



DEBATES
OF THE
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
FOR THE
AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

DAILY HANSARD

Edited proof transcript

5 June 2018

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Tuesday, 5 June 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.

Justice and Community Safety—Standing Committee Scrutiny report 18

MS LEE (Kurrajong) (10.02): I present the following report:

Justice and Community Safety—Standing Committee (Legislative Scrutiny Role)—Scrutiny Report 18, dated 29 May 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 18 contains the committee’s comments on seven bills, 20 pieces of subordinate legislation and three government responses. This scrutiny report deals with some recurring issues for the committee and, given the recurrence, I raise a few points for the benefit of all members.

The first issue is about instruments of appointment and the need for such instruments, together with their explanatory statements, to address any formal requirements in relation to the appointment—in particular, whether or not the appointee is a public servant. The reason this is important is because under the Legislation Act they are the only non-public-servant appointments that are disallowable and, as a result, the only non-public servant appointments that are subject to scrutiny by the committee in its legislative scrutiny role.

The second issue relates to strict liability offences. Since its establishment, the committee has maintained that strict liability offences, which are offences that remove the presumption of innocence, protected by subsection 21(2) of the Human Rights Act, need to be justified in the explanatory statement for the relevant instrument. In particular, the committee has required that explanatory statements explain why it is necessary that offences need to be strict liability offences.

In the present scrutiny report, the committee deals with a subordinate law that creates over 100 new strict liability offences but, despite there being a two-page discussion in the explanatory statement of “human rights considerations”, this does not address the committee’s oft-stated concerns in relation to strict liability offences.

In the same scrutiny report, the committee positively comments on another subordinate law, the explanatory statement for which addresses the committee’s concerns in relation to strict liability offences in a way that the committee thought

should be commended. I commend agencies to the approach demonstrated by that subordinate law.

In making these comments, I state, for the benefit of all members and agencies, that the committee's website includes a document entitled *Subordinate legislation—technical and stylistic standards—tips/traps*. It sets out the committee's requirements and expectations in relation to subordinate legislation that create strict liability offences, as well as the committee's requirements and expectations in relation to other recurring issues for the committee. I encourage all members and agencies to revisit this document to reduce the committee's seeking further comment, thereby reducing more work for the agencies.

Once again, I thank the legal advisers to the committee, Daniel Stewart and Stephen Argument, and the secretariat, for their assistance in preparing this scrutiny report, which dealt with a number of pieces of legislation. I commend the report to the Assembly.

Planning and Urban Renewal—Standing Committee Statement by chair

MS LE COUTEUR (Murrumbidgee) (10.04): Pursuant to standing order 246A, I wish to make a statement on behalf of the Standing Committee on Planning and Urban Renewal. At a private meeting on 14 March 2018, the committee resolved to undertake an inquiry into development application processes in the ACT. The committee has noted the high level of public interest in the inquiry but has also received extensive feedback from the community requesting additional time to respond and provide a submission to the inquiry. Consequently, the committee has resolved to extend the closing date for submissions to the inquiry until Friday, 3 August 2018.

The committee wishes to thank those who have already contributed to the inquiry and encourages all Canberrans to share their views with the committee and make a submission to its inquiry into engagement with development application processes in the ACT. The committee intends to report by the last sitting day in November 2018.

Standing orders—suspension

Motion (by **Mr Gentleman**) agreed to, with the concurrence of an absolute majority:

That so much of the standing orders be suspended as would prevent:

- (1) any business before the Assembly at 3 pm this day being interrupted to allow the Treasurer to be called on forthwith to present the Appropriation Bill 2018-2019 and the Appropriation (Office of the Legislative Assembly) Bill 2018-2019;
- (2) (a) questions without notice concluding at the time of interruption; or
(b) debate on any motion before the Assembly at the time of interruption being adjourned until the adjournment questions in relation to the Appropriation Bill 2018-2019 and the Appropriation (Office of the Legislative Assembly) Bill 2018-2019 are determined;

