



Debates

WEEKLY HANSARD

Legislative Assembly for the ACT

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Tuesday, 23 October 2018

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Tuesday, 23 October 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.

Leave of absence

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

That leave of absence be granted to:

- (1) Mr Ramsay for today for personal reasons.
- (2) Ms Cheyne and Mr Milligan for this sitting week on official parliamentary duties.

Visitors

MADAM SPEAKER: Members, I wish to acknowledge the presence in the chamber of the Hon Sue Hickey, Speaker of the Tasmanian House of the Assembly. Ms Hickey is accompanied by the Clerk of the Assembly, Mr Shane Donnelly. On behalf of all members, welcome here to Canberra and to the ACT Assembly.

Land Tax (Community Housing Exemption) Amendment Bill 2018

Ruling by Speaker

MADAM SPEAKER: Members, before I call the Clerk for petitions, I wish to make a statement in relation to the Land Tax (Community Housing Exemption) Amendment Bill 2018, which is listed for debate tomorrow as order of the day No 1—private members' business.

The bill was introduced on Wednesday, 19 September by Mr Mark Parton MLA. As stated in the explanatory statement for the bill, the intent of the legislation is to create an incentive for residential housing owners to provide rental properties to the ACT community housing sector by exempting them from the obligation to pay tax under the Land Tax Act 2004.

The bill does not contravene the provisions of standing orders 200, 201 and 201A, as it is not a proposed enactment for the appropriation of public money. However, as members are probably aware, the Assembly passed a resolution on 23 November 1995 which stated:

That this Assembly reaffirms the principles of the Westminster system embodied in the 'financial initiative of the Crown' and the limits that initiative places on the non-Executive members in moving amendments other than those to reduce items of proposed expenditure.

That resolution was moved, debated and agreed to prior to the resumption of consideration of the Appropriation Bill 1995-1996 at the detail stage. The debate on the matter raised broad principles of importance relating to the financial initiative of the Crown and its application to the territory's system of government.

It is fair to say that the Assembly moved to more formally embody, through the resolution, the doctrine of the financial initiative of the Crown in anticipation of a number of amendments to the appropriation bill that had been foreshadowed by private members. With the resolution having been passed, later that day the Speaker ruled that the amendments were out of order on the basis that they offended the recently passed resolution.

The precise limits of the 1995 resolution have not, to date, been tested, particularly in relation to the constraints that it imposes on non-executive members' capacity to initiate or amend revenue legislation. It is arguable, however, that the Land Tax (Community Housing Exemption) Amendment Bill 2018 does encroach on the financial initiative of the Crown when considered in its broader sense. I am advised that there does not appear to be a precedent whereby a non-executive member has presented a bill seeking to amend a tax. Standing order 275 states:

Any question relating to procedure or the conduct of business of the Assembly not provided for in these standing orders or practices of the Assembly, shall be decided according to the practice at the time prevailing in the House of Representatives in the Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia.

In a 2013 paper exploring constitutional and procedural positions relating to the financial initiative at the commonwealth level, *The Law Making Powers of the Houses: Three Aspects of the Financial Initiative*, the House of Representatives Clerk's office observed that:

In relation to taxation, House practice, again reflecting the principles of the financial initiative, is that only a minister or parliamentary secretary may move an amendment to increase or extend the scope of the charge proposed beyond the total already existing under an existing act.

Standing order 179 of the House of Representatives provides that:

- (a) Only a Minister may initiate a proposal to impose, increase, or decrease a tax or duty, or change the scope of any charge.
- (b) Only a Minister may move an amendment to the proposal which increases or extends the scope of the charge proposed beyond the total already existing under any Act of Parliament.
- (c) A Member who is not a Minister may move an amendment to the proposal which does not increase or extend the scope of the charge proposed beyond the total already existing under any Act of Parliament.

In relation to taxation, amendment to reduce the tax imposed by a bill is in order and thus, in moving an amendment to a government's bill, a private member may do what

he or she cannot do by introducing a private member's bill; that is, propose the alleviation of a tax.

Based on standing order 275, and the prevailing practice of the House of Representatives practice, as provided for in its standing order 179, I therefore rule Mr Parton's bill to be out of order.

Standing order 170 states that every bill not prepared according to the standing orders shall be ruled out of order by the Speaker and withdrawn from the notice paper. Accordingly, I advise the Assembly that Mr Parton's bill will be withdrawn from the notice paper.

For the information of members, I will table a copy of the Clerk's advice on the matter, as well as a copy of the House of Representatives document that is referred to in the Clerk's advice. I also add that matters that are directly relevant to the financial initiative of the Crown and section 65 of the self-government act have been referred to the standing committee on admin and procedure for inquiry and report. I expect that additional clarity will be brought to bear on these issues following the Assembly's receipt of that committee's report.

I present the following papers:

Land Tax (Community Housing Exemption) Amendment Bill 2018—Copy of Clerk's advice to the Speaker, dated 22 October 2018.

The Law Making Powers of the Houses—Three Aspects of the Financial Initiative—Updated notes for Members, prepared by the Clerk's Office, House of Representatives, June 2012.

Standing orders—suspension

MR WALL (Brindabella) (10.07): I will move that Mr Parton's land tax amendment bill be reinstated on the notice paper and that so much of standing orders be suspended so as to allow order of the day No 1 to proceed for debate in tomorrow's sitting, being 24 October 2018.

MADAM SPEAKER: So you move the suspension of standing orders, Mr Wall?

MR WALL: That was the motion, Madam Speaker—that and the reinstatement of Mr Parton's motion.

MADAM SPEAKER: I think you need leave to ask for it to be reinstated, but you do not need leave to suspend standing orders.

MR WALL: All right; let's do the first one first. I move:

That so much of the standing orders be suspended as would prevent order of the day No 1, Private Members' business, as listed on the *Notice Paper*, to proceed for debate at tomorrow's sitting, 24 October 2018.

The ruling on Mr Parton's bill—a bill which seeks to provide a solution to the housing affordability problem that so many renters in Canberra are facing—seems to be based purely on an interpretation of standing orders. It is worth noting that the interpretation of these standing orders is also currently before the admin and procedure committee for inquiry, looking at how we manage and interpret this going forward.

There is a question for us, in that we can make material changes tomorrow to seek to bring about a change to introduce more affordable rental accommodation in the territory to help out struggling Canberra families. A motion that passed this Assembly indicated intent to do this earlier in the year. It seems that there has been a commitment to support language in moves towards this space. But when a bill is brought forward to implement the changes required to reduce the cost of rental properties in the ACT we see a blockage being brought about.

This is purely an interpretation of standing orders. Frequently standing orders in this place are suspended to allow the passage of bills, motions or discussions that suit the will of the Assembly. This is an opportunity today for the Labor government and the Greens crossbench to show their support, to actually make a change and provide the opportunity for more affordable, more accessible rental accommodation in Canberra by supporting the suspension of standing orders and the debate of this bill tomorrow.

What the government seemingly has failed to recognise over many, many years is that consistently increasing taxes fails to bring about cost efficiencies anywhere. They have routinely increased property taxes in this town. The impact of that has been driving up the cost of housing affordability. Rents are dearer. Property purchases are dearer. Rates are dearer.

Here is an opportunity, Madam Speaker, for the Assembly to bring about legislative change that seeks to address this. It opens the door to property owners, property investors in the ACT, to enter into a scheme that provides genuine, affordable properties for the struggling families in Canberra. This suspension of standing orders is first and foremost a decision on whether or not there is an intent in this place to bring about meaningful change to the affordable housing crisis that faces so many territorians here in Canberra.

From time to time private members' bills have passed this place that have had a financial implication. We regularly see it. It is fair to say that just about every bill that comes through this place from a private member has a financial implication in it in some way, form or shape. The question here is not an interpretation of standing orders but whether or not there is a commitment to reducing housing unaffordability in the ACT.

Do we want to continue the trajectory that we are following, to match Sydney and Melbourne as one of the most unaffordable cities to live in? Or do we want to take a stand, make a difference and see that Canberra families doing it tough have an alternative—a go-between between social housing and what is ever increasingly an unaffordable private housing sector?

This is a genuine move, a genuine change. I put it to the crossbench and I put it to those members opposite in the government: stand up for your values. Show the people of Canberra that you do have a conscience, that you care, and that you are doing all that you can—all that is in your power, all that is before you to make things a little bit easier. Or you can pay lip service, as is often the case, and fail to take any meaningful action.

The Canberra Liberals believe in affordable rental. We believe in doing everything we can to reduce the housing cost burden that so many families are facing. And that is why Mr Parton has brought this bill forward on behalf of the opposition. We stand by it. We do not shirk from the fight or the debate on how we go about reducing the cost of housing in the ACT. We look forward to having the debate tomorrow.

MR GENTLEMAN (Brindabella—Minister for the Environment and Heritage, Minister for Planning and Land Management, Minister for Police and Emergency Services and Minister assisting the Chief Minister on Advanced Technology and Space Industries) (10.12): The motion for the suspension of standing orders should not be supported. Let us be very clear. This motion from the opposition is not about the merits or otherwise of Mr Parton’s bill. What this motion is about is the very core of our democratic system. Indeed, it is about the very function of the style of government that is in place in our territory and across Australia.

I draw the Assembly’s attention to the very clear and eloquent advice that the Clerk put together on this matter. In particular, I wish to draw members’ attention to paragraph 1.6 of that advice. That paragraph makes it very clear that by agreeing to this motion the opposition is asking the Assembly to wilfully disregard section 65 of the self-government act and to disrespect, to paraphrase—

Mr Wall interjecting—

MADAM SPEAKER: Mr Gentleman, can you resume your seat? Members on my left, Mr Wall was heard in silence. Please afford that same respect to others. Mr Gentleman.

MR GENTLEMAN: To paraphrase the advice, in paragraph 1.6: the principle is of the highest constitutional importance. The opposition, the acolytes of Abbott, Dutton, Morrison and Seselja—the supposed bastions of conservatism and tradition—are happy to junk constitutional principles, and indeed the law, when it suits their needs. But they are not so willing when it comes to protecting our community or standing up for the territory.

We all remember the debate in recent times, the attacks from other members of the Abbott, Dutton, Morrison and Seselja Liberals. They were attacks on our multicultural society; attacks on our LGBTI Canberrans; attacks on territory rights, our rights as Canberrans. They were all led by the Liberals on the basis of tradition. No words from those opposite in this debate, no couching of policy merit or otherwise, will take away from what this suspension of standing orders is really about.

It is nothing to do with the merits of Mr Parton's bill because those merits have already been debated in a motion brought previously before this place. It all has to do with trashing principles and tradition to seek the political needs of the Abbott, Dutton, Morrison and Seselja Canberra Liberals.

Opposition members interjecting—

MR GENTLEMAN: This is why the motion should not be supported.

Mr Wall interjecting—

MADAM SPEAKER: Mr Wall! Members, you interject again. Mr Wall was heard in silence. If you interject again, you will be warned. Mr Gentleman.

MR GENTLEMAN: Instead, we should get on with the business of the Assembly. We should get back to delivering what really matters for Canberrans, making our city even more inclusive, progressive and connected—things that this territory government has been doing and will continue to do.

MR PARTON (Brindabella) (10.15): What a sad day for democracy in the ACT. We are elected by the people to bring ideas to this chamber and to debate them. That is what they expect us to do. This week I intended to bring on for debate an idea that we have already agreed on. We have already agreed on it. We had the motion less than a month ago. We have already decided that it is a great idea. This was Ms Le Couteur's motion. Now, for the most technical of reasons, we cannot even debate it in here. What a sad day for democracy that we cannot represent the people who voted for us, that we cannot represent the people who are languishing at the end of public housing waiting lists and who cannot afford rentals in the private sector.

Time and again when I am out talking to the good people of Tuggeranong they say to me, "Why can't you politicians just work together to find solutions?" Let me tell you, Madam Speaker, I wish that we could. I wish that we could. Let me remind all those in the chamber that oppositions are not supposed to be an impediment to good governance. Oppositions are supposed to be imperative to achieving good governance. You can roll your eyes all you like, Chief Minister. How ironic will it be if Ms Le Couteur votes against this? How ironic will it be?

How bizarre will it be if the Canberra Liberals fight here in the chamber just for the right to debate this bill, which is, in essence, the same as Ms Le Couteur's motion? This land tax rebate was so important to Ms Le Couteur a month ago. She was out talking to the media; she was writing op-eds; she was pleading for us all to pass the motion, which we did, even allowing the minister to water it down somewhat. How bizarre would it be if Ms Le Couteur voted for it not even to be given the chance to be debated, let alone implemented as law in the ACT?

You Greens can talk the talk all day, but I do not know that you can walk the walk. Here is your chance to prove me wrong. Here is your chance to prove the voters wrong. If you want to be a genuine crossbench, this your chance.

Members interjecting—

MADAM SPEAKER: Members on my left, you are asking to suspend standing orders. Have some respect and regard for those that want to participate in the debate.

MR RATTENBURY (Kurrajong) (10.18): It is quite clear that the Greens support Mr Parton's legislation and we—

Members interjecting—

MADAM SPEAKER: Members, I have said that you will be warned very soon and it is only 10.20.

MR RATTENBURY: We indicated clearly to Mr Parton and his colleagues, and also to the government, that we intended to support Mr Parton's legislation. Of course, it was Ms Le Couteur who originally moved the motion and who floated this idea as one that we think will make a positive contribution to housing affordability.

The problem we have is that you cannot just unilaterally decide you want to change the rules when they do not suit you. That is the dilemma we face today. That is the bottom line here. We were given the advice from the Clerk yesterday. We sat down and carefully considered this overnight. We are of the view that this advice is sound. We do not particularly like it. It does not suit the outcome we want to achieve. But it is quite clear, once you go through it, that the application of standing order 179 from the federal parliament, which operates in default in the ACT in the absence of our standing orders, is explicit on this matter. It gives a clear indication that the financial prerogative sits with the executive and it does not sit with the legislature.

As members of the crossbench, that is not a position that always thrills us. There have been occasions on which we have wanted to do things in this place that we have been unable to do directly through a legislative pathway. That is how it works for us sometimes. But we accept the principles of how this place works. We have also at times sought to change the rules. But you cannot just change the rules ad hoc because it suits you today. If we are going to change these rules, we need to do that through the administration and procedure committee and through this place passing new standing orders that allow that to be a standard practice of this chamber, not one that suits the Liberal Party.

I think we have been shown the true motivations of the Liberal Party on this this morning, in both Mr Parton's speech, in which he directed quite some energy and potentially vitriol towards Ms Le Couteur, and then in the interjections and catcalling that came across the chamber as I stood up. Even before I got to open my mouth we heard the catcalling coming from the opposition. It is all about the politics of this matter and not about the substance.

Mr Parton: We just want to make it happen. We just want to make it happen, Shane.

MR RATTENBURY: We are hearing this interjection across the chamber again from Mr Parton, “We just want to make it happen.” Mr Parton, go and read the rules. We are stuck here. We do not like it but this is the—

Members interjecting—

MADAM SPEAKER: Members, please!

MR RATTENBURY: I know what will happen, because they have already done it once. The Liberal Party are going to walk out of this place and they are going to sledge the Greens in every way they can by saying that we do not support affordable rentals. I cannot be more unequivocal in this place about our support for this.

But we also come to this place and we accept that there are rules and there are boundaries. So we will not be supporting a suspension of standing orders for these purposes. We are very happy to have further discussion with both the Liberal Party and the government on how the financial prerogative works in this place. But I am not prepared to do it as a one-off on this bill, as part of some political wedge exercise by the Liberal Party.

We are in the middle of a review of standing orders by the administration and procedure committee. This has not been brought up in that committee by a member of the Liberal Party. The Liberal Party did not even make a submission to that process. This is not a serious effort at changing the rules. This is a political move and we should see it for what it is.

We do want this legislation changed and we will continue to work on it. We will continue to make the point to the minister for housing. She is due to report back to the Assembly, I think during this sitting period, on the last motion. We will use that opportunity. We will continue to make the case, but we will not support a suspension of standing orders for this purpose.

MR COE (Yerrabi—Leader of the Opposition) (10.22): Madam Speaker, I note that there are 30 seconds left for this debate. In light of that, I want to be very clear that the Greens have an opportunity today to bring about cheaper rentals in Canberra and they are choosing not to do so because they would rather hide behind the standing orders. They are letting down thousands of Canberrans that want to have some hope of having cheaper rentals. All you need to do is suspend standing orders. Instead, what you are doing is dealing yourselves and the opposition out of the legislative process. It is a sham and they are letting down thousands of Canberrans.

MADAM SPEAKER: The time for debate has expired, Mr Coe.

Question put:

That the motion be agreed to.

The Assembly voted—

Ayes 8		Noes 11	
Miss C Burch	Mr Parton	Mr Barr	Ms Orr
Mr Coe	Mr Wall	Ms J Burch	Mr Pettersson
Mrs Dunne		Ms Cody	Mr Rattenbury
Mr Hanson		Ms Fitzharris	Mr Steel
Mrs Kikkert		Mr Gentleman	Ms Stephen-Smith
Ms Lawder		Ms Le Couteur	

Question resolved in the negative.

Petitions

The following petitions were lodged for presentation:

Phillip precinct code—petition 12-18

By Ms Le Couteur, from 83 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 significant height (24 storeys) of the WOVA development (DA 201833492) substantially overshadows the Bellerive Retirement Village.

Your petitioners, therefore, request the Assembly to call on the Government to amend the Phillip Precinct Code to:

- position the buildings so that shadowing is over the structured carpark to the south of the Tradies site and not over the residents in the Bellerive Retirement Village, and
- reduce the heights (to a maximum of 48m) and the number of buildings.

Phillip precinct code—petition 20-18

By Ms Le Couteur, from 435 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 significant height (24 storeys) of the WOVA development (DA 201833492) substantially overshadows the Bellerive Retirement Village.

Your petitioners therefore request the Assembly amend the Phillip Precinct Code to:

- position the buildings so that shadowing is over the structured carpark to the south of the Tradies site and not over the residents in the Bellerive Retirement Village, and

- reduce the heights (to a maximum of 48m) and the number of buildings.

School bus services—petition 17-18

By **Miss C Burch**, from 528 residents:

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

The following residents of the ACT draw to the attention of the Assembly the ACT Government's proposed cancellation of most current school bus services will force students as young as 5yrs to catch public buses to and from school and go through major interchanges to catch connecting buses. Many students who currently catch one school bus will need to catch three public buses and go through major interchanges.

The ACT Government's public consultation was not advertised well enough for many Canberrans to be aware of it. The consultation has ended with much of the public not realising these changes were being discussed. We are concerned about the validity of the data used by the ACT Government to make the decisions to cut school bus services.

Many parents don't feel comfortable letting their young children catch public buses to and from school and will drive them instead, increasing traffic at school drop off and collection times which many people already know to be a fraught time. We would like to think we live in a safe city where every person is wonderful and safe to be around. Sadly, this is not reality.

Your petitioners, therefore, request the Assembly to call on the ACT Government to reopen public consultation on proposed school bus changes; consult thoroughly with all major stakeholders of the school bus services, including school administrators, teachers, parents and students; keep the safety of our children as a priority; and retain all current school bus services throughout 2019.

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.

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

Ministerial responses

The following responses to petitions have been lodged:

Tuggeranong town centre masterplan—petition 11-18

By **Mr Steel**, Minister for City Services, dated 4 October 2018, in response to a petition lodged by Ms J Burch on 14 August 2018 concerning progressing elements of the Tuggeranong town centre master plan.

The response read as follows:

Thank you for your letter of 14 August 2018 regarding Petition No 11-18 lodged by Ms Joy Burch MLA regarding improvements to the Tuggeranong Town Centre.

I acknowledge Tuggeranong residents' request to improve their Town Centre in line with the Tuggeranong Town Centre Master Plan.

I am pleased to advise that this work is underway and commenced in 2016-17 with improvements to Anketell Street, between Pittman Street and Reed Street North, in the Tuggeranong Town Centre. A preliminary design for creating a more pedestrian friendly and inviting Town Centre environment in this area was prepared in consultation with the Tuggeranong community and a portion of the design, the entry area to the laneway from Anketell Street to the lake, was constructed.

A feasibility study and concept plans for improving the laneway connection from Anketell Street to the Lake Tuggeranong foreshore were completed in April 2018 in consultation with key public stakeholders including the Tuggeranong Community Council, other community representatives, leaseholders and traders. It is expected that construction of works in line with the concept plans will commence in the next twelve months, further the gazebo in the laneway was removed in June 2018.

The 2018-19 Active Travel program has provisioned \$4.0 million to continue Tuggeranong Town Centre improvements over the next three financial years and includes the detailed design and construction improvements in the laneway from Anketell Street to Lake Tuggeranong. Community consultation on the concept plans completed in 2018 for the laneway upgrade will begin shortly.

I trust that this information assures you that the concerns regarding the laneway are being addressed.

Charnwood group centre recycling bins—petition 16-18

By **Mr Steel**, Minister for City Services, dated 5 October 2018, in response to a petition lodged by Mrs Kikkert on 14 August 2018 concerning the supply of recycling bins at the Charnwood group centre.

The response read as follows:

Thank you for your letter of 14 August 2018 regarding petition No 16-18 lodged by Mrs Elizabeth Kikkert MLA requesting public recycling bins at Charnwood Group Centre.

The ACT Government is aware of the increasing community demand for recycling options at town centres and local shopping centres. However, such requests for additional services must be considered in the light of many other competing priorities. In an effort to better understand community expectations and views about the relative priorities for the provision of municipal services, Transport Canberra and City Services (TCCS) has recently completed the

engagement phase of the Better Suburbs deliberative democracy initiative. The community-authored Better Suburbs Statement was made publicly available in September 2018. This statement will assist in guiding future decision-making.

Currently, public recycling bins are provided in the Canberra City area (Civic) and Braddon. Privately operated recycling bins are also provided by many business and in some privately owned shopping centres. Although no recycling bins are scheduled to be placed at the Charnwood Shops, the request for recycling bins at this location has been noted. The ACT Government has committed to install more recycling bins across the city to increase recycling rates and improve the amenity and health of our waterways, although this rollout has not yet commenced. In the meantime, members of the public are encouraged to take their recyclable waste home and utilise the fortnightly kerbside recycling service.

