
Ms J Burch	Mr Pettersson
Ms Cheyne	Mr Ramsay
Ms Cody	Mr Rattenbury
Ms Fitzharris	Mr Steel
Mr Gentleman	Ms Stephen-Smith
Ms Le Couteur	

Noes 10

Miss C Burch	Mr Milligan
Mr Coe	Mr Parton
Mr Hanson	Mr Wall
Mrs Jones	
Mrs Kikkert	
Ms Lawder	
Ms Lee	

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Clause 4 agreed to.

Remainder of bill, by leave, taken as a whole and agreed to.

Bill agreed to.

Adjournment

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

That the Assembly do now adjourn.

Business—development

MS LAWDER (Brindabella) (5.31): On 1 March I attended a dinner organised by the Canberra Convention Bureau. The dinner and the associated three-day familiarisation

tour was called Top Secret 2018. It is an annual showcase for meeting planners considering a national business event for Canberra in the future. The fully hosted program was an opportunity for national association and corporate meeting planners to visit and discover why Canberra is a fantastic destination for business events. This year over 20 organisations attended.

We all know that business events are major economic drivers across Australia, and it is vital that Canberra gets its share. For example, in 2013-14 over 37 million people attended 400,217 business events across Australia. These events are big business: \$28 billion in annual direct expenditure; \$13 billion in direct annual value added; over 179,000 direct jobs; and over \$23 billion annual total economic contribution. The Canberra Convention Bureau continues to work to ensure that Canberra gets its fair share of this lucrative market and to grow that market.

The bureau was supported in this promotion by 30 local attractions and businesses, including the Trippas White Group, Funnel Entertainment, Elite Event Technology, Hiebl Photography, Imagine Events, Canberra Helicopters, Catherine McGrath Media, Ginger Catering, Murrays Coaches, Pialligo Estate, Restaurant Associates, the Big Group, National Convention Centre, National Arboretum Canberra and many national institutions. The following hotels were also supporters; Doma Hotels, Canberra Rex Hotel, Crowne Plaza, Ovolo Nishi, Hyatt Canberra, Peppers Gallery Hotel, QT Canberra, Rydges Capital Hill and the Vibe Hotel Canberra Airport.

At the dinner we had addresses from Jure Domazet, the chair of the Canberra Convention Bureau; Michael Matthews, the CEO of the Canberra Convention Bureau; and a brief address from Steve Jones of the Trippas White Group. The Trippas White Group should be congratulated on providing such a great dining experience on the group's first day of operating the catering business at the Australian War Memorial.

The highlight of the night for me, and I am sure for most others there, was the keynote address from Dr Brendan Nelson, who has such a fantastic grasp of the material of the War Memorial and brought people to tears at one point and laughter at other points. He really does give a fantastic speech.

I congratulate the Canberra Convention Bureau, its board and its members on the success of this year's Top Secret program, and I hope it is successful in attracting many more convention visitors to support our vibrant and vital tourism sector. I would also like to recognise the support provided by VisitCanberra to this program.

Mr John Hindmarsh—tribute

MR RAMSAY (Ginninderra—Attorney-General, Minister for Regulatory Services, Minister for the Arts and Community Events and Minister for Veterans and Seniors) (5.34): I rise this afternoon to thank a generous and passionate Canberran, John Hindmarsh, for his service to the community on his retirement as the Chairman of the Cultural Facilities Corporation, or CFC. John—whose presence I acknowledge in the chamber today along with his wife, Rosanna, their sons and, possibly quite fitting for a person so involved in the arts, quite an audience as well—has spent the last six years

leading a highly focused board to oversee the CFC's governance, to set its strategic direction and to fulfil its leadership role in arts and heritage in our region.

There are few Canberrans who will not have visited one of the cultural venues that the CFC managed during John's previous chair, whether it was for a performance at the Canberra Theatre Centre, an exhibition or workshop at the Canberra Museum and Gallery or a tour—or perhaps even a wedding—at one of our region's historic sites, Lanyon Homestead, Calthorpes' House or Mugga Mugga. John has consistently given back to the Canberra community, and this has been recognised in his being awarded a Member of the Order of Australia.