- (3) at 3 pm on Thursday, 7 June 2018, the order of the day for resumption of debate on the question that the Appropriation Bill 2018-2019 be agreed to in principle, being called on notwithstanding any business before the Assembly and that the time limits on the speeches of the Leader of the Opposition and the Leader of the ACT Greens be equivalent to the time taken by the Treasurer in moving the motion “That this Bill be agreed to in principle”; and
- (4) (a) questions without notice concluding at the time of interruption; or
(b) debate on any motion before the Assembly at that time being adjourned until a later hour that day; and
(c) notwithstanding the provisions of standing order 74, presentation of papers may be made prior to the suspension for lunch.

Safer families

Ministerial statement

MS BERRY (Ginninderra—Deputy Chief Minister, Minister for Education and Early Childhood Development, Minister for Housing and Suburban Development, Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence, Minister for Women and Minister for Sport and Recreation) (10.07): Today I am delivering the second annual safer families statement. This statement will highlight some of the significant achievements of the ACT government and the community over the last 12 months, and will provide a reminder of why we must continue on this path of greatly needed reform.

Domestic and family violence is a pervasive social problem impacting individuals, families and indeed the entire community. Data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics confirms that one in six women and one in 16 men have been subjected, since the age of 15, to physical or sexual violence by a current or previous cohabiting partner. The experience of violence is not a one-off incident for most women, with 54 per cent of women who have experienced current partner violence having experienced more than one violent incident.

Nationally, in 2014-15, on average, eight women were hospitalised each day after being assaulted by their spouse or partner compared with less than two men a day. In this same period Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women were 32 times as likely to be hospitalised due to family violence as a non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander woman.

Domestic and family violence is not limited to physical violence. The Australian Bureau of Statistics reports that since the age of 15 one in four women and one in six men have experienced emotional abuse by a current or previous partner. We understand that controlling and coercive behaviours can have devastating consequences for individuals and that the impacts can be long lasting. The ending of a violent relationship does not automatically mean the effects of trauma cease. In 2011 intimate partner violence contributed more burden of disease, including illness, disability and premature death, than any other risk factor for women aged 25 to 44.

In 2015-16 the financial cost of violence against women and their children in Australia was estimated at \$22 billion. There is no measure of the emotional cost. The ACT government's Coordinator-General for Family Safety has been a driver for an interconnected, whole-of-government and community approach to implementing the government's commitments to address domestic and family violence. Crucial to this approach has been putting victims and survivors at the centre of the policy and service design.

Utilising a co-design approach the coordinator-general and her team made significant progress during 2017-18 towards the establishment of the family safety hub. The co-design commenced with gathering insights from 20 people affected by domestic and family violence and 50 front-line workers. The insights were published in the insights report honouring the contributions of service providers and families experiencing violence who had contributed. The insights told us that a lot of people and communities who experience violence do not recognise it as violence. In particular, power and control is not recognised as violence by victims, perpetrators or the system.

We learnt that people are offered generic pathways that do not meet their needs or aspirations. For example, some people are afraid to access services and they want a non-legal response that does not involve police or child protection. The insights told us that having a gendered system excludes some people and communities; it does not allow for those who are gender fluid or identify differently.

Communities are seeking culturally competent and trauma informed services that work with the whole community. The insights also told us that there is not enough focus on the children and the impact of the significant trauma they experience. The insights gave us valuable information about how and where people seek help or support. We learnt that trust is critical for seeking help in relation to domestic and family violence. People will disclose their experience of violence with individuals where they have an existing and trusting relationship.

A recent report released by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare confirmed what we learnt through the co-design for the family safety hub about help seeking. The AIHW reported that five in 10 women and seven in 10 men who experienced violence from a current partner did not seek advice or support after an incident. Of those who did seek support, women were most likely to seek that support from a family member or friend followed by a health professional.