The ACT Government is very conscious of the need to reduce landfill waste and has this year established a Container Deposit Scheme (CDS) in the ACT. This scheme is expected to significantly reduce the number of recyclable drink containers that are left in public spaces or deposited into general waste or recycling bins.

More information about the Better Suburbs Citizens Forum and the topics covered can be accessed at <https://www.yoursay.act.gov.au/BetterSuburbs>, while details about the CDS including drop off points can be found on the TCCS website.

Thank you for bringing this petition to my attention. I trust that the information I have provided is of assistance.

Phillip precinct code—petitions 12-18 and 20-18

MS LE COUTEUR (Murrumbidgee) (10.27), by leave: I want to talk briefly about the petition on Woden. It is a great outpouring of people power, with the people having their say on developments in their community. Those of you who are not Woden residents will not know particularly what I am talking about—the proposed very large building at the Woden Tradies site, now owned by Geocon and known as WOVA. It would overshadow Bellerive, which is a retirement community that is east-west facing, so the majority of people living there only get three hours of sun now. It is a retirement community, so these people spend a lot of their daylight hours at home. The proposed development was going to severely impact the sun to those residents.

As the Clerk has just reported, there has been a petition with over 500 signatures on this subject. I can also report—as the Clerk was, of course, not able to report—that I am sure it is partially as a result of the petition and the accompanying movement from the people that the plans for the WOVA development have been amended. While I know not everybody is 100 per cent happy, I also know the community as a whole is much happier with the amended plans than they were with the previous plans. This is an example of where our system had some issues with it but it has in fact produced a better result than would otherwise have happened.

School bus services—petition 17-18

MISS C BURCH (Kurrajong) (10.29), by leave: I rise once again to voice community concerns about this government's unfair and unsafe cuts to school bus services across our city. A few weeks ago in this place Minister Fitzharris accused the Canberra Liberals of scaremongering on this issue. The minister denied that the community's concerns regarding children's safety were legitimate and maintained that children as young as five would be perfectly safe on public buses and at interchanges.

More recently we have seen an extraordinary backflip by the minister, with 78 school buses previously on the chopping block now being maintained. Why? If there were no safety concerns and we were just scaremongering, why have we now seen such a backflip? And why, if there were no safety concerns, do we have today a petition with signatures from over 500 parents who do not want their children catching public buses?

While the Canberra Liberals welcome the minister's backflip, this is still not good enough. We still have over 50 schools without dedicated school bus services and over 30 primary schools without dedicated school bus services. The government still has not adequately explained why some schools have their buses back while other schools are still being disadvantaged. These concerns are real, these concerns are genuine and these concerns deserve to be heard.

**Economic Development and Tourism—Standing Committee
Report 4**

MR HANSON (Murrumbidgee) (10.31): I present the following report:

Economic Development and Tourism—Standing Committee—Report 4—*Inquiry into Government Procurement (Secure Local Jobs) Amendment Bill 2018*, dated 28 September 2018, together with a copy of the extracts of the relevant minutes of proceedings.

I move:

That the report be noted.

This is the fourth report of the Standing Committee on Economic Development and Tourism. The report was circulated out of session on 28 September. On 2 August this year the Assembly referred the Government Procurement (Secure Local Jobs) Amendment Bill 2018 to the committee, to report back no later than the end of September 2018. The committee received nine submissions and held a public hearing, and 12 witnesses appeared.

The committee noted at the outset of this inquiry that the subject matter before it was one on which the members held strong views and that the committee was unlikely to be able to reach agreement on a number of areas. We are realists in this committee; the committee agreed to use this report to summarise the evidence presented to it and

make recommendations on areas where the committee was in full agreement. The committee has made six recommendations. Annex A and annex B of the report contain recommendations that not all members could agree upon.

On behalf of the committee, I would like to thank all of the witnesses and submitters for their contribution to this inquiry. I commend the report to the Assembly. I indicate that I will seek leave after other members of the committee have spoken to make some comments on the report at annex A, on which the other members of the committee did not agree.

MR PETTERSSON (Yerrabi) (10.33): I thank my fellow committee members; they were the most fruitful committee members one could wish for. I also wish to thank Minister Stephen-Smith for all of her hard work on the secure local jobs legislation, as well as the stakeholders who contributed to making our inquiry such a success.

I will very briefly talk about the recommendations that were adopted by the committee. You can tell a lot about the government by its policies, but not everything. If it prioritises lower costs over workers' rights and conditions, it is a pretty poor government. Short-changing workers or jeopardising their safety at any level of procurement should not be accepted. I am pleased to say that the committee agrees that the government should use its procurement power to enforce high ethical and labour standards.

The recommendations that are contained within this report are sound, and this bill represents some of the strongest pro-worker legislation in this country. This legislation will set the bar high for industry and stop the rorters and shoddy operators from abusing the taxpayers and their workers. This will level the playing field for honest small and medium businesses who do the right thing but are underbid by unscrupulous operators. It really should not be something that is up for debate. How can anyone argue that we should not prioritise the rights of workers to get paid properly and not get ripped off by dodgy bosses?

There are six recommendations in this report. They make a good contribution to the bill. I urge the government to strongly consider recommendation 6 and move towards public auditing instead of private auditing, as this will deliver better outcomes for all involved. This report clears the way for this legislation to move on to the next stage and, hopefully, become law.

MS ORR (Yerrabi) (10.35): The intent behind the Government Procurement (Secure Local Jobs) Amendment Bill 2018 has overall been supported by the community. Submissions to the inquiry into the bill referred to the Standing Committee on Economic Development and Tourism highlighted this. Across industry and representative groups, the consensus view was in support of the principle behind this legislation. The Master Builders Association, the Canberra Business Chamber, the Property Council, Rider Levett Bucknall and CTR Pacific commercial bricklaying show the wide agreement on the principle.

It is important to focus on the fact that we all agree on the principle of this legislation, as this provides the context for what we are doing here. Everyone—industry, unions,

government and the public—agrees we need to be setting higher standards in our procurement system. The community is calling on us, the ACT government, to take a more ethical approach in the way we procure goods and services.

Ethics are critical in procurement and will only become more important as technology and consumer sentiment change. The shifts in our economic systems in recent decades mean there is a growing importance for governments to lead by example when making purchases. Where value and cost management were once the primary focus in procurement, the community is coming to expect more from governments in who they contract to provide goods and services.

In general, as a society we are becoming increasingly engaged in the impacts of our own purchasing decisions. Buying our groceries, we are more mindful of the impacts of single-use plastics, food wastage and pesticides, with many people willing to pay more per unit to avoid these. When we buy clothes, there is an increasing willingness to ensure that what we purchase delivers better conditions for garment workers and uses more sustainable inputs and production techniques. This customer-led activism has put pressure on businesses and corporations to focus on their social responsibilities when procuring suppliers, and companies are coming to find that ensuring that goods and services are being procured ethically is simply the right thing to do.

The bill at the centre of this inquiry is a further application of acting on what is simply the right thing to do. It is evident from the responses received in the inquiry that we agree that the intent of the bill is the right thing for us to pursue. It is evident in the submission from CTR Pacific commercial bricklaying, who said:

We believe there is a serious problem in the Territory construction industry when it comes to compliance with workplace laws we believe that the reforms suggested in the Regulations would be a huge help to local businesses doing the right thing.

This quote is important because it captures the distinction between principle and mechanism. The legislation itself represents the principle we are all in support of. The legislation itself does not include the mechanism that is defined by the regulation which this legislation will underpin, and the government continues to consult far and wide on this to try to find an approach that is as agreeable as we can manage, given that we all come from different backgrounds and we all have different beliefs and values.

We need to stay focused on this debate and the focus of this inquiry: that the legislation before us represents an intention to enforce ethical procurement standards in the ACT, an objective with widespread support. The bill intends to ensure that it is a viable option for businesses to do the right thing. It will enable us to remove the benefits associated with undercutting staff and failing to provide adequate safety measures and work conditions. We all agree that this is something we should be doing, and that was evident in the responses to the inquiry. For that reason, I call on everyone in this Assembly to vote in favour of the bill when we get to the next stage.

MR HANSON (Murrumbidgee) (10.39): I want to make it very clear that I am now speaking in my capacity as a member of the committee, as opposed to chair of the committee.

Mr Barr: A modest achievement. Indeed, yes. Well understood. Acknowledged. Yes.

MR HANSON: I do not want those two roles conflated.

Mr Barr: Heaven forbid.

MR HANSON: Heaven forbid. Thank you. Mr Barr understands what I am doing. I would like to thank the other two members of the committee. This is obviously a difficult issue to come before this committee because there are such strongly held views. In many ways, they underlie the principles of why we are in this place, certainly for people like Mr Petterson, who is a member of the CFMEU. I think that we approached this in a mature way. We acknowledged our different perspectives. What we have done is seek to provide a committee report that reflects the views of the committee, where we agree, as I said, but has annexes where we have put forward our more deeply held views.

It is clear that there is broad agreement, as Ms Orr said, about what we all want to achieve. Recommendation 1 is that we want to ensure that public money only goes to contractors who have the highest ethical and labour standards. We all agree with that. The problem is that the bill that was put before the committee does not achieve that outcome. It does not. That is the point I will go to.

I will go to some of the quotes that are contained in the report. The MBA accepted that directorate staff are working hard to try to implement very bad laws. They went on to say that they believe that their concerns are being ignored as the law is a fait accompli. And, on behalf of their members, they objected to the government trading off a political promise made with one or two unions for a significant cost burden, red tape and economic impact on the many thousands of small and family Canberra businesses.

The Canberra Business Chamber said that the bill was not going to produce the desired procurement objects. They said that to introduce further regulation and administrative requirements for local businesses appears counterproductive and unnecessary and may serve only as a disincentive to our critical economically important SMEs tendering on such work. The MBA referred to concern about how laws would operate in the real world, stating that their members expressed a view that the unions would have a power of veto over government contracts. The Canberra Business Chamber noted that their members had similar concerns.

I go to annex A, where the recommendations which I put forward which were not agreed to by the other members of the committee are contained. I will just go through them to explain where this bill goes wrong. The first point I would make is that I do not believe that, as the recommendation put forward, we should proceed with this legislation. I encourage members not to support this when it is debated on Thursday.

The second recommendation is about increasing the threshold, where the tenderer has requirements for labour relations training and workplace equity planning, from \$25,000. I suggested \$1 million, but the point is that this is going to affect very small projects, very small pieces of work done by very small businesses. Complying with this would probably preclude them from engaging with government procurements, because the complexity of doing so for small businesses who do not have the HR staff, who do not have the legal representation, means that it is going to cut a whole bunch of smaller businesses out of dealing with government and tendering for government projects.

The third point I made is that we need more time. The MBA were very strong on this. They need more time to comply. This is being forced on them very quickly. We know that the CFMEU put a flyer out calling on their partners in crime, as they described the minister, to get on with this, to comply with this. I imagine that she is concerned about her preselection moving forward, but why not give business additional time to comply with this? I think we all know the reason. It is because otherwise there will be more flyers put out by the CFMEU and she will be in trouble when it comes to her preselection.

The next recommendation was that any individual or entity charged or convicted of a criminal offence punishable by at least two years imprisonment or convicted of an offence under workplace law not be a member of the secure local jobs advisory council. I am saying: let us not have criminals and let us not have people who have been convicted or found guilty of an offence on that advisory council. I find it staggering that the government is going to allow that to proceed. I will not go further with that debate, but it is extraordinary that the government is going to have people advising it who are repeated law breakers, and potentially criminals, under this law.

The next point I have made is that at least one member of the secure local jobs advisory council represent the interests of employers. At the moment, the legislation mandates that, of the six-member committee, three must be unionists. Three must come from the unions, but there is no commensurate balance that three must represent business. It is silent on that. You may find that six members of the committee, all the committee members, are all members of unions, union leaders. How is that balanced? All I have asked for is that there is one member, just one single voice, to represent the interests of business. And they have been knocked back. We are going to have a stack of everybody on this committee, it would appear, representing the interests of unions and not a single person representing the interests of business. You can see from that what the genuine intent of this bill is, as the MBA and the Business Chamber have said: a power of veto.

In my recommendations I have also asked that there be an independent review of the operation 24 months after its commencement. If the government is so sure that this is a wonderful piece of legislation, why not invite an independent review of it? I think that would be necessary. Maybe I am wrong. Why not have an independent review? The minister nods her head; maybe she is nodding her head about something else. But why not have an independent review?

The next point is that under this legislation, workplace delegates and union reps can basically call meetings and examine documents whenever they want. They can come in three times a day if they want, to examine documents and call meetings. Clearly there is an industrial dispute occurring if the union is trying to force a business to sign an EBA. That is a tactic that could be used to significantly disrupt that business. The recommendation is that the legislation include a certain frequency. If you want to examine books or if you are going to call meetings, there should be some measure about how frequently that can occur: that you cannot just have that happening every day or two times a day.

The registrar, under the legislation, has significant powers and will have significant influence over the way that this legislation is interpreted and implemented. We want to make sure that the registrar is someone that is there to represent the interests of business and workers. That is what we want to see: ethical standards implemented. If we have a registrar that is going in and is objective in the way that this legislation is implemented, that would be entirely necessary. To be frank, I do not trust that that will occur, so I have recommended that, similar to the review of government advertising, the registrar should be selected based on a two-thirds majority of the Assembly.

I have also said that in the drafting of the secure jobs code, the right to freedom of association and non-association is preserved in provisions related to worker induction, which includes, of course, the right not to join a union.

I thank members of the committee for the way we have proceeded here, but there is significant disagreement on the effect of this legislation. We all agree on the intent, but based on the advice—the very strong advice—from the MBA, the chamber and all the businesses that they represent, this is not going to have the desired effect. What it will do is give more power to the unions, which is actually the true intent of this bill. *(Time expired.)*

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Environment and Transport and City Services—Standing Committee

Statement by chair

MS ORR (Yerrabi) (10.50): Pursuant to standing order 246A, I wish to make a statement on behalf of the Standing Committee on Environment and Transport and City Services relating to petition 6-18. The petition was received by the Assembly on 20 March 2018 and referred to the committee under standing order 99A. As signatories to petition 6-18, 4,560 residents of the ACT requested that the Assembly reinstate the light rail stop planned for Mitchell.

The committee notes that, in her response to the petition on 15 August 2018, the then Minister for Transport and City Services said:

... that funding has been allocated in 2018-19—

in that budget—

for preliminary planning and detailed design of the light rail stop at Mitchell.

Construction of the Mitchell stop will occur during 2019-20.

In light of the minister's commitment and the budget allocation, the committee will not be inquiring further into the matters raised in the petition.

Delivering an inclusive, progressive and connected Canberra Ministerial statement

MR BARR (Kurrajong—Chief Minister, Treasurer, Minister for Social Inclusion and Equality, Minister for Tourism and Special Events and Minister for Trade, Industry and Investment) (10.51): It has now been two years since Canberrans voted for progress at the 2016 territory election, and they chose a positive vision for Canberra. And every day for the past two years we have been working to deliver on our election commitments. We have been working to deliver a more inclusive, a more progressive and a more connected Canberra.

We believe that, as our city and our economy grow, all Canberrans must share in the benefits. And that is why we are expanding our services and support for Canberrans who need it most. With Australia's lowest unemployment rate and the nation's fastest growing economy, we are in a strong position to deliver on our commitments and expand our services.

We are delivering new local schools, particularly in growth areas of our city, and creating more places for students at our existing schools. We are helping to ensure that every Canberra student gets the same learning opportunities, no matter what their parents do, rolling out laptops to every ACT high school student from this year.

We have successfully expanded our network of nurse-led walk-in centres by opening the new centre in Gungahlin and getting work underway in Weston Creek; we have made a record new investment in mental health services, including more supported accommodation and more support services for communities at risk; we have stepped up our investment in elective surgery and our emergency department; we have opened a third public hospital at the University of Canberra—all this to ensure that Canberrans can access the healthcare they need, close to home and whenever they need it.

By investing more in more services for families and those facing barriers to inclusion, we are working to see all Canberrans share in our prosperity. We have implemented the family safety hub—a nation-leading network of government, specialist and community organisations to help provide more support for people experiencing family violence.

In the last two years we have also become the first jurisdiction in Australia to reach full rollout of the national disability insurance scheme and we are funding more

services for people who need support during this transition. Our government understands that an inclusive community does not leave anyone behind. And that is why we are improving the recognition, participation and opportunities available to Canberrans facing tough times or big obstacles. That is why this has been such a focus of our work over the past two years.

A progressive community is open to change and faces our shared challenges with optimism. Our progressive city is taking action on climate change as the federal government continues to thrash around, changing prime ministers and policy direction every couple of years. We are on track to be powered 100 per cent by renewable electricity by 2020. We have legislated to reach zero net emissions by 2045, a world-leading commitment.

Progress is also establishing Australia's first Reconciliation Day public holiday and celebrating the important place of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures in our city and our nation. Progress is tackling the damage done by problem gambling within our community by introducing wide-ranging reforms to reduce the number of gaming machines, to reduce clubs' reliance on gaming machine revenue and to support Canberrans who need help the most.

Progress is working to make Canberra Australia's most LGBTIQ friendly city, including by supporting our community before, during and after the federal government's marriage equality postal survey and committing to a fundamental principle that all Australians should be treated equally under the law. And progress is protecting our most vulnerable through moving decisively to implement the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Abuse to bring healing to Canberrans who have suffered for too long and to protect future generations of our young people.

A connected city makes the most of the opportunities in our region, in our nation and in the world. Cities work better when they are well connected, and we have been working hard to plan for a future Canberra to connect a city that will be home to half a million people within the next decade. Canberra will be better connected under our new transport network. There will be more buses more often. There will be better connections to where Canberrans live, work and study, and our light rail network will integrate seamlessly to keep Canberra moving.

Two years ago there were no international flights from Canberra. Now there are 14 flights each week connecting Canberra to the globe and bringing a world of possibilities to local businesses and industry. The government saw the benefit of opening Canberra to the world, particularly through the many new jobs and opportunities this is creating for local workers and businesses. We are also committed to creating better rail connections between Sydney and Canberra and we are building better public spaces across our city to support stronger and more connected communities.

Canberra has been named one of the world's best places to visit and we are consistently recognised as one of the world's best cities to live in. But there is, of course, still plenty more to do and in the next two years we will focus on progressing

our light rail network, opening more great local public schools and walk-in centres, fully rolling out our green bins program across the city and driving our economy to create even more good jobs in Canberra.

We will keep working to ensure all Canberrans have access to safe, suitable and affordable housing. We will continue investing in our environment and in the transition to a low carbon economy. We will continue renewing our city and our town centres to create lively, active hubs right across Canberra.

The parliamentary agreement between ACT Labor and the ACT Greens is delivering on our commitments and we will continue to work together for a more inclusive and progressive Canberra.

I present the following paper:

Delivering an inclusive, progressive and connected Canberra—Ministerial statement, 23 October 2018.

I move:

That the Assembly take note of the paper.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

ACT Health—workplace culture Ministerial statement

MS FITZHARRIS (Yerrabi—Minister for Health and Wellbeing, Minister for Higher Education, Minister for Medical and Health Research, Minister for Transport and Minister for Vocational Education and Skills) (10.58): I am pleased to provide an update to the Assembly today on a number of initiatives underway in the ACT's public health services, including the successful transition of ACT Health into two distinct organisations; initiatives to improve workplace culture; and our plan to continue to deliver high quality health care to the Canberra community.

My statement today responds to a number of motions passed in the Assembly this year and reiterates the significant progress our public health system has made this year across a range of issues. As members will be aware, 1 October marked a significant shift in how we organise and deliver public healthcare services to the Canberra community. The creation of these two organisations symbolises the beginning of a new era for public health care in our city and has supported the transformation of our health system into one that is truly modern and built on best practice, as well as bringing us into line with other jurisdictions.

It has been a significant achievement to deliver this scale of reform in 10 months, all the while never losing sight of providing the best possible care to those needing health services 24 hours a day, seven days a week. It was an achievement that our extremely capable health staff engaged in professionally and passionately to accomplish. I would like to recognise and thank each and every one of our over 7,000 health staff for their

deep and ongoing commitment to improving our health system for both staff and consumers alike.

Staff who deliver front-line health services to the Canberra community now work in a dedicated health services delivery organisation, Canberra Health Services. A second organisation, the ACT Health Directorate, is responsible for strategic policy, research and planning and will set the strategic direction for health services across the ACT.

The creation of two health organisations has enabled a clearer focus on efficiency and effectiveness for clinical operations and enabled the ACT Health Directorate to undertake core strategy and system stewardship functions. This change is an essential evolution for our growing population and expanding public health system and has also brought about greater clarity between the distinct roles and responsibilities of front-line staff and corporate staff supporting the delivery of health care for our community. This reform will ensure that as Canberra continues to grow we will keep delivering quality health services into the future.

I will briefly outline, for members' awareness, some of the journey to bring us to where we are today. ACT Health commenced transition activities by conducting a form and function review in April 2018, with a view to clarifying statutory roles across the organisation, ensuring appropriate accountability and resourcing and realigning the disparate functions across ACT Health in readiness for the organisational separation occurring in October. This led to the creation of an interim organisational structure which streamlined reporting lines and the organisational hierarchy.

The next phase of the transition process was to conduct detailed planning, which included defining the purpose, functions and relationships of and between the service delivery organisation and the planning and policy organisation. It was essential that these relationships were supported by effective governance models, management and accountability to create better flow of information and collaboration across the organisation.

This process involved extensive consultation with key stakeholders, including staff, to seek their views on the governance model and key relationships required to ensure effective functioning of both organisations. A dedicated transition office undertook regular staff and stakeholder communications and engagement activities to ensure the delivery of a model that would work on the ground for both staff and ACT health consumers.

To date, this work has included over 240 one-on-one meetings, 58 presentations and group forums, seven leadership workshops, four all-staff forums, and 11 external stakeholder meetings, as well as responding to many direct staff submissions. Discussions were held with staff associations and industrial organisations, and a formal consultation period with staff was undertaken, in keeping with good change management practice and our obligations under relevant industrial agreement. This period allowed staff the opportunity to formally contribute to the final stage of design of the organisations.