Apart from John's many achievements in the construction industry, the extent of his community engagement can be seen in his involvement with the Hands Across Canberra and the Boundless Playground charities, his roles as the Chairman of the National Gallery of Australia Foundation and as a member of the gallery's governing council, and his position as an adjunct professor at the University of Canberra. Either personally or through his company John has supported major exhibitions and acquisitions at the National Gallery and at the Canberra Museum and Gallery, provided major sponsorship to the Canberra Theatre Centre and supported many community activities and local charities. We are all seeing the impact that a strong and active arts sector has on the cultural, societal and economic fabric of Canberra.

I appreciate and wish to recognise John's work in promoting the cultural assets of the CFC as inclusive and inviting spaces for all Canberrans to enjoy. I also wish to thank him for the understanding he has brought to the role these facilities fulfil within the broader ecology of the arts and culture of the region. John's vision for the future of these facilities is quite rightly an ambitious vision, and it echoes the government's own wider ambition for our region.

The benefit of what the CFC has achieved under John's leadership is immense, whether in terms of its economic impact or the opportunities that it provides for our community's cultural participation and expression. John is an inspiring and philanthropic Canberran who I know takes pride in his service to our community. So I express tonight my thanks to John for his services as chair of the CFC over these past six years and for the bold vision he has given us for the future of a world-class theatre and gallery precinct.

I also wish to acknowledge John's successor, Louise Douglas, who is also here tonight. Louise is stepping up from her deputy chair role to guide the CFC as chair over the coming 12 months, and I look forward to working with Louise and seeing our cultural facilities continue to flourish in the period ahead.

I again thank and congratulate John Hindmarsh for his outstanding cultural and community leadership, and I wish him and his family well into the future.

MADAM SPEAKER: It is somewhat awkward speaking from the chair, but before I call Mrs Kikkert, and with the indulgence of members, I, too, would like to take the opportunity to recognise John and his family and friends in the audience. You have served the cultural facilities well; indeed, you have served Canberra well. Thank you

indeed, John and family. Thank you, members, for allowing me to say that from the chair.

Mental health—multicultural communities

MRS KIKKERT (Ginninderra) (5.39): As is often mentioned in this chamber, we live in a richly multicultural city, with 32 per cent of residents born overseas and another 15 per cent having at least one parent who was born overseas. A non-English language is spoken in nearly 24 per cent of Canberra's households.

The prevalence of mental health issues in Australia's multicultural communities is no greater than in the population at large, but Australians from culturally and linguistically diverse, CALD, backgrounds face specific challenges. Concepts associated with mental health sometimes do not exist in other languages or backgrounds. Psychiatric nurse Sione Vaka has noted that there is no direct translation in some Pacific languages for the word "depression". Fatima Mohamed has pointed out that the phrase "mental health" does not even occur in Somali. "In Somalia, you're either crazy or you're okay," she added. "Even if they're sick, they won't tell you what's wrong. They keep it in until it's really bad."

This illustrates another obstacle. Whilst stigmas surrounding mental illness are common, these stigmas are often more pronounced in CALD communities and need to be specifically targeted. At the same time, it is essential that the help provided is culturally competent. This goes far beyond just token access to interpreters.

It is good when mental health practitioners can amplify "cultural concordance" between themselves and their CALD patients. Psychiatrist Siale Foliaki calls this practising "from a place of intimacy", where he can be "enmeshed in [a] client's world".

But a perfect match is not always possible. Another option is when mental health practitioners are able to leverage "their [own] ethnicity, religion, experience practising overseas, speaking languages other than English and/or existing cultural knowledge and experience to effectively communicate with their ... patients".

Professionals who come from a non-dominant culture or who have lived where they were part of a non-dominant culture often find it easier to relate to patients from a variety of multicultural backgrounds. As one doctor reported:

Having lived myself in another situation where you don't understand the language, you don't understand the culture and everything, I guess it makes me a bit more patient and also makes me try and understand where they are coming from so that I can better communicate with them.

For this reason, policy in New South Wales states:

Diversity in the local population needs to be reflected in the skill base and composition of the mental health workforce.

This is why Mr Vaka, the psychiatric nurse mentioned earlier, actively works to recruit nurses from CALD backgrounds.

Madam Speaker, much has already been made in this chamber of the delays in implementing an ACT office for mental health. These delays are to be regretted, but I would suggest that they also provide the Minister for Mental Health with an opportunity to make sure that important multicultural dimensions are not overlooked in the creation of this office.