The insights gathered through the co-design for the family safety hub have prompted the government to think differently about the role for a hub in the ACT. It is evident that we do not need a new service with a shiny front door in order to improve access. What we need is a broad range of systemic reforms requiring a new way of working. The co-design highlighted that collaboration is needed to design and test solutions to systemic problems. The insights also provide an evidence base for future reforms.

The family safety hub will bring together community and government and private sector experts and people with a lived experience of violence to develop new solutions

to challenges in the system. A try and test and learn approach will be used to test new ideas, acknowledging that good ideas do not always work as well as expected in practice and that adjustments may be required to achieve the best outcomes.

Under the leadership of the ACT Coordinator-General for Family Safety work has commenced to bring about the changes we seek in the system. The focus for the first challenge is women and families during pregnancy and early parenting. This recognises that pregnancy and early parenting are periods of increased risk for exposure to domestic and family violence.

Implementation will focus on building a shared understanding across the service system so people get the right responses wherever they seek help; building capability to integrate services for clients; and alternative pathways to safety that meet diverse needs. Implementation of the family safety hub will include a robust evaluation of both the process and outcomes. It is anticipated the first phase will provide valuable learnings for the next and subsequent phases of the family safety hub.

Implementation of the family safety hub will be supported by the delivery of training to front-line workers across the health, education, community services and justice sectors. A front-line worker training strategy will be implemented to build enduring core capability to expand on rather than displace existing training.

To commence in 2018-19 the front-line worker training will equip workers to sensitively inquire about domestic and family violence and provide the skills needed to deliver basic support to reduce the impact of domestic and family violence across the community. Training of front-line workers such as midwives and librarians recognises the valuable role that ACT government employees can play as a first responder for people who may not otherwise seek support.

During the past 12 months we have learnt more about the impacts of domestic and family violence upon children as a result of research published by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare and work undertaken by the Domestic Violence Prevention Council.

The AIHW reported that 68 per cent of women surveyed who had children in their care when they experienced violence from their previous partner said their children had seen or heard the violence. It also reports that one in six girls and one in nine boys experienced physical and/or sexual abuse before the age of 15. Children exposed to domestic, family and sexual violence can experience long-term effects on their development and have increased risks of mental health issues and behavioural and learning issues.

The Domestic Violence Prevention Council held an extraordinary meeting in April this year to further explore the impacts of domestic and family violence on children and young people. This meeting was attended by members of this Assembly, senior executives from ACT government directorates and the community sector. The government will work with the Domestic Violence Prevention Council to respond to the recommendations from the Domestic Violence Prevention Council extraordinary meeting. It is expected the recommendations will seek improvements to service and

policy design for children and young people impacted by or at risk of domestic and family violence.

The recent report by the AIHW told us that alcohol was involved in about one in three incidents of intimate partner violence and three in 10 incidents of other family violence. Whilst the relationship between alcohol use and domestic and family violence is complex, we have a clear mandate to address the issues together and with access to the best available evidence.

Significant progress has been made in the ACT towards building capacity in the alcohol and other drug sector to better respond to domestic and family violence. Through funding from the safer families package the Alcohol Tobacco and Other Drug Association of the ACT, ATODA, developed a suite of Australian-first tools to assess and build capacity among workers and organisations within the specialist alcohol and other drug sector. Launched in the Legislative Assembly in April 2018 the tools developed by ATODA are an important step in the ACT government's commitment to expand upon pathways to safety for those experiencing domestic and family violence.

A number of the commitments made by the ACT government in 2016 have now been fully implemented. An example of this is the introduction of the Family Violence Act 2016 which saw a broadening of the definition of "family violence" in the ACT to include the full range of coercive, controlling and abusive behaviours. Having now been in operation for over 12 months the government is monitoring the application of the Family Violence Act 2016 to gauge whether it is achieving the changes that were intended.