On 6 September the interim director-general released the proposed structure to all staff, and the formal consultation of two weeks attracted over 400 pieces of feedback and commentary. On 26 September all staff were provided with the final structure, to enable the organisations to be established and ready for business on 1 October. The new structure defines the shape and functions of both new organisations and provides a very clear description of what our health system does and how it operates.

The structure highlights the realities of running a large and modern health system and illustrates both my and the new leadership team's commitment to supporting the delivery of health services with the right resources. Our shared focus is on improving patient outcomes, and this structure allows each organisation to really drive the improvements we all want to see.

It is important to recognise that the key milestone date of 1 October was not the end of the transition process. The transitioning to two new organisations includes a stabilise and refine phase. This will allow us to further refine processes and internal structures as the organisations are fully established.

Staff feedback and consultation will continue to be a key element of this phase. In a true partnership model I remain committed to enabling and encouraging staff, stakeholders and the community to continue to invest in this change process. I know the leaders of both organisations are deeply committed to this. Indeed, the leadership of both Canberra Health Services and the ACT Health Directorate, along with my colleague the Minister for Mental Health and I, are very proud of the achievements to date and are firmly focused on continuing this improvement.

For patients, consumers and their families the transition has been a seamless one. People visiting our public hospitals, popular nurse-led walk-in centres or accessing the many community-based health services that we offer have continued to be seen by the same hardworking and dedicated people who work to deliver health care to our community. Indeed, we are working to improve the experience for Canberrans with this transition, and on 1 October a new ACT Health website was launched to help make it easier for the community to access information about Canberra's health services.

The new website brings a wealth of information on the ACT public health system together in a single site so that the community can access information in one location, including information on Calvary Public Hospital, recognising that Calvary continues to be a key partner in delivering public health services across the territory now and into the future. The new health website is the first step in providing better, more meaningful information to the public, with work underway to continue to improve access to health data online and in real time. These are improvements that I look forward to making further announcements about as this work progresses.

This transition milestone of ACT Health becoming two new organisations further sets us on the path of ensuring a high performing health service that is transparent and accessible for our community. I have heard people say—and I have said it myself—that ACT Health has turned a corner. From here it is important that the two new organisations are able to become established, grow and improve.

I am very conscious that this is not the end of the journey. Healthcare systems are complex and we will continue to see challenges arise and opportunities to further improve our health organisations. That brings me to the issue of supporting staff and staff development and how we can make sure we are attracting and maintaining a skilled workforce so that we can ensure Canberra's healthcare system is the best it can be as our city continues to grow.

I am pleased to update the Assembly and the broader community on the significant work being undertaken across our health organisations to improve workplace culture and to cement the organisational values of care, excellence, collaboration and integrity. I will also take this opportunity to respond to the motion passed on 1 August 2018 in this place regarding the number of complaints and investigations.

As Minister for Health and Wellbeing, I am extremely proud of the work undertaken by our staff in ACT Health and Canberra Health Services and appreciate their continued commitment, motivation and hard work as they provide an invaluable service to the Canberra community and our wider region.

I acknowledge that working in health care can be challenging, and even more so during times of change. In March this year, when the Minister for Mental Health and I announced that ACT Health would become two distinct organisations, we did so in an effort to change, to improve the culture within the organisations. I have said many times that I have zero tolerance for bullying and harassment, and this government takes such matters very seriously. That is why we undertook a range of measures to help address issues within Canberra Health Services, the ACT Health Directorate, Calvary Public Hospital, Bruce, and all ACT government health services.

I want to take this opportunity to reassure the Canberra community that ACT Health investigates all issues that are raised by staff, whether it is a clinical issue, a safety concern or complaints about inappropriate behaviour. ACT Health also makes available a range of options to support staff, including the employee assistance program, and ACT Health has at times brought in additional support to give staff another option to share their concerns and manage the demands of their jobs.

Additionally, other pathways for staff to make complaints of bullying and harassment have been outlined in this place very recently. Today I will take time to outline the work underway to strengthen these processes for our public healthcare workforce of more than 7,000 people.

The division of people and culture delivers workshops to managers to educate them on their obligations to address complaints of inappropriate behaviour and provides them with the skills on how to conduct preliminary assessments. People and culture also provides guidance to managers on following procedural fairness and natural justice to ensure matters are addressed in accordance with section 8 of the ACT public service enterprise agreements.

As mentioned already, there are a number of pathways for staff to raise concerns. Often these concerns do not result in formal complaints. However, I can report that in

the last financial year the total number of bullying and harassment contacts in ACT Health were: 53 received by people in culture; 47 contacts received by ACT Health respect, equity and diversity contact officers; and 107 received through Riskman.

There were 160 reports of bullying or harassment where a preliminary investigation under section H of the ACT public service enterprise agreement was commenced. Preliminary assessments are conducted at the local level with the support and guidance of staff in the people and culture division. Two reports of bullying or harassment resulted in a misconduct process under section H of the ACT public service enterprise agreement. Of these two processes, one was found to breach section 9 of the Public Sector Management Act and, as at 30 June, two misconduct processes were currently underway or being investigated.

At Calvary Public Hospital there were seven reports of bullying or harassment where a preliminary assessment under section H of the ACT public sector enterprise agreement was commenced. Three reports of bullying or harassment resulted in a misconduct process under section H of the enterprise agreement, with all three being found to breach section 9 of the Public Sector Management Act.

As at 30 June one misconduct process is currently underway or being investigated. While these figures are unacceptable I think they do show that our complaints processes are working and resulting in appropriate action being taken.

Of course, workplace culture is larger than individual issues. And in an organisation, particularly as complex as Canberra Health Services, there will be subcultures and challenging behaviours that we must work to improve wherever possible.

In March this year, as members well know, the Australian Council on Healthcare Standards conducted an organisation-wide survey of ACT Health as part of the reaccreditation process. It is fair to say that this site visit and the resulting “not met” report were the catalyst for a profound shift in the organisation, one which not only resulted in an outstanding accreditation result that has seen full reaccreditation of ACT Health and Canberra Hospital for the maximum of three years but also a glowing external assessment of ACT Health’s shift in culture, leadership and commitment to continue this improvement.

As I mentioned before, it was in March 2018 that the Minister for Mental Health and I announced that ACT Health would become two distinct organisations from 1 October. This reform will build on the outstanding improvements we have seen through the reaccreditation process and will be an opportunity to reset and refocus both organisations on their core purpose and values. It will also provide an opportunity to establish separate workplace cultures for Canberra Health Services and the ACT Health Directorate, which, on the face of it, are very distinct organisations with very different remits.

As part of the transition, the Director-General of the ACT Health Directorate has been leading an extensive piece of work focused on the cultural needs of the organisations, in particular for the first six months of operation. Recently a number of significant

activities have progressed to support improvements to staff culture and behaviour. And I am pleased to provide an update on these activities today.

The ACT Health Director-General is implementing a number of actions to rebuild the organisation's culture and values including building a cohesive, values-based executive team and environment where collaboration can thrive, embedding senior cohesive leadership teams, providing training on change, leadership and staff forums to ensure communication and engagement with all levels of staff and developing a new consultation framework and guidelines to improve the way staff are engaged. Through this work the director-general, deputy directors-general and all executive directors have participated in high level workshops focused on rebuilding the organisational culture and the organisational transition. This work will continue.

On 14 August more than 140 leaders from across ACT Health came together for a collaborative leadership event. Throughout the event they discussed the importance of their roles in positively leading ACT Health staff through this time of change. This was followed with an additional forum on 13 September. Both presented an extremely valuable opportunity to bring together senior leaders in the organisation to reflect on the collaborative approach expected to continue across both organisations.

I was disappointed that the opposition's health spokeswoman sought to rubbish these workshops as a waste of time when, in reality, these are the types of critical leadership forums that lead to cultural improvements, better governance and a more productive workplace for all our health staff. I expected better.

These workshops were an opportunity for the director-general to bring together leaders across both organisations to embed a culture of collaboration, build and reinforce relationships and ensure that leaders are equipped with the tools and the information that they need to successfully lead staff and to take this important information back to their teams to ensure a shared understanding.

In the lead-up to the commissioning of the University of Canberra Hospital a number of successful change management activities were also undertaken throughout May and June. Leaders, managers and staff all attended a number of workshops to help support them through the transition and give staff the opportunity to provide valuable feedback on culture and values. This feedback was used by UCH leaders and managers to formulate the UCH culture charter.

I am pleased to report that these activities were well received and much appreciated by all involved. UCH staff have indicated that these workshops assisted in the transition and elevated discussion to create positive workplace culture and values-driven behaviours at UCH. The same successful model of change transition will be used for staff affected by the organisational transition. Workshops for leaders, managers and staff are currently being scheduled. The director-general continues to conduct bi-monthly staff forums which are well attended by staff and, in addition, the transition office is utilising communication to ensure consistency and that critical messages are relayed to all staff.

I am also pleased to report that the director-general is leading a body of work focused on improving the management of complaints and concerns to ensure that all staff can have trust in our processes and systems. This work has involved the development of a number of strategies and actions to provide alternative avenues for staff to raise concerns and to shift the focus of complaint and misconduct processes to early intervention and alternative dispute resolution. This work includes the introduction of an employee advocate, modifying existing preliminary assessment processes and establishing an external and trusted avenue for employees of ACT Health and Canberra Health Services to raise issues on bullying or other matters.

The establishment of an employee advocate is just one practical way that these organisations will provide staff with another avenue, beyond those already available, to have their issues or concerns addressed and resolved in an appropriate and timely manner. The advocate will be able to advise staff on the options available to them and give them guidance on what a complaints process would entail. This resource will be available for all employees to directly raise issues and also to refer cases to the appropriate avenue for action. The employee advocate will be central to encouraging the early resolution of matters wherever possible and, most importantly, providing staff with support in a timely way.

We will also soon commence a new workplace culture survey for our two health organisations. The anticipated time frame for the surveys is March 2019, subject to finalising the organisational structures for both organisations. This will be an important process for staff to have their say on what has improved over the past year and where we can continue to focus our efforts. Of course, the findings and recommendations of the independent review into workplace culture within ACT public health services, announced on 10 September 2018, will also help inform the content of the surveys.

I would also like to quickly take the opportunity now to update the Assembly on the independent review, which will build on the initiatives that I have just outlined to improve the workplace culture within our public health organisations. It will be a formal mechanism that will provide clear direction to the Director-General of Health, the CEO of Canberra Health Services and both the Minister for Mental Health and me as we continue to take healthcare forward in a strong and positive way.

I would like to formally table the terms of reference for the review, which I publicly released on 21 September when I also announced the three-member independent panel appointed to lead the review. I present the following paper:

Workplace Culture within ACT Public Health Services—Independent review—
Terms of reference, dated 23 October 2018.

The independent panel has commenced its work and since the panel was announced a number of developments have occurred. Secretariat support and a review office have been established, with the secretariat staff drawn from across the ACT and commonwealth public services, so that ACT Health staff can have confidence in the integrity and independence of the process. A public web page for the review has also

been set up and business rules for the review have been developed to inform and support the independent and confidential nature of the review. This includes processes for the protection of confidential information and the identity of individuals as required and in accordance with law.

On Monday, 15 October the panel called for submissions and feedback on the workplace environment and culture of public healthcare services in the ACT, with the submission process open until 30 November 2018. The panel are calling for submissions from staff within ACT public health services, particularly the ACT Health Directorate, Canberra Health Services and both Canberra Hospital and Calvary Public Hospital, as well as community members and any other health sector stakeholders.

They are urging people to share their thoughts and experiences on what is working well and what is not. And this includes examples of best practice workplace and professional culture, because there are many currently within the ACT public health system. I am pleased to see the work progressing on the review. The Minister for Mental Health and I encourage staff, community members and stakeholders to provide feedback through this submission process.

I look forward to the panel's work and believe that this independent review will be a critical process of learning and healing and looking at how we can address any systemic issues in a meaningful way in coming months. I also look forward to receiving the interim report to the review at the end of January and the final report in March next year, both of which will be released publicly.

The ACT government invests significantly in the delivery of public health services to ensure high quality, safe healthcare for our community, and we must make sure that we are looking after all our people. That means both our patients and our staff.

Improving workplace culture and staff engagement within our healthcare system and building on the positive changes made in recent months through the accreditation process, and more recently the transition process, is a significant priority for the government. An enormous amount of work has occurred across ACT Health in the past year to ensure that the transition has been as smooth as possible and that it will lead to ongoing improvements in organisational culture now and well into the future.

ACT Health's Director-General and the CEO of Canberra Health Services, all deputy directors-general and executive directors and clinical leaders across our hospital and health services are committed to this transition process. They are hardworking and have shown an incredible, renewed commitment to improving culture and ensuring that staff continue to be engaged, acknowledged and appreciated for all the work they do.

This government has an incredible track record of investment in public healthcare, whether at our public hospitals, nurse-led walk-in centres, maternal and child health services, free dental care, hospital in the home or palliative care services, just to name a few. Our commitment—my commitment—remains strong and while we have improvements to make I have confidence in the leadership of the ACT Health

Directorate and Canberra Health Services to continue to deliver the quality services Canberrans deserve and expect.

For staff in particular, the benefits of improving culture across the public health system are wide ranging and significant and will help to develop a more resilient and adaptable health workforce in a very challenging health environment.

External validation of this work through the recent accreditation process is powerful and demonstrates that ACT Health and Canberra Health Services are on the right track and well positioned for a very positive future. I would like again to take this opportunity to thank all the dedicated ACT Health and Canberra Health Services staff who have worked tirelessly in delivering this important transition for their organisations. It further demonstrates their continued commitment to providing outstanding patient-centred, high quality and timely care to our community. I cannot thank them enough.

I present the following papers:

ACT Health transition and workplace culture—Update—Ministerial statement, 23 October 2018.

Workplace Culture within ACT Public Health Services—Independent review—Terms of reference, dated 23 October 2018.

I move:

That the Assembly take note of the ministerial statement.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Personal explanation

MRS DUNNE (Ginninderra): Madam Speaker, I claim to have been misrepresented and would seek your leave to make a personal explanation.

MADAM SPEAKER: Mrs Dunne.

MRS DUNNE: Thank you, Madam Speaker. In the just concluded ministerial statement the minister said words to the effect that she thought it was unfortunate that the shadow spokesman had thought that various panels were a waste of time. I did not say at any time that they were a waste of time. I questioned the amount of money that was spent on catering at \$80 a head and the \$9,000-plus that was spent on the keynote speaker. I want to put on the record that at no time did I say that this was a waste of time. I questioned the spending.

A step up for our kids **Ministerial statement**

MS STEPHEN-SMITH (Kurrajong—Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs, Minister for Disability, Minister for Children, Youth and Families, Minister for Employment and Workplace Safety, Minister for Government Services

and Procurement, Minister for Urban Renewal) (11.23): In April this year I presented the first of the six-monthly progress reports on A step up for our kids—one step can make a lifetime of difference (out of home care strategy 2015-2020). I am pleased to now present the second progress report. As members would be aware, this transformational out of home care strategy aims to improve outcomes for children and young people in the care of the Director-General of the Community Services Directorate by providing more flexible, child-focused services and to reduce demand for out of home care places.

The Community Services Directorate generates a snapshot report that provides point-in-time data on the service demand and performance of the out of home care system and compares this with the same period last year. The snapshot report provides an indication of service demand, capacity of the system to respond to this demand and throughput data. I will talk to the highlights of the report shortly.

In introducing the report, it is important to note that this report is the first opportunity to view the 2016-17 and 2017-18 data side by side, which allows the data to be examined to identify where there are trends that should be responded to, or if we are seeing temporary fluctuations in service demand.

In order to provide a more holistic view of how the out of home care services system is performing, the Community Services Directorate will continue to increase the number of headline measures as the service system matures and more data becomes available. A key focus of the strategy has been the investment in intensive parenting and family preservation supports. This aims to prevent children and young people from entering care and seeks to support children to exit from the system as early and as safely as possible through reunification services. To this end, as an important element of A step up for our kids, the number of children and young people supported through prevention programs not entering care within six and 12 months of support commencing has been added to the latest snapshot report.

This addition to the data complements the existing headline measures, which include: the number of children and young people entering care in that quarter; the number of children and young people exiting care; a comparison of the number of children being case managed by ACT Together and child and youth protection services to monitor service capacity and indicating the number of children on short-term orders versus long-term orders; the types of placements that children are in at that time and the number of children in each placement type; the number of enduring parental responsibility orders and adoptions completed; and the number of newly approved carers and the number of carers exiting.

As I have said previously, reform of this nature takes time. A step up for our kids aims to create generational change, to break the cycle of intergenerational harm, and to improve long-term outcomes for families, children and young people. The inclusion of the new measure relating to the diversion of children and young people from statutory care will help the Community Services Directorate to track the efficacy of the vital investment in family preservation.

This snapshot report highlights the following: service demand continues to increase but at a lower rate in 2017-18 than in 2016-17. From July 2017 to June 2018, 155 children and young people entered the out of home care system. This is 41 fewer than in the previous year. As reported in the first six-monthly update, this reduction in demand is also reflected in the lower number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people entering care compared to the previous reporting period.

The majority of children and young people in out of home care, 71 per cent, continue to be children and young people on long-term orders. The number of children and young people on long-term orders has increased from 526 to 592 during the period July 2017 to June 2018. Over half of those in care are currently placed with kinship carers. The majority of children and young people in residential care are aged 12 and above. Residential care remains a key priority area for ACT Together and child and youth protection services who continue to work together to seek to reduce the number of children and young people in residential care.

In the first half of 2018, only two foster carers and two kinship carers have left the system. The number of new carers approved continues to increase, with 26 foster and kinship carers approved during the last quarter of 2017-18. This brings the total to 117 for the financial year compared to 69 in 2016-17. This increase in carer numbers is a great outcome and demonstrates child and youth protection services and ACT Together's commitment to the recruitment and retention of carers, who are so central to the out of home care system.

Eighty-nine per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people in care have a cultural plan in place. This number has fallen in the final quarter of 2017-18 and child and youth protection services has undertaken its usual quarterly review to address compliance with this important feature of the system and to ensure that quality cultural plans are in place. Cultural plans help to continually improve the preservation and enhancement of the identity of the child or young person as an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander young person.

As at 30 June 2018, 86 per cent of children and young people who were being supported by prevention programs had not entered care within six months of support commencing under A step up for our kids and 75 per cent of children and young people being supported had not entered care within 12 months of support commencing.

As I mentioned earlier, the data provided in the snapshot report is used by the Community Services Directorate and heads of partner agencies to monitor the progress of A step up for our kids. It is important to note that the data is internal operational data and can be updated and changed between reporting periods, and caution should be exercised when using and interpreting data in this report and comparing between reporting periods.

The Community Services Directorate remains committed to the measurement of long-term outcomes. As members would be aware, A step up for our kids is a

fundamental shift in the provision of services in the out of home care sector. In order to determine the overall success of the strategy, the ACT government engaged the specialist services of KPMG to develop an outcomes based evaluation framework, including indicators to measure strategy outcomes; conduct an initial baseline review to determine the suitability of measures and establish a performance benchmark; and perform a mid-strategy evaluation against the agreed outcomes. Having worked with the Community Services Directorate and our partner agencies over the past six months, I am pleased to advise that KPMG is in the final stages of preparing the mid-strategy evaluation for release later this year.

A fundamental tenet of the out of home care system is the trauma-informed, comprehensive assessments for children and young people in out of home care. As at 30 June 2018, 355 children and young people had a therapeutic assessment report completed. The assessments look at different areas of a child's or young person's life, such as health and development, emotional and behavioural development, education and training, family and social relationships, self-help skills, culture and identity, and indicators of trauma in the child or young person.

Child and youth protection services is currently working in partnership with the Australian Childhood Trauma Group to ensure that more children and young people in out of home care and their carers benefit from having a therapeutic assessment in place.

As members are aware, the step up reform does not occur in isolation. The Community Services Directorate is acutely aware of the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in the statutory child protection system and continues to develop better ways of working in order to respond to the issues and drive change in this area.

The primary focus of the Our Booris, Our Way independent review, which I announced in June 2017, is to inform systemic improvements to child protection systems, policies and practices. The review aims to understand the reasons for children and young people entering care and develop strategies to reduce the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people entering care, improve their experience and outcomes while in care and, where appropriate, exit children from care through restorations.

I welcomed the release of the interim report by the Our Booris, Our Way steering committee on 31 August. The interim report makes a number of recommendations about the child protection system including case allocation, revision of policies and practice through to how child and youth protection services engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families where a child or young person is entering the system. Most importantly, the interim report reiterated that children and young people must be valued in a process that holds their cultural rights as central to the child or young person's identity and safety.

The ACT government is acting on the recommendations from the interim report as part of an ongoing commitment to reducing the over-representation of Aboriginal children in the statutory child protection system. I look forward to receiving the final

Our Booris, Our Way report in September 2019 in order to continue the work currently being undertaken to ensure that children stay connected to culture and community as well as maintaining a focus on keeping children and young people safe.

I would also like to take the opportunity today to provide an update on the family group conferencing program and other initiatives being progressed by child and youth protection services in order to support A step up for our kids investment in intensive parenting and family preservation supports for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families.

The ACT government committed \$1.44 million in funding over four years for the ongoing delivery of family group conferencing so that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families can be supported to make decisions to keep their children safe, strong and connected to family and culture. Child and youth protection services developed a family group conferencing model for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families at risk of ongoing involvement with the statutory system, in partnership with the majority Aboriginal-owned and managed organisation, Curijo.

The aim of family group conferencing is to provide families with the opportunity to develop effective family plans that will keep their children safe. The priority is working with the family to keep children at home or planning for the successful restoration of children to their families following some time in out of home care.

Where children are not able to stay safely at home, the team works with and supports families to identify the most appropriate kinship options to ensure that the children remain connected to family and community. Family group conferencing ensures that all members of a child's extended family are contacted and encouraged to be involved in the decision-making process about their child's situation. This process is to be considered in line with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural values of family and community responsibility, and has been supported by the Our Booris, Our Way steering committee in its interim report.

It is expected that family group conferences will occur with a minimum of 24 families each year. From the commencement of the pilot in November up to 9 October 2018, 18 families have been involved in a family group conference, involving 41 children. That is 18 families making decisions about how to keep their children safe and 31 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children have not subsequently entered care following a family group conference.