In light of the fact that the adult mental health unit at Canberra Hospital is currently experiencing what the union has called a “crippling shortage” of permanent psychiatrists and that, as a consequence, “ACT Health is continuing to undertake a national and international recruitment activity to fill vacant positions”, I specifically recommend to Mr Rattenbury that professionals with demonstrable cultural competence are specifically targeted as part of this recruitment drive and that cultural sensitivity be embedded in everything this office does. Madam Speaker, I look forward to hearing more on this topic from the minister.

Harmony Day

MR STEEL (Murrumbidgee) (5.43): I am delighted to speak today on Harmony Day 2018 which is celebrated tomorrow, 21 March, and every year to coincide with the United Nations International Day for the Elimination of Discrimination, symbolising our city’s inclusive spirit and the ACT government’s commitment to working towards a more harmonious and inclusive society. Harmony Day is a true celebration of the diverse cultural and linguistic background of our city. Australia is a multicultural country, and I see this every day in my staff who come from a diverse array of backgrounds and nationalities including Jamaican, Korean, Polish, Ukrainian, Swedish and English.

The ACT government values the benefits of a multicultural city that promotes inclusivity, diversity of culture and language, and the value of tolerance. Canberra is one of the most multicultural cities in Australia. We know from the 2011 census that 37 per cent of the ACT population reported being born overseas or having at least one parent born overseas. The 2016 census also showed an increase of households speaking a language other than English from 21.1 percent to 23.8 per cent. The ACT is home to over 100 embassies and high commissions with individuals from over 200 nations who reside in our city and call it home.

While our National Multicultural Festival, which was held in February, is a fantastic celebration of this diversity it is great to see other events occurring throughout the year in Canberra. On Saturday I was delighted to participate in the celebration of the festival of colours, Holi Mela, and the celebration of Harmony Day. The event was hosted by the India Australia Association of Canberra at Glebe Park and represented a wonderful celebration of multiculturalism, inclusivity and social harmony in our community, featuring live music, dance performances, food stalls showcasing authentic Indian food, games and interactive events for children attending the event as well as an explosion of colour which the festival is well known for.

Many speeches were given in the spirit of social harmony and inclusivity, and the ACT government has been working to create a more inclusive society where our multicultural communities have the opportunity to actively engage with us as a government and in the wider community.

I am proud to live in a city that is inclusive, and Harmony Day is a significant day in the hearts and minds of many Australians and Canberrans. I would like to thank the community groups who have engaged with the government to make Harmony Day tomorrow such a success. I would also like to extend my thanks to the India Australia Association, their president, Sandipan Mitra, and all the volunteers and organisers of the Holi Mela. I would also like to acknowledge those in my community who are from a culturally or linguistically diverse background and recognise the strength through diversity that they provide our multicultural community here in Canberra.

Women—self-defence

MS LEE (Kurrajong) (5.46): Jasiri means fearless. I know that all members from both sides of the chamber marked International Women's Day on 7 March in different ways but I had the very real pleasure of being asked to participate in something quite different. I was approached by two amazing women, Caitlin Figueiredo and Ashleigh Streeter, whom I have spoken about in this very chamber, to lead a women's self-defence class for our women MLAs and some of their constituents.

As a child, Caitlin Figueiredo was abused in secret by an extended family member for no other reason than that she was a girl. Wanting to help other Australian children and young women in similar situations, Caitlin created Jasiri Australia with a group of friends in Canberra. Together they established the world's first pay it forward self-defence social enterprise offering a range of pathways to help survivors of abuse. Through their self-defence classes Jasiri Australia aims to give women and girls the skills they need to become their own advocates for change. Jasiri also funds life-changing programs with 100 per cent of the profits from its online store and events going directly to support the Alannah and Madeline Foundation. A few months ago I took the opportunity to attend the first class taught by taekwondo 3rd Dan champion and model, Lorna Munro, who, I know, has come on board to be Jasiri Australia's self-defence expert.

In Australia on average one woman is murdered each week. Sixty thousand children live in emergency accommodation because of domestic and family violence or homelessness. When I was becoming a teenager my parents ensured that my sisters and I were taught taekwondo, a way to instil in us some confidence, discipline, some skills to look after ourselves should the need arise and to learn a little more about our culture because taekwondo is a Korean martial art.