I have described only a handful of the initiatives taking place across the ACT community to address domestic and family violence. I am pleased to note that the community, including community groups and not-for-profit organisations through to the corporate sector, have taken steps to address domestic and family violence. I would like to acknowledge the contributions made by the community to improve the lives of people affected by domestic and family violence.

There have been significant gains in the last year. However, we are only just getting started. There is still much more to be done to reduce the occurrence and impact of domestic and family violence. The ACT government remains committed to this essential area of reform and looks forward to continued strength of activity and partnerships over the coming years.

I present the following paper:

 Safer Families—Annual Statement 2018—Ministerial statement, 8 June 2018.

I move:

 That the Assembly take note of the paper.

MS LE COUTEUR (Murrumbidgee) (10.18): I thank Minister Berry for bringing to the Assembly this update on the work of the family safety hub. Of course, I also appreciate the efforts made by the coordinator-general to present members of the Assembly with updates about how her work has been progressing. It is important work and it affects us all. As the statistics the minister has provided indicate, all of us are connected or affected in some way. It is highly likely that many of us know people who are or have been affected by family violence given its pervasive nature.

The underlying cause of such violence is, of course, the exertion of power and control by a person over another one and the belief that that person has the right to exert that power and control over the other one. It is often linked to a sense of ownership and entitlement. It is important to remember this when trying to understand the links with alcohol. Whilst these links clearly exist, a person's decision to use violence as a means to exert power and control is the underlying problem, regardless of whether they are inebriated. In other words it is not the inebriation that causes the violence; it simply makes it easier for a person to choose to use violence.

I am very pleased that Minister Berry has pointed out the health burden of this societal problem, as the links to increased rates of depression and anxiety, disability, and premature death are evident. The health system obviously has a role to play. This has often been overlooked in the past. If we are to address the disproportionate health burden that domestic and family violence results in, we have to direct some preventive health measures into this space. I am very pleased the government has considered the voices of people with lived experience in their co-design process. All too often we forget to include the people whose lives have been or will be affected most by an issue such as this.

Equally, the voice of service providers is a valuable one that can provide insights and views informed by their day-to-day interactions with victims and survivors and/or perpetrators. The value of their specialisation in the field cannot be overestimated.

I am intrigued that the insights include that having a gendered system excludes some people and communities. Whilst I can see that this may be the case, it also points to the fact that services, whether or not they are gender specific, need to ensure that services and support are open to all, including gender diverse individuals. For example, a women's service should be open to working with a person who has transitioned their gender from male to female, and they need to do that in a way that is respectful not only to that individual but to other services users, and likewise the other way around. A person should always be asked how they want to be identified and how they want the services to provide their support.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

ACT Health accreditation update

Ministerial statement

MS FITZHARRIS (Yerrabi—Minister for Health and Wellbeing, Minister for Transport and City Services and Minister for Higher Education, Training and

Research) (10.22): Today I would like to update the Assembly and the broader community on the progress ACT Health is making as it works towards re-accreditation of ACT Health. Madam Speaker, as you would be aware, ACT Health is currently undergoing a re-accreditation process against the 10 national safety and quality health service standards. All public and private hospitals in Australia undergo this important, rigorous process.

The re-accreditation process is part of a continuous cycle of improvement to ensure we deliver safe and high quality health care to Canberrans. It is an opportunity to identify areas for improvement that will make health services even better. As part of the accreditation process, the Australian Council on Healthcare Standards conducted an organisation-wide survey of ACT Health between 19 and 23 March 2018. During this survey, ACHS assessed ACT Health's implementation of the national standards.

Under this assessment ACHS looked at 209 core criteria under the national standards for this important survey. While ACT Health met 176 of the core criteria, it unfortunately did not meet 33 under five of the national standards. Subsequently, the ACHS provided ACT Health with a period of 90 days to remediate those matters that did not meet the 33 core criteria.

ACT Health will be reassessed on its implementation of these not-met criteria through a process called an advanced completion survey. Two surveyors from ACHS will conduct this survey on site at Canberra Hospital and Health Services between 3 and 5 July 2018.