In early 2019 work will commence through the new functional family therapy program for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families at risk of ongoing involvement with the child protection system. This partnership between Gudan Gulwan and OzChild for the delivery of the functional family therapy program is aimed at reducing the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people entering, or remaining in, out of home care through family-based interventions that aim to keep children safely at home.

Child and family centres are also an important part of our efforts to support families across Canberra. The growing healthy families program is a community development

program delivered out of the three child and family centres in collaboration with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. The program offers a range of culturally-informed health, early childhood development and parenting services that support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, families and communities. The program includes case management for families with high and complex needs, developmental children's groups, early intervention and targeted intervention playgroups, and community activities and events.

As part of the program each of the child and family centres delivers group activities in partnership with other community organisations, such as Uniting Care, Gudan Gulwan, The Smith Family, schools and the Belconnen Arts Centre. Examples of these groups include Koori Kids, Deadly Bubs, Strong Women's Group, Ngunnawal Homework Club, Mums and Bubs Group, and Koori Paint and Play.

In closing, I acknowledge the importance of A step up for our kids to the Canberra community. I look forward to sharing the results of the mid-strategy evaluation and ongoing transformation of the out of home care system with the Assembly in the next progress report. I present the following papers:

Out of Home Care Strategy 2015-2020—A Step Up for Our Kids—One Step Can Make a Lifetime of Difference—Update—October 2018—Ministerial statement, 23 October 2018.

A Step Up for Our Kids—Snapshot Report, as at 9 October 2018.

I move:

That the Assembly take note of the ministerial statement.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

ACT carers strategy Ministerial statement

MR STEEL (Murrumbidgee—Minister for City Services, Minister for Community Services and Facilities, Minister for Multicultural Affairs and Minister for Roads) (11.37): Last week I officially launched the ACT carers strategy first three-year action plan. Carers make a vital contribution to the fabric of the Canberra community, and this plan is an important milestone in our shared journey in becoming a community that better supports and cares for carers.

I would like to thank the many carers who contributed their time and expertise to help develop the carers strategy and action plan. I would also like to acknowledge Carers ACT, who have driven the work for an ACT carers strategy, and the work of my colleague, Minister Rachel Stephen-Smith, who has championed the inclusion of carers at every step of the process.

The launch of the action plan, fittingly, took place during National Carers Week. I appreciated being able to talk with carers during the event and hear their personal stories. I was humbled by carers' passion and tireless dedication for the work that they

do and their generosity in giving up their often minimal time to contribute to developing the strategy and action plan. The overwhelming feedback that I received when talking to carers at the launch was that the deliberative democracy process that the ACT government used in consultations to produce this document helped the carers feel as though their voices were heard and valued.

This is a plan by carers for carers, a plan that makes me feel confident that our ACT carers strategy first three-year action plan will deliver an ongoing commitment to support carers within our community. The carers strategy is a 10-year strategy, demonstrating our government's ongoing commitment to supporting carers in our community. The first three-year action plan contains 25 actions that fall under five themes: service and support for carers; recognition and awareness; inclusion; support for young carers; and workforce and skills recognition. All these actions have been a direct result of what carers have stated that they want and need to make their lives more comfortable. While they are ambitious, I feel that they are worthwhile and achievable actions.

These actions will guide support for carers and respond to the challenges they face, while recognising the essential contribution that carers make to our community through their caring role. I am pleased to report that progress is already underway on some of the early actions, demonstrating the commitment that our government and our community sector partners have in ensuring that we work together for our carers.

The Education Directorate provides a range of supports to young carers and is working to ensure that they receive the support that they need. Central to the future of education strategy launched this year is the need to know and respond to students, including identifying any additional supports required to ensure that they remain engaged in education. Under this strategy there will be a greater focus on ensuring that all students, including young carers, are engaged collaboratively in designing their own individualised learning pathway, incorporating wellbeing supports. These critical educational changes were identified as a priority when I was talking to young carers at the strategy launch last week.

Early progress is also being delivered by Libraries ACT through the promotion of digital services to support carers to do business online. Carers have identified that the shift to online delivery for many government services, including the rollout of the national disability insurance scheme and Centrelink services, has been problematic as they do not always have access to computers or have the skills to navigate the online environment.

Furthermore, Carers ACT have taken the lead in providing for 10 people to complete a certificate IV in mental health peer work, which will increase the support for carers of people with a mental health condition. This work will be backed up by running a coaching program to support care and mentoring and will provide a drop-in space and mentoring for young carers.

A handbook for foster and kinship carers has been drafted and is in the final stages of editing. It will be released before the end of the year, assisting foster carers to stay informed about their role and the supports available to them.

Many more actions to support and recognise carers are included in the action plan and will be implemented over the next three years. I am proud of the way that deliberative principles have underpinned the development of this strategy, demonstrating our government's commitment to engaging differently and more effectively with our community and including people whose voices might otherwise not be heard.

The development of this action plan has been possible through authentic collaboration with carers working alongside government officials and community sector organisations. I look forward to reporting on many more of the actions identified in the carers action plan that support and recognise carers. I wish to congratulate the many people who contributed to this work, especially our carer community, to implement the actions in this action plan over the next three years.

I look forward to continuing to build a strong relationship with carers and working with the community to implement the actions in this action plan.

I present the following papers:

ACT Carers Strategy—Launch of the 3 year Action Plan—Ministerial statement, 23 October 2018.

ACT Carers Strategy 2018-2028—First Three-Year Action Plan.

I move:

That the Assembly take note of the ministerial statement.

MS STEPHEN-SMITH (Kurrajong—Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs, Minister for Disability, Minister for Children, Youth and Families, Minister for Employment and Workplace Safety, Minister for Government Services and Procurement, Minister for Urban Renewal) (11.42): I want to very quickly add my voice of thanks to a few people involved in the development of the carers strategy.

Firstly, I thank Lisa Kelly, CEO of Carers ACT—a passionate advocate for Canberra's carers and someone who has not only embraced the deliberative process as part of the development of the carer strategy but now is using that process in other work that Carers ACT has undertaken—and the other staff of Carers ACT who worked on this important project.

I want to record my thanks to Emily Jenke from Democracy Co, who skilfully facilitated the carers voice panel, one of the ACT government's first deliberative processes. I echo the words of Minister Steel that all of the feedback I have had from the carers who participated in that process was that they felt heard and they felt the process in itself was valuable. Emily's skill in facilitating that plays no small part in that.

I want to thank the staff from the Community Services Directorate—who worked alongside Democracy Co, the carers and Carers ACT to develop first the vision outcomes and priorities statement and then, through the taskforce, the carers

strategy—and officials from other agencies who engaged very positively in this process to identify actions that they could take early and to think laterally and out of the box about how they could change what they do to support carers, not necessarily doing that at any cost but just raising awareness of the needs of carers across their organisation.

Finally, I want to thank the carers who participated in this process, who gave of their time and expertise to help us develop a better policy by and for the carers themselves, the members of the carers voice panel, and the carers who participated in the taskforce. I just wanted to take a moment to record all of that thanks.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Crimes Legislation Amendment Bill 2018

Debate resumed from 20 September 2018, on motion by **Mr Ramsay**:

That this bill be agreed to in principle.

MR RATTENBURY (Kurrajong) (11.45): The ACT Greens will be supporting the amendments of this bill. I would like to acknowledge that these amendments, while minor in nature, will serve to further support efficiencies in our courts administration and justice system overall. They provide greater clarity for the judiciary—Supreme Court judges and magistrates and associates—regarding their powers and responsibilities.

The amendments also support greater consistency in regards to administrative functions of seeking and issuing warrants, and also rectify a minor drafting anomaly of a previous bill. The Attorney-General and the Justice and Community Safety Directorate work methodically on issues such as these while also maintaining a forward-facing agenda of reform and innovation.

I am keenly aware, as the minister for justice, of the need to both monitor the existing structures and seek out opportunities for change when the need arises. Therefore, while they are presented in broad tranches, each of these minor and non-controversial amendments represents time and resources well-spent in order to continually improve our increasingly complex and integrated justice system as we continue to grow as a city.

With those brief remarks, the Greens are pleased to support this legislation today. We think it will make improvements to the bill. We thank the Attorney-General for bringing these amendments forward to make our justice system better.

MR HANSON (Murrumbidgee) (11.47): At the outset, I thank Mr Rattenbury for speaking probably a bit longer than he may have otherwise to what is a very short bill. The Canberra Liberals will be supporting this legislation, Madam Speaker. Although many clauses are only one or two word changes, they do make alterations to how some criminal law procedures would operate.

They can make changes to either make processes run more smoothly or prevent complications in the future. For example, there is the adjusting of language to clarify that the issuer of a warrant is the magistrate, not the Magistrates Court, under the Crimes (Child Sex Offenders) Act 2005. This change not only brings the child sex offenders provisions into line with other acts, but also avoids the confusion of vesting the power in a thing rather than in a properly designated person.

Similarly, extending the power to issue warrants under the Confiscation of Criminal Assets 2003, the Crimes Act 1900, the Crimes (Surveillance Devices) Act 2010 and the Drugs of Dependence Act 1989 to associate judges of the Supreme Court as well as appointed judges increases the capacity of that court in an area where timeliness and access are vitally important.

Another seemingly small but important change is to the Magistrates Court Act to remove an anomaly in procedure for transferring matters from the Magistrates Court to the Supreme Court. Specifically, where a person has been committed for trial under a main offence, and also with related or back up offences, the current legislation does not allow for all of the offences to be transferred and dealt with under one mechanism.

Lastly, the bill includes an increase in the value of a penalty unit from \$150 to \$160 for offences where penalties are calculated using these units. These are periodically reviewed and updated. This is an appropriate review. As usual, we sought consultation with the legal profession. As usual, we will support genuine technical amendments to improve justice procedures. The bill does that in several areas and we support this legislation.

MS ORR (Yerrabi) (11.49): The Crimes Legislation Amendment Bill will improve the operation and efficiency of the criminal justice system here in the ACT. In moving these amendments here today, ACT Labor demonstrates its commitment to justice and community safety in the ACT. The measures will assist our courts, law professionals and enforcement agencies in coordinating and navigating the criminal justice system.

The bill makes amendments to a range of criminal laws. The changes will have a real-world impact on the people who are victims of crimes, on the people who are accused and are searched, and on the ability of police prosecutions and courts to do their jobs.

The bill features four changes that will assist the operation and efficiency of the criminal justice system. The bill clarifies that warrants under the Crimes (Sex Offenders) Act 2015 are issued by the magistrate. The change will help to avoid any unintended consequences that might arise from vesting power in the court. This change is an exercise in harmonisation, clarifying and simplifying the existing judicial system. It also ensures that the ability of the police to apply for time critical warrants when necessary is not unintentionally obstructed.

The bill makes changes to the powers of an associate judge to the Supreme Court. Associate judges will have powers to issue warrants under the relevant acts that are equivalent to those granted to judges. This change is consistent with other recent

amendments, which increased an associate judge's powers to approve emergency authorisations and issue warrants under other legislation. This measure will increase the pool of judicial officers authorised to perform such functions, allowing for greater efficiency and timeliness in the way that law enforcement agencies engage with the judicial process.

The bill also clarifies the mechanism by which backups and related charges can be transferred to committals. This change rectifies a previous anomaly. It will act to reduce costs faced by a defendant and offer efficiency gains.

The monetary value of a penalty unit will increase with the changes in this bill. While this change will reflect price changes in the period since penalty units were last reviewed, the court will consider personal circumstances when imposing fines, meaning that the offender's ability to pay will be taken into consideration. Taken together, each of these measures enables our criminal justice system to better respond to the needs of the community.

We also understand that, in justice and community safety, criminal justice is not the sole answer. The ACT is committed to not just ensuring that the criminal justice system operates as well as it can but also that we offer the appropriate alternative and supports where we can. As is well known, once an individual enters the correction system it is often very difficult to break the cycle and exit it.

That is why, while we appreciate and understand the need for criminal justice, ACT Labor will continue to explore opportunities for introducing restorative justice measures in the ACT. Restorative justice can include referral to conferencing programs where offenders are diverted away from the court or circle and forum sentencing where victims and offenders come together to discuss possible resolutions. It might also be used upon release from jail to mediate between an offender and a victim.

There are many opportunities in restorative justice to effect meaningful change in order to address issues such as recidivism. I am proud to be part of a government that realises that this is part of the solution. It is ACT Labor that understands and appreciates the need for a holistic approach to justice and community safety.

We have funded more staff for the Director of Public Prosecutions. We have increased funding for Legal Aid. We have signed up for the national redress scheme for ACT survivors of sexual abuse within institutions in the ACT. We have introduced an eighth magistrate. We have opened the new courtrooms. All of these measures illustrate our commitment to a fair and just society. I commend the bill to the Assembly.

MR PETTERSSON (Yerrabi) (11.53): Our ACT Labor government cares about keeping Canberrans safe. Our government understands the importance of reducing crime and supporting emergency services. This requires a multifaceted approach. It means improving our legal system so that it is more transparent and accessible, more funding for ACT Police and funding programs to help reduce recidivism.

It also means that we focus on helping to prevent some of the causes of crime by reducing poverty in the ACT, funding drug and alcohol treatment programs and properly funding mental health services. Tackling crime requires a holistic approach. It is important that our laws are effective and efficient. It is vital for our justice system that we have a clear operation of criminal laws that work in together.

This bill clarifies some of the existing issues in the existing criminal code. Firstly, it standardises warrant provisions across the territory acts so it is clear that it is a magistrate of the Magistrates Court that has the power to issue warrants. It provides the powers to an associate judge of the Supreme Court as equivalent to those granted to judges to issue warrants as a *persona designata*. Increasing the pool of judges available to perform these duties will make the court system timelier and run more efficiently for law enforcement agencies. This change is in line with the recent change made to the Supreme Court Act.

This bill also increases the monetary value of a penalty unit under section 133(2) of the Legislation Act. Previously a penalty unit was \$150 for an individual and \$750 for a corporation. Under this bill, a penalty unit is now \$160 for an individual and \$810 for a corporation.

Finally, this bill extends existing mechanisms for transferring back-up or related charges with an indictable matter committed to the Supreme Court under section 88B of the Magistrates Court Act. These changes together will ensure that the ACT court system works more effectively in the interests of justice. This bill is just one small element of the government's policy agenda to improve our justice system and keep Canberrans safe. The government is committed to investing in a transparent, timely and accessible legal system.

Over the course of this year we are expecting to progress 15,000 cases through the court and tribunal system, including 1,000 domestic and family orders. Over the same period, 15,500 calls are expected to be made to the Legal Aid helpline. In response to this, more resourcing has been made available for legal aid. This year the government appointed a new magistrate to help deal with this caseload and to ensure that matters are dealt with in a timely fashion. More resources were also made available for the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions.

Our government has a firm belief that creating alternatives to the prison system would be extremely beneficial to the whole community. The ACT is a national leader in alternative justice pathways such as restorative justice. Funding increases will allow a 25 per cent increase in a restorative justice conference. We are expanding access to restorative justice to offenders under the age of 18 who have not committed a serious crime as long as they do not deny responsibility for that crime. Ensuring that many eligible young people can have access to this program will help divert vulnerable youth away from the criminal justice system. The fewer young people in jail, the better.

Our government's goal is to reduce recidivism by 25 per cent by 2025. This will be achieved through the employment and skill building programs in correctional

facilities to ensure that upon release people are able to get a job, support themselves and be able to reconnect with the Canberra community. Adjacent to this is \$6 million in funding to continue with the intensive corrections order scheme so that offenders can be diverted from full-time imprisonment to further rehabilitation efforts.

The new court precinct is designed to make the court process less traumatic and intimidating for victims and families. There will be support facilities for witnesses and their families, dedicated places for community services and domestic violence support agencies, and a mediation hub to facilitate restorative justice practices outside of the court. This design will ensure that there is no longer a situation where a victim of crime sits next to the perpetrator's family or vice versa in the waiting room beforehand. Our government will continue the design work for a dedicated drug and alcohol court to adequately deal with these issues.

This multifaceted approach to the criminal justice system is having a positive effect. Over the past year across the territory crime has been down. In my electorate of Yerrabi, crime is down 34 per cent, the largest decrease across Canberra. Overall, assaults fell about 18 per cent from 748 to 616. Thefts were reduced by about 20 per cent, from 2,676 to 2,128. Property damage dipped by 14.5 per cent, from 1,197 to 1,023. Burglary decreased by 21.5 per cent, from 677 to 531 offences. Sadly, however, there were two homicides in the territory over the past year. As a government we can always improve. These increases in support for emergency services and other areas of the criminal justice system can help decrease crime in all areas.

Our government is getting on with the job of making our community safer. Crime is complex and multifaceted with no one real solution. But we do know that educating people and pulling them out of poverty are two of the best things we can do as a society. The tough law and order shtick by those opposite never delivers true and lasting results. Instead, it breeds resentment and distrust while populating prison cells, not to mention making the job of police that much harder.

MR GENTLEMAN (Brindabella—Minister for the Environment and Heritage, Minister for Planning and Land Management, Minister for Police and Emergency Services and Minister assisting the Chief Minister on Advanced Technology and Space Industries) (12.00), in reply: I rise in support of, and also to close debate on, this stage of the Crimes Legislation Amendment Bill 2018. On behalf of the Attorney-General, I thank members for their contributions. This legislation supports the government's commitment to improve access to justice for our community and create efficiencies and reduce wait times in the justice process.

As the Attorney-General has outlined, the Crimes Legislation Amendment Bill is an omnibus bill, amending the Crimes (Child Sex Offenders) Act, the Crimes (Surveillance Devices) Act, the Crimes Act, the Drugs of Dependence Act, the Confiscation of Criminal Assets Act, the Magistrates Court Act, the Supreme Court Act and the Legislation Act. It makes minor technical and common-sense amendments to modernise, simplify and clarify these pieces of legislation. The combined effect of these amendments is to improve the efficiency and operation of

the criminal justice system in the ACT, which is an ideal that I am sure we all agree on.

The government aims to ensure that all ACT legislation is up to date and consistent. To this end, the bill will amend the Crimes (Child Sex Offenders) Act to clarify that warrants are issued by a magistrate rather than the court, to eliminate inconsistencies. This amendment responds to an issue raised by a number of our judiciary about the construction of the warrant regime in the act. The act falls within my responsibility, and sexual crimes committed against children have profound consequences for the victim, their family and the community. These crimes warrant the specific monitoring and reporting measures imposed by the child sex offender register, which requires offenders to keep police informed of personal information.

An important measure under the act is the ability for police to apply for a warrant to enter and search premises occupied by the registered child sex offender. A warrant may be applied for in circumstances where the registerable offender has incorrectly reported their personal details, or has breached an order prohibiting particular conduct, such as being within a certain distance of a school zone or living at a particular residence with a child.

The concern raised which has led to this amendment being proposed is that the warrant process differs from other warrant schemes created under other ACT legislation, as it empowers the Magistrates Court to issue a warrant rather than the “magistrate” or “issuing officer” in their personal capacity as a designated person. The concern is that this may trigger the usual procedural requirements in respect of applications such as filing and serving the application and conducting the proceedings in open court. This has the potential to jeopardise the safety of children and the protection of the community, as it may delay the time for the warrant to be issued or may provide time for an offender to destroy the evidence.

The amendments address issues about vesting the power in the court, rather than the specified person as a *persona designata*, to issue warrants. This is because it is well established that the process of issuing a warrant is an administrative function, not a judicial one. While ordinarily a judicial officer such as a judge or magistrate is empowered to issue warrants under various statutory regimes, in the performance of the function entrusted, the judicial officer is intended to act personally, detached from the court of which he or she is a member. While I am advised that it appears that this has not arisen as a practical issue in an application for a warrant to date, addressing it in this bill will prevent it becoming a live issue in the future.

For these reasons, an amendment to change the language of the act is critical to ensure that police are able to apply for warrants in a time-critical circumstance seamlessly. This is an important measure to allow police to apply for warrants in time-critical circumstances and will avoid unintended consequences such as triggering the application of the court procedures rules. If the rules were to apply, this may require the application to be heard in open court and served on the respondent, which would obviously undermine the purpose of being able to obtain warrants in a timely way. This amendment will also ensure consistency with other warrant regimes. I commend the amendment to the Assembly.

The bill we are debating today also provides powers to an associate judge of the Supreme Court to issue warrants under a range of acts. This measure will enhance administrative efficiency, as it will increase the pool of judges able to issue warrants and perform duty functions over weekend and holiday periods. It will improve the effectiveness of the Supreme Court and assist the court to flexibly manage its case load. It will also improve timeliness for law enforcement agencies applying for warrants. This is a common-sense approach aligned with recent amendments widening the role of an associate judge.

This amendment will allow an associate judge to issue warrants under the act and also make orders associated with warrants. This approach is consistent with recent amendments made to the Supreme Court Act which expand the jurisdiction of the associate judge. It is a common-sense amendment which will improve the efficiencies of the Supreme Court by increasing the pool of judicial officers available to issue warrants. This will have a positive impact for law enforcement agencies such as police to respond urgently to investigate breaches of the law.

We also see minor and technical amendments contained in the bill to extend the existing mechanisms for transferring backup and related charges with an indictable matter committed to the Supreme Court. Under the Magistrates Court Act, a magistrate is able to commit an accused person charged with an indictable offence for trial on application by the person and with the prosecution's consent. This increases the efficiencies in the Magistrates Court by allowing magistrates to attend to other priority matters, and speeds up the committal process. The bill addresses the lack of express powers to transfer related summary charges with the indictable charge. This will ensure better outcomes for the accused person to reduce lengthy and costly legal proceedings in both courts.

Section 88B provides the court with a power to commit an accused person for trial on application by the person and with the prosecution's consent: in effect, a waiver of the full committal hearing. A concern has been raised about the apparent anomaly in the drafting of section 88B, as there is no mechanism to transfer backup and related charges.

The inability to transfer backup and related charges creates potential inefficiency, as it means that the Magistrates Court must retain the charges until the committed matter is finalised in the Supreme Court. This reduces efficiencies of the courts, and can increase costs for accused persons. Backup offences contain elements similar to those constituting the first indictable offence and are relied on by the prosecution as alternative charges to the primary charges. Related offences arise from substantially the same circumstances as those from which the first indictable offence has arisen. This means that an accused person could be tried in separate courts for offences arising from the same set of circumstances, with the same evidence called. The bill makes changes to both the Magistrates Court Act and the Supreme Court Act to align the process of committal in section 88B.