After years of training, by year 10 I had achieved my black belt and by year 12 I had achieved my second Dan and was teaching classes on a regular basis. This high school extracurricular activity gave me the opportunity to continue teaching taekwondo when I moved to Canberra for university, and it was not long before I was asked to teach a few women's self-defence classes. Mind you, that was many years ago.

But to be approached by Caitlin and Ashleigh to put on this class was something that really took me back to hone my taekwondo skills and I was able to teach a few basic self-defence moves based on the taekwondo principle. Perhaps it is no surprise that, of course, the biggest and most immediate tool in our defence kit is our voice. Anyone walking past the Theo Notaras building on that day may well have wondered at the number of very loud voices counting in Korean and sounding very threatening.

I thank and acknowledge my colleagues Ms Lawder, Miss C Burch and Ms Le Couteur for really getting into the swing of things and looking and sounding very self-defence competent post class. I thank Caitlin and Ashleigh for their tireless enthusiasm and advocacy for so many things, and it is no wonder that Caitlin, Jasiri founder and CEO, was named ACT Young Woman of the Year this year and Ashleigh, Jasiri's chief operating officer, was named ACT Woman of the Year.

We are, indeed, blessed to have these two outstanding young women here in the ACT, and I am also honoured to have been asked to become Jasiri Australia's first ambassador. I know that I will need to work hard to keep pace with these two dynamos but I absolutely support their hard work, their advocacy and their enthusiasm to make the world a better and safer place for those impacted by violence. I look forward to working with them and the entire Canberra community to, indeed, be fearless.

Mental health—fundraising event

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) (5.51): I rise tonight to speak about the Puka Up Foundation who are currently undertaking a bike ride from Sydney to Melbourne to raise awareness of suicide and suicide prevention. There are 28 riders taking part in the challenging eight-day, 413-kilometre event. It is an important issue and it is bringing much-needed attention to the issue of suicide, an issue that continues to impact families and communities across the country on a daily basis.

I had the pleasure of going out and joining the team for part of their ride on Sunday. I can confess I did not ride that far with them but I enjoyed joining them. They are doing a great job and are a very committed bunch of people. They were riding through Canberra on Sunday. It was a hot and windy day, as members will recall, but they were all in great spirits.

Puka Up is a new social enterprise founded by one of Australia's leading mental health advocates, former AFL footballer, Wayne Schwass. Having battled silently with his own mental health for much of his sporting career, Wayne is now a dedicated mental health advocate committed to raising awareness about mental health, emotional wellbeing and suicide prevention. In the Hindi language Puka means authentic and genuine. The foundation has come from Wayne's own personal experience and his desire to do something but he is really seeking to turn that into something much bigger and to have a significant impact on the community.

The significance of the distance of the trip is that in 2016 in Australia 2,866 people tragically lost their lives to suicide. On average seven people per day die by suicide and it is estimated a further 65,300 people attempt suicide every year. The 1,433 kilometres represents a kilometre for every two people who took their own lives in 2016. The aim of the event is to create a national conversation about suicide prevention. It is a difficult subject to discuss but the need for these conversations has never been more important.

The riders are currently on their way to Albury, having started this morning in Wagga. They did leave Canberra on Monday morning with that very chilly start. Members will recall it was probably the coldest morning we have had all year. They battled the heat and wind on Sunday afternoon and then got up again on Monday morning to ride 266 kilometres in one day to Wagga. The ride finishes at Etihad Stadium this Friday to coincide with the start of the AFL season in Melbourne.

I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the entire team, particularly to thank Wayne Schwass and the Puka Up team for having me along on their ride on Sunday and for their efforts in starting an important conversation about mental health and suicide prevention. I would also like to acknowledge the sponsors of the trip, whose names I will not read out now but who are all acknowledged through the Puka Up website and Facebook page, particularly the 28 riders who come from all walks of life.

I had a chance to chat to quite a few of them. They have taken this on for a range of reasons, some of them quite personal and some of them simply for a desire to contribute to the community and raise awareness of this very important issue. I wish them all strong tail winds and few punctures on their trip to Melbourne.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

The Assembly adjourned at 5.55 pm.

Schedule of amendments

Schedule 1

Workplace Legislation Amendment Bill 2018

Amendment moved by Miss C Burch

1

Clause 4

Proposed new section 246 (2)

Page 3, line 8—

omit proposed new section 246 (2), substitute

- (2) This section only applies to overpayments made after the commencement of this section.
-