While this result is indeed disappointing, I have been given every confidence that ACT Health staff will rise to the challenge. I hear a lot from people in our community about the skilled and compassionate care they receive when accessing care and support from ACT Health. The dedication of staff-to-patient care is clear, and ACT Health will use this opportunity to ensure this dedication translates to all aspects of care provided in Canberra's hospitals and health centres.

I think it is important to take this opportunity to acknowledge the governance issues that exist at ACT Health, as well as the government's recent decision to separate ACT Health into two organisations. The decision to separate into two organisations was made prior to accreditation, although announced afterward.

Members would be aware that ACT Health is responding to unprecedented demand on health services in the ACT, and tackling challenges including increasing population, chronic disease, demands on infrastructure, a shift to activity-based funding and cuts to health funding from the commonwealth government. This provides some context to some of the pressures and change the ACT health system has been responding to in recent years, and indeed each and every day.

The government is taking steps to respond to these pressures through increasing resourcing in workforce, services and infrastructure investment. However, within the organisation itself, a clear and strong governance system is essential for the day to day running of the organisation as well as for the success and support of the ACT Health

workforce, in concert with a strategic and carefully planned approach to managing demand and pressures in the future.

As Minister for Health and Wellbeing, I took my responsibility to consider a significant decision about the future structure and governance of the organisation over a period of time. I have heard from some clinicians and staff that they have found it difficult to be heard and respected in the organisation recently. I acknowledge the difficult working environment that might have been experienced, and have given the staff at ACT Health my commitment and want to reiterate it here again today that it is my expectation that staff should be valued and listened to.

For now the focus for ACT Health must be on addressing those not-met criteria. Clearly governance, especially corporate governance, is highlighted in the report. I am assured by the interim director-general, ACT Health executives and indeed through the optimistic and spirited sentiment of the workforce overall, that we can work together to make the necessary adjustments to ensure a strong governance system for the ongoing longevity and success of the organisation.

Many of these adjustments will be realised through the organisational restructure as we near 1 October when ACT Health will become two organisations, with a tailored, considered approach to governance and organisational structures that sustainably supports the operations, policy and planning of health services for the Canberra community.

In the meantime ACT Health have given assurances both to myself and to my colleague the Minister for Mental Health that significant progress has been made already as ACT Health work towards re-accreditation. Minister Rattenbury and I have been receiving regular, detailed briefing on the remediation activities underway, which demonstrate ACT Health are taking the necessary action to do everything they can to be in a position to achieve every standard through the re-accreditation process. I will now outline under each of the five standards where core criteria received a “not met” and explain the nature of this progress.

The first is standard 1: governance for safety and quality in health service organisations. One area that ACHS identified as requiring improvement was standard 1, which covers governance for safety and quality in health service organisations. The ACHS assessed ACT Health as having not met 17 core actions under standard 1. It is important to emphasise that improving quality and safety is an ongoing process in the health system and that it does not start or end with accreditation. I am pleased to say that there is significant work underway every day in our hospital system that is focused on delivering and improving quality and patient safety.

Some of the survey’s recommendations and comments under standard 1 include that the corporate and clinical governance structures be reviewed to reflect good governance and enable clear lines of accountability; that the strategic corporate plan and business plans be reviewed and updated with a focus on patient safety and quality, and cascaded through the organisation; that the organisation demonstrate how business decision-making considers the impact of decisions on patient safety and quality of care; that clear accountability lines be established at senior executive level

and above to ensure more timely and effective decision-making processes are in place to improve patient safety; that ongoing strategies are developed to clearly inform staff of their accountabilities and responsibilities in safety, quality and risk at all levels of the health service workforce; and that the current risk register be reviewed to ensure an effective and transparent system for monitoring risks across the health service.