The bill also increases the value of penalty units used to define the amount payable for fines for offences. It is very important that the value of penalty units is maintained

over time to ensure that penalties keep pace with inflation and remain an effective tool for us to deter crime. Appropriate penalties are a central element of the effective justice system. Tackling crime and improving community safety are a top priority for this government.

The increase in the value of a penalty unit from \$150 to \$160 for an individual, and \$750 to \$810 for a corporation, will ensure that financial penalties remain an effective punishment and deterrent to the commission of ACT offences. I am advised that the last increase to the value of penalty units was made in August 2014. In accordance with section 133 of the Legislation Act, penalty unit amounts are to be reviewed at least once every four years. The increase will only apply to offences committed after the amendments come into force. The increase ensures that the relative weight of penalties is maintained, in line with the cost of living, and continues to have a deterrent effect.

In conclusion, this bill contains a range of procedural and efficiency reforms proposed by the judiciary and other justice stakeholders to improve the way the ACT's justice system operates. It is a demonstration of how this government is committed to responding to issues raised by stakeholders. These amendments highlight, yet again, the outstanding commitment this government has to improving our justice system and access to justice for our ACT community. I encourage everybody to support the important changes in this bill.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Bill agreed to in principle.

Leave granted to dispense with the detail stage.

Bill agreed to.

Sitting suspended from 12.11 to 2.30 pm.

Ministerial arrangements

MR BARR: Minister Ramsay is away today, as I think members are aware. Minister Gentleman will assist with questions in Mr Ramsay's portfolios.

Questions without notice **ACT Health—workplace culture**

MR COE: My question is for the minister for health. Minister, you were asked several questions about the legal protections and powers of your proposed review into ACT Health during the last sitting. Minister, you did not answer any of them. Minister, how can anyone in the ACT have any faith in your proposed inquiry when you cannot—or will not—answer simple questions about the features or processes of this inquiry?

MS FITZHARRIS: I thank the opposition leader for his question. I believe, based on my recollection, that it is incorrect. What I did say was that the terms of reference would be published later that week and that I was about to appoint an independent panel and the terms of reference would serve as a guide. The members of the independent panel themselves have reiterated their approach to this matter in their call for submissions, which opened last Monday.

I utterly reject the premise of Mr Coe's question. Indeed, I indicated at the time that they asked me a range of questions, which I said would be answered when I released the terms of reference and when the independent panel was established. That is my recollection. If I reread *Hansard* and it is different, I will correct the record, but it is simply not the case that I failed to answer a question, and it simply is the case that an independent review has been established; an independent panel has been appointed; they have called for submissions; and in their statement, on calling for submissions, and on their website, they make it clear that confidentiality and privacy are of the utmost importance—as have I, Madam Speaker.

MR COE: Minister, how can anyone trust that the process will be fair and open when you have avoided answering questions or publishing information about the openness and fairness of the processes involved?

MS FITZHARRIS: Again I would invite the Leader of the Opposition to visit the website and read the public statement made by an independent panel. What in fact Mr Coe is saying is that he has no faith in the independent panel made up of highly regarded health professionals nationally: Mick Reid, former head of health in New South Wales and Queensland; Professor David Watters, a former president of the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons; and Fiona Brew, a nursing leader from Victoria. What in fact the opposition is saying is that they have no faith in an independent panel, and I find that outrageous.

I have stated repeatedly, on the record, how important it is for this review to be conducted with confidentiality and privacy if that is the wish of those people participating—as has the independent panel. Unless he has not done his homework, I would invite him to do that and to have a look at the public statement made by the independent panel and to read all the information that they have online, which is widely available to the public.

MRS DUNNE: Minister, how will it be possible for members of the public and staff of the hospital to be assured that they will be protected, given your incapacity in previous question times to answer questions and the fact that, having read all the stuff on the webpage that you have suggested, there is no outline under what statutes members will be protected?

MS FITZHARRIS: I refer members to my previous answer and I remain incredibly disappointed with the opposition, who endlessly seek to attack anything in Health, absolutely anything. All those ACT public health staff that are working very hard now have multiple pathways before them. As I outlined extensively this morning, there is an independent panel. If the opposition is saying that they do not trust that panel, then I invite them to do so. If they do not trust an independent—

Mrs Dunne: Point of order, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: Resume your seat, minister. Mrs Dunne.

Mrs Dunne: This is question time; it is not debating time, Madam Speaker. The question was about how members of the public could trust the process. It is not an opportunity for the minister to attack the opposition. It is to address the answer and be directly relevant to the question.

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you, Mrs Dunne. There is no point of order. At the beginning of the response the minister referred to the independent panel and the processes attached to that. Did you have something further to add?

MS FITZHARRIS: No.

ACTION bus service—network

MS LE COUTEUR: My question is to the Minister for Transport. It relates to distances to rapid buses under network 19. Minister, in June you said that 55 per cent of Canberrans would be within 800 metres walk of a rapid or light rail stop, while on 25 September the *Canberra Times* published an analysis saying that only a third of us will be. Why are the figures different?

MS FITZHARRIS: I thank Ms Le Couteur for the question. It is because, quite simply, they have used a different methodology. The methodology that the ACT government used is based on both the transport for Canberra policy released in 2012 and the estate development code, which indicates that the walking distance for rapid public transport services is an 800-metre walking distance and a local service is a 500-metre distance.

What we know about the revised bus network, which has now been released, is that it is one of the biggest public transport investments in our bus network in decades, a \$50 million investment in operating services, and 80 new buses going into the fleet at a cost of \$43 million. What we believe is that this network is quite simply going to deliver significantly more buses for Canberra—

Ms Le Couteur: On a point of order, Madam Speaker, I am not asking whether it is a good or bad network, just how they worked out the distances. I am not disputing whether it is a good or a bad network.

MADAM SPEAKER: The distances, or the difference?

Ms Le Couteur: The distances.

MS FITZHARRIS: As I indicated, the distances were 800 metres from a high frequency public transport stop and 500 metres from a local stop. The methodology used by the ACT government, explained in the transport for Canberra policy and also in the estate development code, is that it is radial distance and may not take into

account the different approach that the *Canberra Times* used. But I am not familiar with the entire methodology that the *Canberra Times* used.

MS LE COUTEUR: Correct me if I am wrong, but I think that what you have just said is that you are working on an assumption that for all new parts of Canberra—

MADAM SPEAKER: Supplementary question, please, Ms Le Couteur.

MS LE COUTEUR: OK; I simply do not understand it: are you saying that, because the state development plan says something, that that is what it must be? Can you give more answer on notice? I have not quite understood it yet.

MS FITZHARRIS: Yes, I can.

Canberra Hospital—radiology department

MRS DUNNE: My question is to the Minister for Health and Wellbeing. I refer to various media reports, including in the *Canberra Times* and elsewhere, in relation to medical imaging at the Canberra Hospital, particularly those issues around the standard of training of registrars and concerns raised by the Salaried Medical Officers Federation that there has been no clinical director of the medical imaging department for some time. Minister, why has there been no clinical director of medical imaging at the Canberra Hospital since May this year?

MS FITZHARRIS: As Mrs Dunne has acknowledged, there has been significant coverage of issues in radiology. I will have to refresh my memory on the clinical director and take advice. I believe that that position has been filled. There are two other directors of radiology who are currently being recruited as well. So I will just remind myself of that and correct—

Mrs Dunne: Has a radiologist has been recruited?

MS FITZHARRIS: Yes, there are two radiologists being recruited and I believe the clinical director is in place but I will confirm that at the end of question time.

MRS DUNNE: Minister, why did the Canberra Hospital appoint a director of medical imaging—not the clinical director—who has no clinical training in radiology and is not a member of a recognised radiology association as set out in the selection criteria?

MS FITZHARRIS: I do not intend to address specific matters that Mrs Dunne knows are the subject of significant other investigation, and I do not intend to comment on what I believe is Mrs Dunne's half-knowledge of this matter.

MR WALL: Why do we have a situation where registrars are not receiving adequate training and are at times forced to treat patients without the supervision of a trained radiologist?

MS FITZHARRIS: They are not currently in that position.

ACT Health—workplace culture

MR HANSON: My question is to the minister for health. Minister, I refer to your ministerial statement of 23 October 2018. You stated:

In March 2018 when the Minister for Mental Health and I announced ACT Health would become two distinct organisations, we did so in an effort to change to improve the culture within the organisation.

Minister, you said nothing about this at the time or for the seven months since it occurred. Why is it that you have come up with this new rationalisation of the restructure of ACT Health seven months after you made the decision with no mention of cultural change at the time?

MS FITZHARRIS: I do not believe that Mr Hanson is correct. I have continuously spoken about organisational culture in ACT Health for some time and I believe that a thorough look at the records would attest to that. I certainly do recall discussing it at media events on the afternoon of 23 March.

MR HANSON: Minister, will you now table in the Assembly all the written evidence dating from before 15 March of this year supporting your claims that the restructure was about changing culture, by the close of business at the end of the sitting week?

MS FITZHARRIS: I believe what I have said in this place is on the record in *Hansard*. The opposition are free, of course, to read that. There were a number of matters which led the government to the decision to separate ACT Health into two organisations. Those issues have been extensively canvassed in this place and were certainly part of the accreditation draft report that we received in March, which I have spoken at length about in this place.

MRS DUNNE: Minister, how was taking the decision to restructure in March without consulting ACT Health staff consistent with improving the culture of the organisation?

MS FITZHARRIS: Staff within ACT Health expect ministers to take leadership positions, and that is exactly what I have done. I outlined extensively this morning the process in place since March to lead to the separation on 1 October.

Government—priorities

MR PETTERSSON: My question is to the Chief Minister. In the two years since the 2016 ACT election, how has government been delivering on its commitments to the Canberra community?

MR BARR: I thank Mr Pettersson for the question and all of my colleagues for their hard work over the past two years. It has been a busy couple of years. Whilst we have been getting on with the job, those opposite have continued to exhibit the sort of churlishness you would expect from those in opposition. I am sure members would

agree that the important initiatives outlined in the ninth parliamentary agreement have been aggressively introduced through these first two years, with more to come obviously in the next two.

Mr Hanson: The cost of living. Rates. You are tripling rates; you're right on track with that.

MR BARR: I will spend a moment highlighting some of the most important commitments that we have already met: opening a new walk-in centre in Gungahlin—

Mr Hanson: The proliferation of drugs—that's going well! How's the health system going?

MADAM SPEAKER: Mr Hanson!

MR BARR: establishing the Office for Mental Health; expanding hospital in the home to care for 3,000 more Canberrans each year; providing grants for GPs to deliver more bulk-billing services; rolling out laptops for ACT high school students; delivering the future of education strategy to drive the next 10 years of achievement in our schools; achieving the full scheme roll-out of the national disability insurance scheme; starting consultation, scoping and design work on stage 2 of light rail to Woden; making off-peak bus travel free for pensioners and concession card holders; delivering \$30 million worth of new footpaths and active travel infrastructure; establishing the City Renewal Authority and the Suburban Land Agency to renew our city and town centres while making more land available for new homes; rolling out green bins to Weston Creek—

Mr Wall interjecting—

MADAM SPEAKER: Mr Wall!

MR BARR: Kambah, Tuggeranong and Belconnen; establishing the ACT Multicultural Council; establishing the Reconciliation Day public holiday; funding a new health centre for Winnunga Nimmityjah Aboriginal Health Service; and establishing the Family Safety Hub. I could go on but I believe the time is up. *(Time expired.)*

MR PETTERSSON: Chief Minister, how has the government been working to involve the Canberra community more often and in new ways while delivering its agenda over the past two years?

MR BARR: One of the important commitments that we made was to engage in more representative consultation with the Canberra community, and it is important to ensure that the decisions that we make reflect what the community needs, and to find ways to engage Canberrans that feed into their busy lives so that everyone has the chance to participate.

Opposition members interjecting—

MADAM SPEAKER: Mr Wall, Mr Hanson, if you want to have a conversation and humour amongst yourselves, take it outside.

MR BARR: One of the important steps we have taken is to embrace participatory democracy by using citizens juries, community panels and other deliberative forums to help inform important reforms. From the carers strategy to the better suburbs forum to the citizens jury on CTP reform, we are bringing Canberrans into the policy-making process from the start, with the community helping to set the objectives of reform.

Since 2016 we have conducted dozens of innovative consultations on issues as wide ranging as the new housing strategy through to the integrated public transport network. We will of course continue to look for new ways to involve Canberrans in decision-making about the big questions that our city faces as well, of course, as delivering on local infrastructure, because good government means being closely engaged with the communities that you represent.

MS ORR: Chief Minister, what are the government's priorities for the next two years?

MR BARR: Amongst the top priorities are to deliver a step up in our health services as this city's needs continue to grow. This will include more elective surgeries and making more health services more accessible; getting work underway on the SPIRE centre and the expansion of the Centenary hospital; and opening two new walk-in centres.

We will focus on opening a new public school in north Gungahlin and getting on with the work for the new primary school in the Molonglo Valley—

Opposition members interjecting—

MADAM SPEAKER: Chief Minister, could you resume your seat. Stop the clock. Members on my left, this is the third time that the Chief Minister has been on his feet and I have had to call you to allow the Chief Minister to answer the question. Chief Minister.

MR BARR: Thank you, Madam Speaker. We will focus on opening new public schools in growth areas and continue with the next stage of light rail so we can continue to see the benefits of significant investment in transport infrastructure and congestion busting, which is a very popular topic in politics at the moment.

We will help more Canberrans access secure, suitable and affordable housing through the scrapping of stamp duty for first homebuyers and a range of other initiatives to be released shortly under the government's housing strategy.

Every member of the government comes to work determined to deliver on the election commitments and the policy platform that we promised in 2016. We look forward to the opportunity to continue to deliver on that platform and that policy agenda, and

making a positive difference to ensure that Canberra remains Australia's most livable city, a very progressive and forward looking city with a very bright future.

Education—occupational violence

MS LEE: My question is to the minister for education. Minister, last week the ABC ran a story about a learning support assistant, with the pseudonym of Melanie, who worked for 10 years in disability education and was an experienced staff member. According to the ABC article, for six months, from the beginning of 2016, Melanie was injured on a weekly basis at school. She lodged 34 incidents of injury to the Education Directorate over this time but says that she received no advice and was assured that the student did not have a behavioural problem. Her injuries included bites and bruises. The only thing offered to her by the directorate was compression bandages to limit the bite penetration. Melanie is now in a mental health facility, having considered suicide, because of the psychological damage this has caused her. Minister why did it take so long for a case like this to come to light?

MS BERRY: It is a terrible thing when a worker gets injured when they go to work. That should not be the case. Every worker should have the right to return home safely in the evening after work. In this case, that has not happened. The ACT government has taken action. We are working very closely with the Education Union and with school staff to ensure that there are a policy and a plan around occupational violence to ensure that all our staff in schools can be safe at school. This is a difficult thing for the Education Directorate and the government to manage because there are two conflicting rights: the right of the worker to return home safely and go to work safely; and the right of the child to a decent education.

What we want to achieve and what all our school teachers and school staff want to achieve is an inclusive education system so that every child, regardless of how they learn, is supported in our schools, and so that our teachers, importantly, get the chance to do what they are passionate about: to provide a great education to our children. So from the very first meeting that I had with the Education Union when they spoke to me about occupational violence, that was the first instruction I gave to the Education Directorate: to take immediate action and make occupational violence and how we manage that a priority. We have done that but, as I said, it is a difficult issue. It requires a mature response, and the Education Directorate is providing that response.

MS LEE: Minister, why didn't you intervene earlier, or were you not informed?

MS BERRY: I did intervene. As I said, it was the very first instruction that I gave to the Education Directorate, following a meeting with the Education Union, to address occupational violence in our schools.

MISS C BURCH: Minister is this acceptable treatment of staff?

MS BERRY: Clearly not, because I have obviously done something about it.

Mrs Dunne interjecting—

MS BERRY: As I said, in my first meeting with the Australian Education Union, whom I am working very closely with—I know that that is not something that the Canberra Liberals can come to terms with: actually working with a union to achieve an outcome for workers in this town and I am doing that—the first thing that I did was to instruct the Education Directorate to take action—

Mrs Dunne interjecting—

MS BERRY: and make addressing occupational violence—

Mrs Dunne interjecting—

MS BERRY: Will you please stop interrupting me. This is a very serious issue and your sniping from across the side is not helpful.

Mr Coe interjecting—

MS BERRY: That was not the question that was asked. The question—

Mr Hanson interjecting—

MS BERRY: You are continuing to carry on. This is a very important issue: making sure that people can come home safely from work. The ACT is the only state or territory that is taking on this very difficult issue, by implementing a policy and a plan to address occupational violence in our schools.

Mr Hanson: That's ridiculous.

MS BERRY: Yes, it is ridiculous to have workers safe at work. It is ridiculous—from the Canberra Liberals. That is because you cannot bear the thought that workers will join their union and be represented by their union to ensure that they are safe at work. We want to make sure that teachers can do what they are passionate about in an inclusive school environment where every child, regardless of how they learn, gets support from the teaching profession and the teaching profession gets support from their employer, as they deserve, which they are getting.

Education—occupational violence

MR WALL: My question is to the Minister for Education and Early Childhood Development regarding attacks on teachers. Reportedly, the only support offered to a teacher who had been subjected to student bite attacks for six months was the application of compression bandages, which in any event did not prevent injury. Why does the directorate not have policies and practices in place that support and protect teachers?

MS BERRY: The member clearly was not listening to my previous response. I will say it again: in my first meeting with the Education Union I was informed that this was a very important issue for them.

Opposition members interjecting—

MADAM SPEAKER: Members on my left, it is apparent that the minister is going to stop answering while you are interjecting. So I would suggest that you remain silent. Minister.

MS BERRY: I instructed the Education Directorate to make occupational violence a priority. We now have a policy and a plan in place to address this very difficult issue, which is more than can be said for the Liberals who have done nothing but attack unions and their members and the right of a worker to be safe at work.

These teachers and school staff want to do what they are passionate about and support children regardless of how they learn. This policy which has been implemented in ACT schools is going towards addressing this very difficult issue, making sure our schools are inclusive and making sure that our teachers are safe.

MR WALL: Minister, why have you allowed teachers to be attacked in their classrooms for two years? Can you inform the Assembly what, now, is the policy in place to protect a teacher from student bite attack?

MS BERRY: I am pretty sure that I tabled this policy when I made the announcement. If I have not tabled it, I will. As I said when I tabled the announcement on the policy and plan for occupational violence in our schools, it is going to be a difficult issue. I said that we would get increasing awareness raised around this, because the only way that a policy can be properly implemented about this difficult issue of keeping our school staff safe and ensuring that every child is included in our schools, regardless of their background or how they learn, is for teachers to tell us what is going on.

We have asked for that to happen, and it is happening. There is an increase, and there will continue to be an increase, as we work out how we address this difficult issue. We are working closely with the union. We are working closely with teachers, schools and parents to make sure that our schools are inclusive and that our workers in schools get to go to work safely and get to leave work and get home safely.

MS LEE: Minister, when did you first become aware of the problem of assaults on teachers in schools, and when was your first meeting with the Education Union on occupational safety?

MS BERRY: Good: they have finally officially asked when my meeting with the Education Union was. I can get that information—

Mr Coe: You could have given this information without us asking, you know.

MADAM SPEAKER: Mr Coe, the question has been asked. Will you allow the minister to complete the answer.

MS BERRY: I can confirm that I launched the policy in July 2017 and, as I said, it was in my first meeting with the Australian Education Union, which should be in the calendar somewhere. I will look in my office if it has not been published. I will be able to give you the exact date. But I can assure you that I work very closely with the Education Union to ensure that the occupational violence policy and plan that have been implemented—

Opposition members interjecting—

MS BERRY: You know, it is—

Mr Gentleman: On a point of order, Madam Speaker, the opposition continue to interject during the answer from the minister, even though you have given them—

Opposition members interjecting—

Mr Gentleman: And they continue to interject while we are doing this point of order. I ask you to bring them to—

MADAM SPEAKER: I think I have indicated that the minister clearly is not going to answer the question when you interject. You have continued to interject. Please cease and allow the minister to answer.

MS BERRY: I was appointed as education minister in 2016, so it would have been around October 2016 that I met with the Education Union. That policy is being implemented. We will work with the schools and the teachers to make sure that they are safe in our schools. It is important to understand the seriousness of this issue. Of course it is very serious. We want to make sure that our teachers are safe in our schools, so we will continue to work on this difficult and sometimes quite complex issue. We continue to lead the country in this work. It should not be underestimated how difficult it is, but we want to make sure that we support school staff so that they can do the job they are passionate about.

Education—staff welfare

MRS KIKKERT: My question is to the Minister for Education and Early Childhood Development. Minister, why has the number of teachers and principals taking leave due to violence, harassment and bullying tripled over the past five years?

MS BERRY: It is an unacceptable circumstance that our school staff should be having to take leave because they have been treated in a way that is unacceptable. I think that the first thing for us as leaders in this town is to show the value and respect that we have for the teaching profession. In the same way we would appreciate and value the medical profession or a doctor with a diagnosis, we should absolutely respect the work of the teaching profession and not ignore this issue but make sure that we do everything we can to make sure our teachers are safe at school. But, alongside that, we need to make sure that our schools are inclusive so that everybody gets the chance to have a good education, that people are equally valued in our

schools and that people are supported in a way that makes sure that our schools are great places to be.

MRS KIKKERT: Minister, when did you first become aware that incidents involving attacks on teachers and support staff were increasing?

MS BERRY: As I said, I was appointed as education minister and it was brought to my attention by the Australian Education Union in my first meeting with them.

MS LEE: Minister, is reporting 34 times in a six-month period worthy of a better response than “put a bandage on it”?

MS BERRY: It is unacceptable for any worker in this town to go to work and be injured, and that is why the government has implemented the occupational policy and plan to ensure that our school staff, just like any other workers, get the chance to go to work and come home safely.

This is not a simple, easy issue to address overnight. It is a complicated and complex issue with competing rights that we need to address to ensure that everybody gets the same chance.

Opposition members interjecting—

MS BERRY: Madam Speaker, on a point of order—

MADAM SPEAKER: Members opposite. Mr Hanson, I think this morning I warned a number of you.

Mr Hanson: Madam Speaker, the minister said “point of order”. What is the point of order?

MADAM SPEAKER: The point of order is your continued interjections.

Mr Hanson: How do we know that?

MADAM SPEAKER: I am telling you that as far as I am concerned—

Mr Hanson interjecting—

MADAM SPEAKER: You are warned, Mr Hanson. Stop the clock, please.

Mr Gentleman: On the point of order, I ask that Mr Hanson withdraw the terminology “bad boss”. It is inappropriate.

Opposition members interjecting—

MADAM SPEAKER: Mr Hanson, it is a reflection on her capacity as a minister, I believe. So I ask you to withdraw.

Mr Hanson: Madam Speaker, I have heard the term “bad boss” used by that side of the chamber on countless occasions. If we are going to say that the term “bad boss” is unparliamentary, that is news to me. I do not think that that is on the list. I will withdraw in this case but I would ask you to come back and say whether we are not allowed to use the phrase “bad boss” anymore and the impact that might have on you lot.

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr Hanson, for withdrawing. Minister, have you finished?

MS BERRY: Yes.

Schools—computers

MS ORR: My question is to the Minister for Education and Early Childhood Development. Can the minister update the Assembly on the government’s delivery of a Chromebook to every public high school student?

MS BERRY: Yes, I can update the Assembly. The government went to the 2016 election with a commitment to provide every ACT public high school student with a laptop or tablet device. After being returned by the people of the ACT because of policies like this, which support Canberrans’ access to a decent life, we will continue to deliver on this important commitment.

Based on advice from the expert ministerial reference group, I determined that the government could deliver this commitment faster and to more students than initially anticipated: more students would get their laptop devices sooner. In the 2017 budget, the government allocated \$11.483 million to the three-year better schools for our kids technology-enabled learning initiative.

Mr Barr interjecting—

MADAM SPEAKER: Chief Minister, that won’t happen again, will it?

MS BERRY: Thank you, Chief Minister. During three weeks at the start of term 1 this year, the government’s Chromebook rollout began, with 14,886 devices issued to years 7 to 11 public high school students. A few weeks ago, the second procurement for this initiative was put out to tender, to give Chromebooks to year 7 students starting in 2019 as well as new students in years 8 to 12.

Members interjecting—

MADAM SPEAKER: I will let you get a bit of silence, Ms Orr, before you ask your supplementary. Are you right there, Mrs Dunne?

MS ORR: Minister, why is the government providing school students with these devices?

MS BERRY: The ACT government is delivering for Canberrans, regardless of their background or circumstances. On this side of the chamber, we believe in a community that helps everybody to access a decent life. We believe in equity. This election commitment is improving equity in education. In today's school education context, personal computing devices are a key enabler. Because of this initiative, irrespective of family circumstances, every public high school student will have an equal opportunity to access technology-based learning when and where they need it.

Every Canberran deserves the best quality education to get the most out of life. Education has the power to break down barriers, improve social equity and make sure that people lead happy and fulfilling lives. The government is investing in education equity through initiatives just like this one.

Notably, other state and territory governments are taking note and having a look at how they can follow the ACT's national leadership in this area. Thanks go to Caroline Chisholm School, in your electorate of Brindabella, Madam Speaker, and the Isabella Plains Early Childhood School. They recently hosted the Northern Territory education minister, who looked with great interest at our technology-enabled learning initiative here in the ACT.

MS CODY: Minister, how do the devices contribute to learning in a modern, digital world?

MS BERRY: In today's schools, a significant part of learning happens digitally, especially in the secondary school context. Providing equal access to devices like Chromebooks is key to enabling learning for all students. Students use the devices to develop capacity to analyse information, solve problems and communicate in a highly digital society, in line with the objectives of the Australian curriculum, which requires students to understand how to operate effectively in a digital world.

The Chromebooks also enhance student learning opportunities and experiences to collaborate and discover and, in doing so, produce responsible, literate and knowledgeable digital citizens. The objective is not to provide a technologically-driven curriculum but rather enable learning across curriculum areas.

Chromebooks were selected because these devices will best align with the ACT's public school IT infrastructure, another area where the ACT has been nation leading. Students are already equipped with access to a specialised Google education platform, where they can access a Google classroom and Google apps. Chromebooks integrate seamlessly with these apps and will ensure that all students are using a safe, secure and easily managed platform.

Education—NAPLAN results

MR PARTON: My question is to the Minister for Education and Early Childhood Development. Minister, the Grattan Institute has just released its state by state report card measuring student progress. It highlights that the ACT is the worst performer of all states and territories on a like for like basis, with students making two to three

months less progress than the national average, and that it has progressively got worse over the past eight years. Do you still claim that it is the fault of NAPLAN data and not failures in the ACT education system that we have these results?

MS BERRY: I do not recall blaming NAPLAN data for the results in the ACT. So if you have read that somewhere and can quote me on that, then do; otherwise you should correct the record. How NAPLAN data is used, whether it benefits children in their education, is what I have asked consistently and publicly. That is why the ACT government is leading a review of whether NAPLAN data, how it is used on the My School website, how it is reported and how data is compared, is useful in an education or whether it is doing more harm than good. That is what I have said.

With regard to the Grattan Institute's report, this is a very narrow picture—I think that that should be kept in mind—of what is actually happening in our schools. It also should be remembered that the data that has been used in this review is two years old now. It is from 2016. But the report does provide some good information and complements the work that the ACT is already doing in responding to the Auditor-General's report and Professor Lamb's recommendations as well as our future of education strategy, which was informed by over 5,000 conversations with the ACT community, including over 2,400 students, who will be most affected by an education in the ACT. Additionally the ACT government has announced that it aspires to extend early childhood education for four year-olds to three year-olds as well. This will all inform a better educational outcome for all of our children.

MR PARTON: Minister, do you still think that ANU researcher Andrew Macintosh, whose findings replicate those of the Grattan Institute, is wrong?

MS BERRY: Thank you Mr Parton. I think that some of the information that Macintosh used to analyse his data did not give a full picture. Mr Macintosh himself admitted that he is not an education expert.

I, on the other hand, have been listening to education experts and researchers—internationally renowned experts including Pasi Sahlberg from Finland, who is now with the University of New South Wales Gonski Institute, David Gonski himself, Professor John Hattie, Dr Chris Sarra, John Falzon, Christine Topfer from Tasmania, Tom Lowrey—ensuring that our school professionals are being provided with the most contemporary and up-to-date information to be able to provide the best possible education system in the ACT.

In addition to that, it has also been backed up through the conversations that I have been having with the ACT community about what they want to see in their schools in the ACT: an inclusive system that is equitable; one that gives every child the same chance regardless of their background to an equal education.

MS LEE: Minister, do you accept that there are issues with academic performance in the ACT and do you intend to take the Grattan Institute recommendations, which is at least the fifth report highlighting academic failures in the ACT, seriously?

MS BERRY: As I said, the data in the report is two years old and the ACT Education Directorate schools have already been implementing a whole lot of the work that has been recommended through that recent report, keeping in mind that it gives a very narrow picture of what is happening in our schools. There is a considerable amount of work that is happening across our school system to improve education outcomes for children.

What we have seen, and on the advice of researchers, professionals and well-recognised academics like Mr Gonski in his Gonski 2.0, is: when you address equity in a school system every child will achieve excellence. And that is what we are doing here in the ACT, because this is what a government which is progressive and wants to ensure that there are equitable outcomes for every person, regardless of their background, in our schools does. The recommendations that have been provided in the report complement the work that the ACT government is already doing.

Of course we happily listen to the advice of academics but we have also been having a very big conversation with the ACT community about the future of education and what our students, parents and teachers want from their school system, and that has also been backed up by all the experts that I have just referred to across the nation and across the world.

ACTION bus service—school services

MISS C BURCH: My question is to the Minister for Transport. Minister, on the afternoon of Tuesday, 16 October, due to an accident on Tillyard Drive, the 625 school bus from Melba Copland Secondary School was required to make diversions and to drop students off at locations other than their normal stops. Minister, one of the affected students was a 12-year-old boy who was dropped off two kilometres from his normal stop in unfamiliar surrounds. What processes and procedures are in place to ensure students' safety in such circumstances?

MS FITZHARRIS: Quite significant policies and procedures are in place. I am not aware of that incident; this is the first I have heard about that and I am certainly not familiar with the experience of that particular 12-year-old boy. I will take the question on notice. It would seem to me that that is not usual practice. If Miss Burch can provide further information, I would welcome that, and I will follow it up.

MISS C BURCH: Minister, what additional processes and procedures are in place to ensure the safety of young students with special needs when school buses are required to make diversions or drop them off somewhere other than their regular stop?

MS FITZHARRIS: I will take the question on notice but I also note that if there are children with special needs travelling on a dedicated school bus or on other buses, that would be quite different from those who are dropped door to door on special needs buses that also transport children around the territory. If further information can be provided, I can provide a fuller answer.

MRS KIKKERT: Minister, were procedures and processes followed in this particular case?

MS FITZHARRIS: As I say, it is the first I have learnt of this incident so I will take the question on notice.

Animals—dangerous dogs

MS LAWDER: My question is to the minister for transport and city services. Minister, Justice Mossop, in handing down his ruling on *Meyers v Commissioner for Social Housing*, stated:

In an urban community where crime rates are low, there is no reason why citizens need dogs that are of such a temperament as to represent a threat to the lives of other citizens.

Minister, how has the government responded to Justice Mossop's statements that Canberrans do not need dogs that are of such a temperament as to represent a threat to the lives of others?

MADAM SPEAKER: Just for clarification, I think that is to the Minister for City Services, not the minister for transport and city services. Mr Steel in response, please.

MR STEEL: I thank the member for her question. The government has undertaken an independent review of dog management in the ACT. The recommendations from that review are being implemented. That is our response.

MS LAWDER: Minister, why are dogs that attack, harass or are menacing towards people allowed to be rehomed or given back to their owner?

MR STEEL: I thank the member for her question. DAS staff investigate dog attack incidents and make an assessment based on the behaviour of the dog. We have some real professionals in DAS. I visited them just the other week, talking to them about how they undertake those investigations and they do take into account all aspects of a dog attack, including whether there is provocation and a whole range of other matters relating to the dog's behaviour, to determine what should occur in relation to that dog.

MR COE: Minister, will you now strengthen dangerous dog legislation to address the issues raised by Justice Mossop, especially given your experience having visited DAS over in Symonston?

MR STEEL: I thank the member for his question. We have some of the strongest dog laws in Australia here in the ACT as a result of the reforms that we as an Assembly instituted at the end of last year. We have just had a review into dog management from an expert panel that has provided us with recommendations. They have certainly recommended that the focus should be on responsible dog ownership. That is where we will be focusing our efforts in particular.

Health—bulk-billing

MS CODY: My question is to the Minister for Health and Wellbeing. Minister, how is the ACT government encouraging GPs to increase bulk-billing rates in my electorate and in the ACT more broadly?

MS FITZHARRIS: I thank Ms Cody for the question. Over the past decade the ACT government has undertaken a variety of programs aimed at increasing the bulk-billing rates here in the ACT so that GPs can continue the work they do, providing extremely high quality primary health care to our community. Our priority is to ensure that as many Canberrans as possible can access bulk-billing GP services. We have a strong commitment to universal public health care where and when Canberrans need it.

Our initiatives are working despite the federal Liberal government's extension of the Medicare rebate freeze, which GPs have said repeatedly, including here in the ACT, has made it very difficult for them over the past few years. According to Medicare statistics, GP bulk-billing rates in the ACT have climbed from 50 per cent in the June quarter of 2018 to 62.8 per cent in the June quarter of this year. But we want to improve those rates even further.

During the last election ACT Labor committed to increase GP bulk-billing rates, particularly where we knew there were gaps in service; that is, particularly on the south side of Canberra. Last year's budget provided \$1 million for a grant scheme to support the expansion of bulk-billing GP practices in Canberra's south. I am really pleased to say that three grant recipients have been selected, all demonstrating a strong commitment to bulk-billing and improved primary health care for clients in the Tuggeranong and Molonglo Valley areas. These are the Interchange General Practice, the Isabella Plains Medical Centre and the National Health Co-op. All three have demonstrated an ongoing commitment to providing bulk-billing GP services to south-siders. We are doing our part to ensure that health care in Canberra remains affordable.

MS CODY: Minister, what projects will be delivered as a result of the bulk-billing grants?

MS FITZHARRIS: I am really pleased to say that all the grant recipients demonstrate a very strong commitment to bulk-billing, particularly in the Tuggeranong and Molonglo areas where, indeed, two of those practices are expanding into opening new practices as a result of this grant.

The Interchange General Practice will receive a grant of \$500,000 to establish a new seven to eight-room general practice in Tuggeranong. When fully staffed, the practice will provide up to 35,000 consultations each year and have a particular focus on vulnerable population groups and issues such as drug or alcohol dependencies, sexuality and gender diversity, chronic conditions and mental health.

The Isabella Plains Medical Centre, a very busy local centre, will receive a grant of \$111,000 to expand and enhance their current practice. This grant will ensure that more patients will be bulk-billed, it will improve ease of access for many of their clients and improve privacy, particularly for vulnerable groups of patients. It will provide them the ability to purchase equipment to support continued and expanded visits to outreach clinics including, importantly, to a number of local residential aged care facilities or, indeed, in patients' homes.

The National Health Co-op has made an enormous contribution to expanding the ACT's bulk-billing rates over the past few years in a community ownership model. Their grant is \$350,000 to establish a new multidisciplinary general practice in the suburb of Coombs. This will support not only bulk-billing GPs but also allied health services such as physios, psychologists, nutritionists and dietitians. They will expand their hours as demand increases in this fast growing area of Canberra and they will also be able to employ allied health staff working across their network to spend more time in the Coombs practice to deliver more primary healthcare to local residents.

MR PETTERSSON: Minister, how does access to affordable primary health care reduce pressure on other parts of the health system?

MS FITZHARRIS: I thank Mr Pettersson for the supplementary question. As we know, the ACT has a growing and ageing population, which will result in increased demand for health and hospital services in the future. Our effort is to make sure that as many Canberrans as possible get the primary health care they need when they need it to reduce the likelihood that they may need to present to hospital.

Certainly the extended commonwealth freeze on Medicare rebates placed enormous pressure on GPs, and, as I said earlier, particularly on local ACT GPs and other parts of our primary healthcare network as individuals could not seek further bulk-billing services.

According to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, the ACT had 8,000 potentially preventable hospitalisations in 2015-16. Although this was the second lowest number in the country, there is still work we all need to do. A focus on improving preventative care, better maintaining people's physical and mental health, and improving the management of existing conditions through high quality primary health care like GPs and our nurse-led walk-in centres will help to manage service demand into the future and, importantly, lead to better health outcomes.

By supporting GPs to provide bulk-billing appointments, we are supporting access to primary health care here in the ACT. This is why the government established a grant scheme to support the expansion of affordable, accessible primary health care in Canberra's south. This is an important initiative to reduce pressures on other sectors of the healthcare system and improve the health and wellbeing of the community in the ACT.

In addition to the grants process, there were some remaining funds, and we will be working further with GPs, using those funds to find new and more innovative ways to continue to support GPs to provide bulk-billing services to the Canberra community.

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

Supplementary answer to question without notice Canberra Hospital—radiology department

MS FITZHARRIS: I refer to Mrs Dunne's earlier questions about radiology. I advise Mrs Dunne that the new clinical director was appointed approximately two weeks ago.

Papers

Madam Speaker presented the following papers:

Annual Reports (Government Agencies) Act, pursuant to section 15—Annual reports 2017-2018—

ACT Electoral Commission, dated 28 September 2018.

ACT Ombudsman, dated 2 October 2018.

Office of the Legislative Assembly, dated October 2018.

Standing order 191—Amendments to the Health (Improving Abortion Access) Amendment Bill 2018, dated 24 September 2018.

Auditor-General's Report No 3/2018—Tender for the sale of Block 30 (formerly Block 20) Section 34 Dickson—Recommendation 1 and Government response—Copy of letter to the Speaker from the Minister for Planning and Land Management, dated 16 October 2018.

Mr Barr presented the following papers:

Annual Reports (Government Agencies) Act, pursuant to section 13—Annual reports 2017-2018—

Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate (4 volumes), dated 24 September 2018.

City Renewal Authority, dated 22 September 2018.

ACT Public Service—State of the Service Report, dated 26 September 2018.

Administrative Arrangements—Administrative Arrangements 2018 (No 2)—Notifiable Instrument NI2018-523, dated 18 September 2018.

Annual Reports (Government Agencies) Act, pursuant to section 13—Annual reports 2017-2018—

Australian Capital Territory Insurance Authority, dated 2 October 2018.

Icon Water Limited, dated 17 September 2018.

Independent Competition and Regulatory Commission—Report 7 of 2018, dated 27 September 2018.

Ms Berry presented the following papers:

Annual Reports (Government Agencies) Act, pursuant to section 13—Annual report 2017-2018—Education Directorate, dated 28 September 2018.

Annual Reports (Government Agencies) Act, pursuant to section 13—Annual report 2017-2018—Suburban Land Agency, dated 18 September 2018.

Social housing stock—response to resolution of the Assembly 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 Sport and Recreation and Minister for Women) (3.29): For the information of members, I present the following paper:

Social housing stock, dated October 2018, pursuant to the resolution of the Assembly of 11 April 2018.

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

Leave granted.

MS BERRY: I am happy to table this response to the ACT Legislative Assembly resolution of 11 April 2018 about social housing stock. As the Assembly is aware, the ACT government is developing a new ACT housing strategy, which will be released in 2018. The new strategy will set out the government's commitment to social and affordable housing as an important part of ensuring we can continue to provide an equitable, diverse and sustainable supply of housing for all Canberrans into the future.

In the meantime, work is underway to look at the long-term management of the public housing portfolio and the final rollout of the government's unprecedented public housing renewal program of providing 1,288 modern and sustainable properties spread throughout Canberra that will be better suited to the changing needs of our public housing tenants.

The government also continues to set community housing targets on government land release that will provide for affordable rental properties targeted at the households who need them most. Affordable rental opportunities are also being supported through the government's \$1 million affordable housing innovation fund, which is trialling new solutions to long-term complex problems.

The ACT government signed up to the new national housing and homelessness agreement in June 2018, and both the multilateral and bilateral ACT agreements are publicly available on the website of the Council on Federal Financial Relations. While no new funding was provided, the ACT government's agreement to the NHHA has ensured that commonwealth funding of \$130.7 million will continue to flow to local housing and homelessness services providing critical services to our community.

The response also outlines how the government calculates the level of housing supply needed to respond to projected housing demand and the initiatives the ACT has committed to as part of this bilateral agreement under the NHHA and sets out the ministerial and directorate responsibilities for signing, implementing and reporting on the NHHA and associated initiatives. I commend this report to the Assembly.

Social housing incentives—response to resolution of the Assembly

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 Sport and Recreation and Minister for Women) (3.31): For the information of members, I present the following paper:

Social housing—Provision of incentives, dated October 2018, pursuant to the resolution of the Assembly of 1 August 2018.

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

Leave granted.

MS BERRY: I am pleased to table the response to the ACT Legislative Assembly resolution of 1 August 2018 about the provision of incentives for social housing stock. I announced the outcomes of the round 1 expression of interest under the government's new \$1 million affordable housing innovation fund on 21 August 2018. Community Housing Canberra Incorporated was awarded a grant of \$230,000 to establish a new affordable rental real estate management model within the ACT. This initiative will allow us to trial a new way of increasing the supply of affordable rental properties in the ACT.

As the Assembly is aware, the ACT government is developing a new ACT housing strategy, which will be released later in 2018. The new strategy will set out the government's commitment to social and affordable housing as an important part of ensuring we can continue to provide an equitable, diverse and sustainable supply of housing for all Canberrans into the future. One of the key goals we will focus on in the new strategy will be measures to increase the availability of affordable rental properties for lower income households.

So as not to anticipate the release of the new ACT housing strategy, the attached report does not commit to introduce any new incentives at this stage, but it identifies some of the implementation issues that may be involved with delivery. Some of the issues covered include cost impacts and viability, and feedback received during consultation with the community sector, community housing providers and the real estate and property sector as part of the development of the new housing strategy. I commend this report to the Assembly.

MS LE COUTEUR (Murrumbidgee) (3.33), by leave: I thank the minister for the report. I look forward to seeing the report, as distinct from the brief comments, so I can only make very brief comments myself. I am pleased to hear the government will look at long-term management, and I am looking forward to seeing how it calculates the demand for public housing. Clearly, however it is calculated at the moment, we have not got enough of it right now. I think every member of the Assembly would agree with that.

Again, I am looking forward to the actual statement because the motion dealt with more than just land tax; it also dealt with rates issues. We have the situation that if you are a tenant of a community housing provider and you are entitled to rates rebates, the community housing provider does not get those on your behalf.

It was disappointing to hear that the strategy does not seem to have covered land tax, but given the Assembly's clear positivity about land tax—the fact the motion was passed—I urge the minister to bring forward a bill to support a land tax exemption for affordable rentals to eligible low income Canberrans. We went through the debate this morning and discovered that a minister needs to put forward such a bill, so I call on the minister for housing to do that.

Papers

Ms Fitzharris presented the following papers:

Annual Reports (Government Agencies) Act, pursuant to section 13—Annual report 2017-2018—Health Directorate, dated 26 September 2018.

Annual Reports (Government Agencies) Act, pursuant to section 13—Annual report 2017-2018—Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate (2 volumes) (incorporating the ACT Public Cemeteries Authority)—

Dated 18 September and October 2018.

Corrigendum.

Annual Reports (Government Agencies) Act, pursuant to section 13—Annual report 2017-2018—ACT Building and Construction Industry Training Fund Authority, dated 12 September 2018.

Mr Gentleman presented the following papers:

National Environment Protection Council Act, pursuant to subsection 23(3)—National Environment Protection Council—Annual report 2016-17.

Annual Reports (Government Agencies) Act, pursuant to section 13—Annual report 2017-2018—

ACT Policing, dated 13 September 2018, in accordance with the Policing Arrangement between the Commonwealth and Australian Capital Territory Governments.

Crimes (Controlled Operations) Act, pursuant to subsection 28(9)—Annual Report 2017-18—ACT Policing Controlled Operations, dated 13 September 2018.

Crimes (Surveillance Devices) Act, pursuant to subsection 38(4)—Annual Report 2017-18—ACT Policing Surveillance Devices, dated 13 September 2018.

Mr Gentleman, on behalf of **Mr Ramsay**, presented the following papers:

Annual Reports (Government Agencies) Act, pursuant to section 13—Annual report 2017-2018—

Director of Public Prosecutions, dated 5 October 2018.

Justice and Community Safety Directorate, dated 5 October 2018.

Legal Aid Commission (ACT), dated 18 September 2018.

Public Trustee and Guardian, dated 4 June 2018.

Civil Law (Wrongs) Act, pursuant to subsection 4.56(3), Schedule 4—Professional Standards Councils—Annual report 2017-18.

Judicial Commissions Act, pursuant to subsection 61A(5)—ACT Judicial Council—Annual report 2017-18.

Annual Reports (Government Agencies) Act, pursuant to section 13—Annual report 2017-2018—ACT Gambling and Racing Commission, dated 18 September 2018.

Annual Reports (Government Agencies) Act, pursuant to section 13—Annual report 2017-2018—Cultural Facilities Corporation, dated 2 October 2018.

Mr Gentleman presented the following paper:

Planning and Development Act, pursuant to subsection 242(2)—Schedule—Leases granted for the period 1 July to 30 September 2018.

Mr Rattenbury presented the following papers:

Annual Reports (Government Agencies) Act, pursuant to section 13—Annual reports 2017-2018—

ACT Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment, dated 19 September 2018.

Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate, dated 28 September 2018.

Annual Reports (Government Agencies) Act, pursuant to section 13—Annual report 2017-2018—ACT Human Rights Commission, dated 5 October 2018.

Standing Committee on Economic Development and Tourism Report 4—government response

MS STEPHEN-SMITH (Kurrajong—Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs, Minister for Disability, Minister for Children, Youth and Families, Minister for Employment and Workplace Safety, Minister for Government Services and Procurement, Minister for Urban Renewal) (3.40): For the information of members, I present the following paper:

Economic Development and Tourism—Standing Committee—Report 4—*Inquiry into Government Procurement (Secure Local Jobs) Amendment Bill 2018*—Government response, dated October 2018.

I seek leave to make a short statement.

Leave granted.

MS STEPHEN-SMITH: I thank the Assembly for the opportunity to present the government's response to the Standing Committee on Economic Development and Tourism inquiry into the Government Procurement (Secure Local Jobs) Amendment Bill 2018. I want to take this opportunity to thank all members of the committee for their thoughtful consideration of this critical piece of legislation. As set out in the

government response, we have accepted five of the committee's recommendations, and the sixth has been accepted in principle.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the committee secretary for his work to facilitate the committee's consideration of this bill in a comparatively condensed time frame. Finally, I would like to put on record my thanks to those individuals, unions, businesses and industry groups who made submissions and appeared before the committee to provide evidence. In particular, I would like to extend a note of thanks to those workers who gave up their own time to appear before the committee.

As the committee's report notes, the government has also been undertaking a separate public consultation on a draft of the Government Procurement (Secure Local Jobs) Amendment Regulation 2018, the consultation draft of the Secure Local Jobs Code and the consultation draft model contract terms and conditions.

Relevant evidence provided to the committee inquiry as well as the submissions made to the public consultation are currently being considered in the finalisation of the subordinate instruments that form part of the overall secure local jobs package. I look forward to debating this legislation later in the week and finalising the remaining elements of the package to deliver on the ACT government's commitment to ensure that public money goes only to businesses that do the right thing by their workers.

Papers

Ms Stephen-Smith presented the following papers:

Annual Reports (Government Agencies) Act, pursuant to section 13—Annual report 2017-2018—Long Service Leave Authority, dated 14 September 2018.

Annual Reports (Government Agencies) Act, pursuant to section 13—Annual report 2017-2018—Community Services Directorate, dated 18 September 2018.

Mr Gentleman presented the following papers:

Subordinate legislation (including explanatory statements unless otherwise stated)

Legislation Act, pursuant to section 64—

Cemeteries and Crematoria Act and Financial Management Act—Cemeteries and Crematoria (ACT Public Cemeteries Authority Governing Board) Appointment 2018 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2018-235 (LR, 22 August 2018).

Civil Law (Wrongs) Act—Civil Law (Wrongs) Professional Standards Council Appointment 2018 (No 10)—Disallowable Instrument DI2018-258 (LR, 11 October 2018).

Energy Efficiency (Cost of Living) Improvement Act—Energy Efficiency (Cost of Living) Improvement (Priority Household Target) Determination 2018, including a regulatory impact statement—Disallowable Instrument DI2018-243 (LR, 6 September 2018).

Financial Management Act—Financial Management (Credit Facility) Revocation 2018 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2018-249 (LR, 13 September 2018).

Government Procurement Act—

Government Procurement (Non-Public Employee Member) Appointment 2018 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2018-246 (LR, 11 September 2018).

Government Procurement (Non-Public Employee Member) Appointment 2018 (No 2)—Disallowable Instrument DI2018-247 (LR, 11 September 2018).

Health (National Health Funding Pool and Administration) Act—Health (National Health Funding Pool and Administration) Appointment 2018 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2018-253 (LR, 4 October 2018).

Nature Conservation Act—Nature Conservation (Aquatic and Riparian) Action Plans 2018—Disallowable Instrument DI2018-240 (LR, 6 September 2018).

Official Visitor Act—Official Visitor (Children and Young People) Appointment 2018 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2018-256 (LR, 5 October 2018).

Public Place Names Act—

Public Place Names (Denman Prospect) Determination 2018 (No 2)—Disallowable Instrument DI2018-241 (LR, 3 September 2018).

Public Place Names (Taylor) Determination 2018 (No 5)—Disallowable Instrument DI2018-251 (LR, 20 September 2018).

Public Trustee and Guardian Act—Public Trustee and Guardian (Investment Board) Appointment 2018 (No 2)—Disallowable Instrument DI2018-257 (LR, 11 October 2018).

Racing Act—

Racing Appeals Tribunal Appointment 2018 (No 5)—Disallowable Instrument DI2018-237 (LR, 23 August 2018).

Racing Appeals Tribunal Appointment 2018 (No 6)—Disallowable Instrument DI2018-238 (LR, 23 August 2018).

Radiation Protection Act—Radiation Protection (Council Member, Chair and Deputy Chair) Appointment 2018 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2018-250 (LR, 20 September 2018).

Road Transport (General) Act—

Road Transport (General) Application of Road Transport Legislation (Pedicab) Declaration 2018—Disallowable Instrument DI2018-244 (LR, 10 September 2018).

Road Transport (General) Application of Road Transport Legislation Declaration 2018 (No 7)—Disallowable Instrument DI2018-248 (LR, 13 September 2018).

Road Transport (General) Application of Road Transport Legislation Declaration 2018 (No 8)—Disallowable Instrument DI2018-254 (LR, 4 October 2018).

Road Transport (General) Application of Road Transport Legislation Declaration 2018 (No 9)—Disallowable Instrument DI2018-255 (LR, 4 October 2018).

Road Transport (General) Concession Determination 2018 (No 2)—Disallowable Instrument DI2018-245 (LR, 10 September 2018).

Road Transport (General) Act and the Road Transport (Safety and Traffic Management) Act—Road Transport (Road Rules) Amendment Regulation 2018 (No 1)—Subordinate Law SL2018-19 (LR, 11 October 2018).

Road Transport (General) Act, Road Transport (Public Passenger Services) Act and the Road Transport (Vehicle Registration) Act—Road Transport Legislation Amendment Regulation 2018 (No 2)—Subordinate Law SL2018-16 (LR, 6 September 2018).

Road Transport (Safety and Traffic Management) Regulation—Road Transport (Safety and Traffic Management) Parking Authority Declaration 2018 (No 2)—Disallowable Instrument DI2018-236 (LR, 23 August 2018).

Sex Work Act—Sex Work (Fees) Determination 2018—Disallowable Instrument DI2018-242 (LR, 6 September 2018).

Taxation Administration Act—Taxation Administration Amendment Regulation 2018 (No 1)—Subordinate Law SL2018-17 (LR, 17 September 2018).

Tobacco and Other Smoking Products Act—Tobacco and Other Smoking Products (Fees) Determination 2018 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2018-239 (LR, 30 August 2018).

Tree Protection Act—Tree Protection (Advisory Panel) Appointment 2018 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2018-252 (LR, 4 October 2018).

Valuing teachers

Discussion of matter of public importance

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

The importance of valuing and supporting ACT teachers.

MS CODY (Murrumbidgee) (3.42): I am so glad that my MPI has been submitted for discussion today, because valuing teachers is an especially important topic at the moment. There are several major debates going on in our community about education. It is important that we make sure that those debates are had in an intelligent way. They are debates about ending homophobic discrimination in private schools. They are debates about the future of NAPLAN and about school funding. They are debates about how we make our education system stronger and ensure that every child, not just the ones with wealthier parents, gets the best start in life, and debates about what we do with the kids, like me, who did not fit in at school.

Too often, what presents itself as advocacy for education or children is just teacher-bashing in disguise. I may not be the one you would have expected to nominate this MPI for discussion. I am, after all, the high school dropout of the Assembly. When I hear others tell the story of the school teacher who inspired them to their political careers or their careers in general, I must admit that I scratch my head.

I was inspired to get here in the classroom of hard knocks, not the classroom of an inspiring teacher, although as my mother is a teacher I am sure she tried to be inspiring. But, again, that is not a criticism of the teachers involved. They did their work. They worked very hard to make sure that I was engaged. I just was not interested. They tried really hard. I was just—what is the parliamentary term?—a little brat. Let's go with that.

As we have all of these conversations, both in here and in society, it is important that we maintain respect for the teachers involved. Neither the children nor the teachers involved in education are robots that we as community leaders can program. Too often I hear people advocate that we make a rule that they must do this or demand that one approach or another be taken in education. The reality is that every kid is different and each teacher is also different. Therefore, how each teacher deals with each kid in each situation is going to be different.

Many of the solutions to how we, as community leaders and as the government of the ACT, manage education for our kids have to acknowledge that difference. Sometimes when I talk like this I get this really odd argument come back at me. It goes something like this: “If we are not going to stand around micromanaging teachers and curriculums and prodding and testing the kids to within an inch of their mental health, how will we make sure they get a good education?” I may have exaggerated the federal Liberal government's approach, but I am sure you all get what I mean.

The answer is actually quite simple: encourage and respect the professionalism of teachers. Respecting teachers and students requires us to put a lot of trust in those teachers. But it requires a lot more than that. It also requires us to give them the tools to do their job. Those tools are not just buildings and books; they are also training and professional development. After students themselves, the single most significant factor in the outcomes achieved in schools is the expertise and professionalism of the teachers facilitating learning.

I recently had the opportunity to hear from Minister Berry about the future of education strategy. This 10-year plan values teachers and provides them with the support they need to provide the education we want our kids to have. The future of education initiative enhances teacher skill through induction, partnerships between universities and schools, as well as highly effective continual professional learning programs that teachers in the ACT engage in as part of their professional role. Indeed, one of the four foundations in the future of education strategy is focused on teachers, on creating and supporting empowered, skilled educators across the system.

This includes ensuring high quality initial teacher training as well as ongoing professional learning, mentoring, coaching and support for educators and school

leaders. Unlike the federal Liberals, the ACT government is willing to put its money where its mouth is. For those who paid attention to the budget, you will recall that it included \$9.2 million over four years to make an immediate start on providing the best possible teaching in every classroom, every day, as well as enabling continued development of longer-term strategic reforms.

The government is investing in teacher capability in literacy and numeracy and building better links with the University of Canberra, where, like my mother, many ACT teachers gain their initial and post-graduate qualifications. This university partnership will also provide teachers with opportunities for professional learning through research collaboration and growing the University of Canberra as a centre for excellence in teaching.

Investing in teacher and school leaders with expert coaching and mentoring is also a priority. The ACT government is implementing a new teacher mentor program where school leaders will be provided with better training in mentoring and supporting teachers who are beginning their careers in one of the ACT's public schools.

These are just some of the initiatives that show that the ACT Labor government is valuing and respecting ACT teachers in the way we run the education directorate. When we make the professionalism of teachers one of the first principles of education policy, we can both nurture their skills and deliver better outcomes for our kids. We need to both support the professional development of teachers so they can make the right decision in educating our children and also get out of the way and let them make those decisions.

As I briefly touched on, my mother was a teacher in the ACT public school system for some 35-plus years. She has had the great privilege of holding her head up high and taking the skills that she developed here in the ACT to other states in Australia. Although she has retired from teaching in the ACT, the teaching bug has not left her. She is now looking to continue that career in Queensland. Far be it from me to stop her. I think she is mad. I really have no idea how teachers do it every day. They are the most incredible people, but good on them. It is teachers like my mum and the teachers that Minister Berry has talked about supporting that make our ACT education system fabulous.

As a product of the ACT education system and as a product of the ACT, I am proud to stand here today to congratulate Minister Berry on doing exactly what I have set out here; that is, letting teachers make decisions about how to engage with our children so that they get better learning outcomes. I am always proud to be part of a government that is delivering on helping teachers to better support students and better support their professional outcomes so that we end up with a wonderful education system; I do not know how you can improve on a wonderful education system, but there is always room for improvement.

Again, I am very proud to stand here having yet again drawn another MPI. The importance of valuing and supporting ACT teachers is a very important matter of public interest.

MS LEE (Kurrajong) (3.52): I thank Ms Cody for bringing on this matter of public importance about supporting and valuing ACT teachers. Teachers do a tremendously important job. Educating children is as hard as it is valuable. It is incumbent on a government to do what it can to ensure that teachers are able to undertake this important job in a safe and supported environment. We have nearly 4,000 teachers employed in ACT schools. Anyone who has visited our schools will know that for the most part teachers work in a warm, pleasant and inspiring working environment.

Our 87 government schools educate nearly 48,000 students. Those schools are clustered into four geographic networks. Principals are supported by school improvement directors who work closely with schools in their region. They in turn are supported and led by an executive director of school improvement, who has responsibility for implementing school improvement and planning cycles and day-to-day executive leadership of school operations, including management of critical issues and complex complaint management.

I note from recent responses to questions on notice that the number of executive officers and senior officials within the education directorate has increased, in some cases quite significantly, particularly at the executive level. That is all very well but that increase appears to have come at a time when teachers are under increasing pressures and under increasing threat of injury.

The much-lauded managing occupational violence policy that came into effect, or perhaps more correctly was included in the directorate's list of policies, in July 2017 is intended as a blueprint and protocol, as its title suggests, to manage violence in the education work space. We have more executive staff and we have more policies that someone can point to to show how proactive we are. But I note that, as at September this year, only 48 schools had participated in occupational violence training. Despite the policies, despite the additional layers of oversight, we have almost half of our schools not yet equipped to manage their workplace safety.

During the 2017-18 annual reporting period there were 3,139 work health and safety incident reports, up from 2,242 the previous year. The directorate likes to think that this increase in reporting is a positive step. Yes, the fact that staff are more willing to report incidents would be encouraging if it were only a failure to report that was the problem. But why so many in the first place, and what evidence is there that each of them had a satisfactory outcome?

There are about 6,800 staff employed in the education directorate; so that is almost half the number of incidents compared to the number of staff looking after the entire education system in the ACT. This is a staggeringly high ratio. When you put those employment numbers, reporting structures, incident report processes and the introduction of a new violence management policy into the mix, you wonder how and why circumstances could get so bad that WorkSafe is forced to intervene.

Madam Deputy Speaker, last week ACT families would have been as horrified as those of us on this side of the chamber to learn that we have teachers being seriously injured at work on a daily basis and that these attacks have gone on relentlessly, in

some cases for months and in other cases for far longer, and that little to nothing has been done to stop them.

We may never know how much teachers have been subjected to attacks at schools. We may never know which schools or how many schools have been affected. All we know is that there have been reports and that the WorkSafe commissioner has issued an enforceable undertaking to address the serious problem.

We have heard in the past eight days that teachers in the ACT do need more support. When a student is biting a teacher, I think we can all agree that the teacher needs more support than a compression bandage, especially if these bandages are not able to heal wounds but are to act as cushioning. A prophylactic compression bandage is surely not adequate support for our ACT teachers who find themselves in such challenging situations.

There is no evidence of support for these teachers and no evidence that the teacher workplace is valued, not at the school level, not at the network level, not at the directorate level and certainly not at the ministerial level. If the minister has issued a public apology to any teacher who found themselves in these shocking circumstances, then I have not heard it, and nor has the Canberra community.

The minister only said in her media conference that a cultural change was needed. The ACT education union was little better, being quoted as saying that tackling violence against teachers would be a difficult journey. A union spokesman said that we have now fewer people in schools accepting the unacceptable. So it seems it is acceptable that the ACT government failed to protect our teachers because it is a difficult journey.

It is interesting to reflect that it was a member of the government who felt the need to bring on this MPI based on a sentiment that, in all honesty, is self-evident. It speaks volumes for the state of education in the ACT and the minister's failure to look after the people she says she highly supports and values if we have to be reminded of the importance of supporting and valuing our teachers. Yes, Madam Deputy Speaker, the government backbench should be trying to show some support for our teachers because clearly the minister has not been able to do so.

When I visit schools—government, non-government and Catholic—I am always met with highly qualified teachers who are dedicated to their profession and to the students they teach. I am sure that there is no-one in this chamber—certainly not from the Canberra Liberals—who does not acknowledge the work they do.

It is hard to be a teacher. If you have one bad experience, you stay for the love of educating our future generation. Multiple experiences of the kind we have heard about in the media recently and no satisfactory response from a government that supposedly cares about you is certainly more than enough to make you seriously consider whether you should stay in teaching.

I am particularly pleased that Ms Cody has brought this issue to the Assembly's attention. Teacher safety and supporting and valuing our teachers are substantial

issues in the ACT. They need serious discussion and serious reflection as to how we get it right. I hope the minister is prepared to add more than a literal bandaid solution.

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 Sport and Recreation and Minister for Women) (4.00): I am very happy to talk on this important issue—the importance of valuing and supporting ACT teachers for every ACT child and young person and their family. Despite what Ms Lee has referred to in her speech, it is timely for us to be discussing this matter this week because World Teachers Day is celebrated in Australia this Friday, 26 October.

This is a good chance for us to stop to reflect on our education system, especially with the debates going on around the country and here in the ACT about our schools. It gives us the chance to think about our own experiences with the teachers in our lives who have helped shaped our childhood and maybe the teachers in the lives of our children. As I was sitting here I was trying to recall all of the teachers in my life—Mrs Sadler, Mr O’Keefe, Ms Dibbs, Mr Langford and school principals, Mr Cainier and Mr Southern—and there are a whole lot more, of course, that I could list.

I was out on the weekend with Ms Orr naming a park in Moncrieff and I came upon a former teacher of mine, Mr Allen, aka Roger, who will always be known to me as Mr Allen. He was a primary school teacher for me, and whilst he was very kind in his reflection of me as a student when he was the teacher, he was a little more honest with my daughter on reflections of my work as a student, and she was wickedly enjoying the reflections on my childhood with Mr Allen.

I thought about how that is a really great thing in the ACT: we can from time to time run into teachers we have had over the years and reflect on the difference they made in our lives, regardless of whether it is a small or large thing, and remember that they were a part of it.

Another teacher I fondly recall was known as a relief teacher at the time or an emergency teacher—that can often be the case when you are doing relief work with year 9 students. Mr Volk was our history relief teacher and he played the guitar. As year 9s in the 80s we were all very keen on Van Halen, Pink Floyd and that kind of music. So when Mr Volk came into the class the song we asked him to play on guitar was *Stairway to Heaven* because we knew it went for 12 minutes and it would take up half the class, and we could usually get him to have another go at it.

We did not do much school work, but we enjoyed the company of Mr Volk and hearing him play *Stairway to Heaven*. Although guitar was not the class at the time—it was history from my recollection—I learned the first couple of chords of *Stairway to Heaven*, which is an achievement in itself.

I understand the impact teachers have in our lives, small or large, career-changing or just dealing with bumps along the way. Certainly for the teachers working with my children it has not always been a smooth journey, and I appreciate all the work they do with my children, my friends’ children and the children of the Canberra

community in guiding them through their education journey as they turn from young people into adults.

As a government I am proud to stand on our record of valuing and supporting teachers in the ACT. I believe our record in this place is clear and very strong. As I said in my ministerial statement about releasing the future of education paper, it absolutely realised on investing and empowering learning professionals, making sure we respect our teaching profession the same way as we would respect the medical profession.

After personal factors related to a child, teachers are the most significant factor in student achievement, and school leaders have a vital role here. The government believes that teachers and school leaders are expert professionals, highly skilled at working with students and leading them on their journey.

The future of education strategy was importantly founded through a big conversation with more than 5,000 contributions including many teachers and school leaders, and it includes four foundations of focus on empowering learning professionals.

The ACT Teacher Quality Institute has been a national leader in supporting an expert teaching profession. Through the future of education strategy the government will take the TQI's role in sharing excellent practice and contemporary research evidence even further by exploring the creation of an ACT teaching evidence clearing house. We will do this in part through supporting teachers to build knowledge in their profession through, for example, action research projects.

As Ms Cody noted, the government has also invested in supporting our teachers. Education is one of the largest budget items for our government, and a large proportion of that spending is directed to teachers because we know education is a real leveller. It does not matter where you come from; everybody is of equal value and gets an equal chance in our schools to a great education and the great life that can come out of that.

I congratulate and thank teachers in the ACT for the work they do with our children and our families. There was mention of occupational violence in schools, and it is a very important issue. Of course, I have not come to this issue inexperienced; I spent over 15 years working for unions around workplace safety, particularly in schools in relation to contract cleaning. But for teachers it is something I have taken very seriously. I took immediate action as soon as it was brought to my attention by the Australian Education Union, whose input into this work I also take very seriously. I appreciate their representation of their members in our public schools.

Everyone is entitled to be safe at work, and those who work in education are no exception. The undertaking the government gave was given voluntarily. It was entered into with WorkSafe, and WorkSafe acknowledged the government's effort in this place. That undertaking reinforces the work already underway and already planned. This is a complex issue, and to suggest that it is not is just silly. It is complex, it is difficult, and it requires a mature response. I will continue to keep the Education Directorate focused on improving work, health and safety in schools.

As I have said before, teachers change lives. Their work breaks down disadvantage. It opens up life chances for children who would not ordinarily get that chance. I would like an education system that respects, supports and values the expertise of the teaching profession, and I am confident we are firmly on that path with the future of education strategy.

I thank Ms Cody for raising this very important matter in the Assembly. I am very happy to take the chance to say how much I value and support ACT teachers and thank them for the journey on which they have assisted me and my children and all other children in the ACT as they learn how to be grown-ups outside the education system and get on with their lives as decent and well-adjusted citizens of the ACT.

MR RATTENBURY (Kurrajong) (4.08): I am pleased to have the opportunity to speak about this matter of public importance this afternoon. The Greens recognise that teaching is a highly respected profession and want to take this opportunity to thank our dedicated and professional teachers for the work they do. Teachers across the ACT school system are essential for enabling the provision of a high quality, well-resourced and safe learning environment for all students.

We also acknowledge that to get the best possible education our children need the best possible teachers and great leadership from our principals. In order to ensure that we have the best possible teachers in the ACT, the government has a responsibility to maintain and improve the remuneration, conditions and career opportunities of all ACT education professionals. It is important to reflect that that is a broad group, whether it is teachers, teachers' aides, principals and various other staff who play such important roles in our education system.

We also understand that modern schools are increasingly complex environments, and we must ensure that our teachers feel supported to effectively teach children and young people with diverse needs, including students experiencing a disability or a learning difficulty, gifted and talented students, and students at risk.

With my Minister for Mental Health portfolio responsibilities I am acutely aware of the increasing rates of distress and poor mental health we are seeing and having reported to us amongst young people. This is an emerging challenge that we need to support our teachers to deal with.

Of course, the mental health of our teachers is also something we need to be aware of with teachers often working in high stress environments and being on the frontline of dealing with difficult individual and family situations. That is why the government is continuing to invest more in youth mental health services, providing more school psychologists in our schools and working to better coordinate the pathway between our school and community mental health services.

I am very conscious of the need for that partnership. Particularly given the lengthy school breaks that occur, the school counsellor is not necessarily always available. So one of the things we need to do is make sure that there is a good pathway between school and the non-school services.

In addition to this work, ACT Health is part of the ACT implementation and engagement advisory group for local implementation of the beyondblue national education initiative to support mental health promotion and suicide prevention activity for early childhood to secondary school.

ACT Health also funds Mental Illness Education ACT, better known as MIEACT, to provide programs such as the school education program and the anybody's call program to students and teachers in schools. As part of these programs, teachers are given the skills to deal with stigma, create safe environments and encourage help-seeking behaviour and recovery in their students.

These are just a few examples of the kinds of initiatives which support the mental health and wellbeing of our students, but also our teachers, and which help our teachers to best respond to the changing needs of each schooling community and each cohort that comes through their schools.

I think it is fair to say, and it has been reflected in the discussion today, that being a teacher is not an easy job. It is one that requires skill, patience, compassion and dedication to the welfare of our young people and their families. I am sure most teachers would add a few other traits to that list. It is often said that in addition to their classroom duties teachers are also required to be nurses, psychologists and social workers among the many other and varied roles they fulfil on a daily basis. We are grateful to our teachers for their hardworking commitment to shaping the next generation and providing all students with the opportunity to achieve their potential.

I also want to take this opportunity to recognise that our school system has faced some challenges in recent years. We need to keep working with our principals, teachers and families to respond to these issues and reverse some concerning trends. Tomorrow we will have the opportunity to go into detail about the recent WorkSafe ACT investigation into occupational violence in our schools. While I do not want to pre-empt the debate we will have as part of private members' business tomorrow, it is important to reiterate that everyone is entitled to a safe and supportive work environment, and our teachers are no exception.

Providing care and support for children with complex needs is never easy. We must ensure that our teachers have the skills and supports in place so that their safety is not put at risk as they seek to provide that care and support. Last year's budget included more than \$18 million over the forward estimates to provide needs-based funding for students with a disability and/or complex health needs in ACT's public schools. The enforceable undertaking agreed between WorkSafe ACT and the Education Directorate outlines further investments to support the safety and welfare of staff. This is a crucially important issue and one that must be taken seriously.

We have, of course, recently experienced similar concerns about staff safety in our inpatient mental health wards, and I have committed to looking at ways to change our practices and arrangements to ensure that risks are mitigated and incidents are prevented wherever possible. I look forward to further discussion about how we can better prevent and manage occupational violence in our schools as part of tomorrow's debate.

I also want to briefly mention the report released yesterday by the Grattan Institute looking into student progress on key indicators such as literacy and numeracy. The finding that ACT students are two to three months behind comparable students in other jurisdictions in some of these indicators is concerning and follows similar findings from other independent reports over recent years.

As I mentioned earlier, in order to improve these students' outcomes, we need the best teachers and strong leadership from our principals. Providing our teachers with opportunities for professional development, supporting them working with complex students, and providing them with the remuneration and resources they need are all essential to ensuring that our students can achieve the best possible results.

We have discussed this issue previously in this place and the recently released future of education strategy will provide opportunities to address this concerning trend. But we must continue to monitor these results and if we do not start to see improvements, then further action will be required.

Teachers are a crucial part of our education system and our society as a whole. Teachers play a central role in the lives of children for the formative years of their development, and the importance of teachers is something that cannot be underestimated. I thank Ms Cody for bringing forward this matter of public importance today and am pleased to reiterate the Greens' commitment to supporting and valuing our teachers in the territory.

Discussion concluded.

Justice and Community Safety—Standing Committee Scrutiny report 22

MS LEE (Kurrajong) (4.15): I present the following report:

Justice and Community Safety—Standing Committee (Legislative Scrutiny Role)—Scrutiny Report 22, dated 16 October 2018, together with a copy of the extracts of the relevant minutes of proceedings.

I seek leave to make a brief statement.

Leave granted.

MS LEE: Scrutiny report 22 contains the committee's comments on four bills, eight pieces of subordinate legislation and seven government responses. The report was circulated to members when the Assembly was not sitting. I commend the report to the Assembly.

Justice and Community Safety—Standing Committee Scrutiny—reference

Motion (by **Ms Lee**, by leave) agreed to:

That:

- (1) the draft Integrity Commission Bill 2018, as soon as it is made available, be referred to the Standing Committee on Justice and Community Safety (Legislative Scrutiny Role) for consideration and report;
- (2) the Committee is to report by 27 November 2018;
- (3) if the Assembly is not sitting when the Committee has completed its inquiry, the Committee may send its report to the Speaker or, in the absence of the Speaker, to the Deputy Speaker, who is authorised to give directions for its printing, publishing and circulation; and
- (4) the foregoing provisions of this resolution, so far as they are inconsistent with the standing orders, have effect notwithstanding anything contained in the standing orders.

Adjournment

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

That the Assembly do now adjourn.

Schools—visits

MS LEE (Kurrajong) (4.17): Over the past couple of months I had the privilege and the pleasure to visit several more schools and I want to focus today on just two because their stories are quite similar—Richardson Primary School and Kaleen UC high.

Richardson Primary School is a small government school with an enrolment of 170 in the latest school census. It is, in fact, the smallest government primary school in Canberra but, boy, does it punch above its weight. The minute you arrive at the school you have a sense that the school is valued, is alive and is a place where children are keen to be and where children will learn. The foyer is an eclectic mix of mosaic, amazing graphic artwork, achievement awards, school activities and issues that the school and its students think are important.

When you meet the principal you understand why the school is so upbeat. Anna Wilson has been at the school for two years and in that time has inspired students, the teaching staff, parents and the local community to make learning a valued goal and Richardson primary a school to be proud of.

There are many positive things to say and hear about this school, from their breakfast club every day of the school week, which is supported by a local church, to the before and after school care they offer because they recognise that working parents need to be able to put their children in a safe environment. A visit to the two kindergarten classes, the ladybugs and the bees, which each have only a dozen or so pupils, is a kaleidoscope of colour, words, numbers, pictures, drawings, books, just the best start

for any young person. I have never seen a more appealing kindergarten space. Full marks to the ladybugs teacher, Mrs May, who allowed us to interrupt her reading class.

There are activities at lunchtime: Lego clubs, sports activities, master chef classes supported by Communities@Work where a box of produce arrives at the school and the challenge is for students to make something yummy out of it. We heard that the zucchini muffins last week were very popular. There is a YWCA clubhouse located at the school, and each Wednesday is a waste-free day. Each class is assessed for how much waste they have brought in their lunch boxes, and scores are displayed each week on a wall in the foyer and, boy, does it get competitive.

Great efforts have been made to develop a positive behaviour culture and DABs are given out to students for a range of positive behaviours. The house that receives the most DABs over a period gets to have their house colours displayed on the DAB model and the house captain must do a DAB in front of the Assembly when receiving the statue.

Richardson Primary is not one of those schools blessed with high SES-level demographics or a great history of success. In fact, in previous years truancy, suspensions and other challenges were commonplace. But the support of the school community, a principal who was determined to make Richardson the best it could be and an attitude of belief in the school by the staff and the community have done wonders.

The changes in this school are not the result of bucket loads of money; it is not picket fences and shining new laptops; it is the belief that a good leader produces great teams, teams that collaborate, share ideas and measure their success. Richardson Primary School has a whole-school approach to teaching and learning.

Key principles include students being able to explain what they are learning and why, teachers knowing the needs of every student, feedback being given regularly, students working cooperatively and, most important of all, students being responsible for their learning. With that approach, recently the school won the STEM challenge for local schools. As the principal herself said, who would have believed it possible?

Another school that has stared down negative attitudes, difficult culture and more than the usual number of students with complex needs and challenging behaviours is UC Kaleen high. It is well known that in recent years Kaleen struggled to attract even local families; it was “anywhere but Kaleen” for parents with children graduating from local primary schools. Enrolments were declining, its reputation was poor and Kaleen was looking like a basket case. No more! The school is growing; there is a sense of pride among the students, three of whom I met who were very impressive young people with a clear sense of where they wanted to be in life.

The range of courses on offer includes agriculture, woodworking, languages. I might say, their facilities would be the envy of many commercial enterprises. They have strong local engagement with such groups as the model-train makers, who are able to use their facilities and share their knowledge with the students.

Again, this is not the results of bucket loads of money being thrown at the school; it is through the dedication and belief of the staff and starts at the top with the dedication, determination and leadership of the principal, Lana Read. This school is on the move. Their web site says:

Kaleen is a professional learning community, committed to doing whatever it takes to ensure all students achieve success.

And that is demonstrated throughout the school.

Both schools demonstrate the importance of a strong community, parental involvement and a focused teaching team. The ACT Education Directorate has focused obviously on getting some less-than-average schools up to scratch. Let us hope that it does not mean that we take our eyes off the ball regarding our high-achieving schools. However, recent research would suggest that we might be at risk of doing so.

Girls takeover parliament

MR PARTON (Brindabella) (4.22): Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. I rise to speak about the Jasiri girls takeover parliament program, because I think it is genuinely important. I think it is so important for us to inspire young women to consider becoming involved in the political process.

I would love to see more women involved in politics in this country. I am so genuinely proud to be a part of a parliamentary team which is majority female. We have six of the best elected women in the country on this parliamentary team. It is my great pleasure to work with them every day in representing the people of Canberra. And of course we have done so without quotas.

Congrats to Caitlin and Ashleigh for their work in constructing the girls takeover parliament program. My office took on one of the program participants for a week. I am convinced that we got the pick of the bunch. Mariam Abouelnasr joined us last week and we put her to work. She was involved heavily in pretty much everything that the Parton office did in that week. She was insightful, thorough and wonderfully positive in everything that she did. She did say to me late in the week that, for her, the pivotal moment was being a part of a very small and intimate discussion with former Chief Minister Kate Carnell, who is such a motivational and inspirational speaker. Special thanks also to the former President of the Senate, Margaret Reid, for also speaking to participants and everyone who played a role in that week.

I would like to read some of what Mariam wrote for us, in view of it being rolled out in adjournment debate. This is what she wrote. I quote directly:

As part of the Girls Takeover Parliament program I have been fortunate to join Mark Parton's office for a week. It has been an amazing experience to see the inner workings and a day in the life of an MLA. I have learned so much about the legislative assembly and politics in general and have truly enjoyed doing so.

It's been great to see a profession in which each day you can make a difference in some way for someone, a profession in which you can truly contribute to the greater good of society. It's been a privilege to be welcomed into Mark's office and to really feel like part of the team for my time there.

I loved being a part of this program and wholeheartedly encourage young women to take part in it next year. It's run by inspiring people who have so much wisdom to share. Not only will you experience the legislative assembly, but you will also undergo two intensive training days in which you will be mentored by the most incredible women who have amazing stories and backgrounds.

I have already begun implementing the skills I learnt from these mentors in various aspects of my life. In addition, you will meet other likeminded young women and forge tight friendships with them. It is so rewarding to be surrounded by so many intelligent, curious and talented minds and to be able to bounce ideas off each other and share world views. It is a great way for girls to learn to back themselves in fields of leadership and get involved in roles where they can truly influence the future of Australia.

Well said, Mariam, well said.

Brindabella electorate

MS J BURCH (Brindabella) (4.26): Spring has well and truly arrived in the Brindabella electorate. I experienced that firsthand when I was out in the suburb of Theodore delivering my spring newsletter to households. Spring has also marked some important new projects for the ACT government that it is delivering in and around the Tuggeranong region. They include improvements to the Mt Taylor car park, providing funds to improve bulk-billing services in our suburbs and upgrades to the Tuggeranong town centre.

Tuggeranong is very blessed to have many great views, recreational areas and open spaces. Undoubtedly Mt Taylor is one of those assets that we have, with more than 4,000 walkers and runners taking in the views from the top of the mountain each month. But the need for upgrades has been at the forefront for users and the government alike.

Recently I was down at Mt Taylor with Minister Steel and Taryn Langdon, a local who is a strong user of Mt Taylor, to announce some upgrades to the area. That includes improvements to the carpark. The carpark will be improved—it will be chip sealed—and a dedicated single entry and exit point will be constructed there to improve safety and management of the traffic.

Additionally, a curb barrier will be placed on the roadside edge just up from Mannheim Street. We do not want to see people come up and dash across busy Sulwood Drive. Those improvements will certainly make users safer in the area. It will no doubt entrench Mt Taylor and the views from Mt Taylor as a very popular bit of activity for one and all.

For many years before I came into this place I worked as a nurse. Access to primary healthcare and healthcare services is very important to me. Improving healthcare is

equal to improving access to primary healthcare and bulk-billing. That is why I was very pleased to join the minister recently down at Isabella Plains Medical Practice to announce the government's bulk-billing general practice grants funds. This will see two initiatives brought into the Tuggeranong Valley. One is an improvement to the great existing services out of Isabella Plains Medical Centre. The grants have provided an additional \$111,000 to provide equipment for outreach clinics and home visits, which is a very good outcome for our community.

Finally, I was also very pleased to join Chris Steel, in his early days of being appointed as the Minister for City Services, down in Tuggeranong town centre through the laneways to share with him my vision of Anketell Street and the connection through to that laneway down into the lake. The laneway is a key part of our town centre. It has been under-utilised and, sad to say, probably a little bit unloved and unkempt for some time. But there is work afoot and certainly great ideas to be had.

The gazebo has gone. That has cleaned up the area significantly. Certainly the plans for that connection through the laneway from Anketell down to the lake look fantastic. I encourage all with an interest to make sure that we get this right. The members of the Tuggeranong community are very vocal in making sure that we listen to them. We want to listen to them; we want to hear their opinions. I encourage everybody to go onto the your say website. Have a look at the plans for that connection from Anketell Street down to Lake Tuggeranong. Let us know what you think. With all that advice to hand, with my enthusiasm and the enthusiasm of the community, those connections from Anketell Street down to Lake Tuggeranong will be a reality in the hopefully not so distant future.

Ian Kiernan AO—tribute

MS ORR (Yerrabi) (4.30): I rise this evening to pay my respects to the late Ian Kiernan, founder and chairman of Clean Up Australia. It is difficult to quantify the impact Ian made during his life, as his work to improve Australia's natural environment crossed generations and borders.

As members know, Clean Up Australia is now an annual event for schools, families and other community groups to come together and get on with cleaning up their local environment. Since the inaugural clean-up event, which Ian organised to be held on Sydney Harbour, Clean Up Australia has grown into a national movement in which millions of Australians come together to clean up our environment.

Ian's impact can also be found in Clean Up the World, a campaign which now includes 30 million volunteers from 80 countries as well as the significantly increased awareness, which most of us may not even realise we have, of environmental conservation. Ian's passion and commitment for conservation through community mobilisation led Clean Up Australia to go beyond being just a one-time community event. Clean Up Australia is now a world-renowned organisation that leads the Clean Up Australia Day campaign each year.

Since that first clean-up, the way we as a nation think about littering has evolved, and Ian's philosophy of identifying the problem and the solution and then just getting on with the fix-up is something Australians have come to deeply value. Ian Kiernan's vision created Clean Up Australia and, as a result, thousands of Canberrans have mobilised over the years to take part in both hands-on and mindful environmentalism.

I personally felt Ian's impact when I regularly took part in clean-ups when I was a kid, with my Girl Guide group, along with my neighbours and my friends. More recently, with the help of Clean Up Australia, I have been able to hold my own grassland and waterway clean-ups across my electorate of Yerrabi. Clean Up Australia has always helped to facilitate these clean-ups by providing resources for volunteers to participate. Last weekend I held one of these events at the north Mitchell grasslands in Franklin.

The passion and commitment that volunteers in my electorate give to each clean-up reflect exactly the attitude Ian Kiernan promoted and what I believe he would want Australians to continue to display. I encourage all my constituents to get involved in events like these to honour Ian's vision for Australia's environment and to give back to our local community.

Ian's original vision has grown into one of Australia's largest, most successful volunteer movements and reflects a strong national character. In honouring Ian's legacy, it is important to remember that Ian believed that Clean Up Australia belonged to its volunteers. We will probably never be done cleaning up Australia's environment but, because of Ian Kiernan's impact, Australia is a much cleaner and healthier place now than it would have been without him.

Mental Health Month

MR RATTENBURY (Kurrajong—Minister for Climate Change and Sustainability, Minister for Corrections and Justice Health, Minister for Justice, Consumer Affairs and Road Safety and Minister for Mental Health) (4.33): Mental Health Month is a global event held annually each October to raise awareness and reduce stigma around mental illness. There has been a terrific series of events taking place here in the ACT, and I wanted to take the opportunity to reflect on a few of those.

Each year, one in five Australians experience a mental health issue, and approximately half of all individuals will experience issues with mental health in their lifetime. Mental Health Month is a yearly reminder of the responsibility we all share to reach out and support those in the community who suffer in silence. Mental Health Month gives us all the chance to share the message that it is okay to get help for mental illness and that it is a sign of strength, not weakness.

This year the theme for Mental Health Month in the ACT is identity and growth. This theme was suggested by students from Hawker College and it means knowing who you are, accepting the past and growing into your future. Students went on to explain that mental illness should never define us. It is only one small part of the person we are; it cannot stop us from accomplishing everything we want to achieve. We need to be able to say, "I'm me. I'm okay with me. I wouldn't change a thing." This is a very

positive attitude towards mental health expressed by the students of Hawker College and I personally want to thank them for their contribution to this Mental Health Month here in the ACT.

As I said, there have been some key events in the ACT. We had the lived experience showcase coordinated by Julia Bocking, a consumer and academic at the University of Canberra. It was held here at the Assembly on Wednesday, 3 October, and it included a screening of the film cleverly titled *Madness Sans Frontieres*, which talked about the lived experience and really sought to bring that important perspective to the discussion around mental health.

The mental health awards, which were also hosted here at the Assembly, were coordinated by Simon Viereck and the Mental Health Community Coalition team. These awards recognise individuals and organisations in our community who make an enormous contribution to the mental health sector in the ACT and by doing so enrich our community through their work by sharing their stories. There are a number of categories, and I would like to mention each of the winners.

There was the consumer of the year, Matthew Martin. Matthew has a great story, and he has been very courageous in sharing it widely in the community, of how mental health suddenly caught up with him. That would be the best way to describe it. Matthew spoke at the opening of the Dhulwa mental health facility a couple of years ago now and has continued to be an excellent advocate for the mental health issue and cause.

The carer of the year award went to Natalie Malcomson. Natalie is particularly focused on the issue of helping carers of people with bipolar disorder. She runs a monthly support group and facilitates a 12-week family connections program. Natalie is very passionate about the issue of BPD.

The promotion, prevention and early intervention program of the year was won by Menslink. I do not think I need to add much about Menslink in this place; it is a well-known organisation that runs terrific programs for young men.

The commendation award for mental health promotion, prevention and early intervention went to Tony Baker, who is the go-to guy for health and wellbeing in the building and construction industry and I think is well known across Canberra for that.

The reciprocity award went to Katrina McLean for her work with the Richmond Fellowship over the past nine years.

We also had the mental health volunteer of the year award, which was jointly awarded to Eunice Jolliffe, Ros Williams and Ann Finlay, three mothers who have had the terrible experience of having to go through the coronial process and have used that experience to advocate for improvements.

The David Perrin award was given to Rose Beard. This was one of the really inspiring awards on the day. Rose is well known in the community. Rose lives with and negotiates complex mental illness, disability and chronic illness related to an ongoing

battle with cancer, but she is also a strong advocate in the community for the mental health cause. Finally, the Michael Firestone memorial scholarships were presented to Delia Quigley and Sian Jackson.

The month also included the Belconnen community gallery's *Piece of Mind* exhibition run by the Belconnen Community Service. That was on from 9 to 19 October and was an excellent display of artworks by people with a lived experience of mental health issues. We also had the mental health and wellbeing expo in Civic, with over 70 local organisations participating, again run by the Mental Health Community Coalition.

You can see that right across the community there has been a terrific month of events, and I thank all of the organisers.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

The Assembly adjourned at 4.38 pm.