Ensuring good governance is an important component of any organisation or business. It lays the foundations for its purpose and direction, and ensures all staff are aware of their responsibilities and accountabilities. ACT Health's vision is "Your health, our priority". This vision is well known within the organisation and within the community.

The directorate's governance framework, clinical governance framework and corporate plan play an important role in guiding and demonstrating how the organisation goes about achieving this vision. While some of these documents may have been out of date at the time of the survey, the goals, objectives and principles within them do not in any way differ or alter the important work of the organisation, or the services that it provides.

ACT Health's vision and values of care, excellence, collaboration and integrity represent what the staff believe is important and worthwhile, and guide what they do on a day-to-day basis. Improving the quality of health care across the ACT is a key priority for ACT Health, as it aims to be the safest healthcare system in Australia, delivering high-quality, person-centred care that is effective and efficient.

In the interest of moving ahead with addressing the governance issues in the not-met report, the directorate's governance framework, clinical governance framework and corporate plan have been reviewed and updated to provide staff with a clear outline of reporting and accountability under the current organisational structure. These documents are currently being reviewed by the national standards leadership committee.

The business plan template has been updated to align with the corporate plan. This will enable divisions and branches to plan how they can achieve the strategies and goals of the organisation within their day-to-day business and service delivery.

In addition, to further strengthen governance, the directorate's committee governance structure is being revised to ensure that there are clear mechanisms in place for cascading and escalating matters of strategy, policy, quality, safety and risk through the most appropriate and effective channels of the organisation.

I have been assured that ACT Health's deputy directors-general have reviewed the current organisational risks. Policy and guideline documentation is being updated to reflect the revised committee governance structure and will include a risk escalation process and a clear link between identified risks and organisational priorities.

As the ACHS acknowledged during the organisation-wide survey in March, a significant body of work has been undertaken by the Health Directorate to engage with staff and consumers to develop a new quality strategy.

Over the last year ACT Health had put considerable work, including consultation, into developing the implementation plan and measurement framework to support the implementation of the strategy from 1 July this year. While the strategy is the overarching document which sets the framework and objectives for this, importantly, the implementation plan will be the driving force for achieving the objectives of the strategy. Of course, a robust measurement framework is necessary through which to drive and monitor progress across the organisation over the coming years.

A capability-building approach to this work is being adopted in order to build knowledge and skills in patient safety and quality improvement across the short, medium and longer term. This will develop a culture of always delivering high quality care and continuous improvement across the ACT Health workforce and the organisation as a whole.

I am advised that ACT Health has also undertaken a number of steps to strengthen the governance of clinical pathways. A proposed clinical governance, monitoring and evaluation process has been circulated to clinical governance executives for consideration.

All current clinical pathways have been reviewed and risk rated with appropriate review dates assigned. The clinical division responsible for each pathway has been identified, and a process for ongoing monitoring and evaluation established, with the outcomes to be reported to the clinical governance executive committee. These processes will help to ensure patients receive the clinical care they need, minimising the risk of adverse events and helping them to move out of the acute setting at the appropriate time.

ACT Health is committed to enabling a culture of quality and safety, and one that demonstrates the principles of risk management through proactive, timely identification and reporting of risks by all staff and including risk in the planning, implementation and maintenance phases of all ACT Health systems, processes, policies and procedures.

Quality care cannot be assured unless there is a system of robust corporate and clinical governance to enable complete oversight of the complex health system in which patients, carers and consumers find themselves.

All staff have a responsibility and are accountable for the quality of our service. They are therefore responsible and accountable for good clinical governance. All staff have an obligation to govern safe, quality care for every patient every time. This is, of course, a basic expectation and level of trust which every patient puts in the hands of the clinicians providing health care, and one which ACT Health understands to be of utmost importance.

One of the key steps in this process is communication and engagement with staff, especially those who are delivering front-line services. It is important that all ACT Health staff are aware of the mechanisms and tools in place to support them to do their job to a high standard. The ACHS also recommended that immediate action

be taken to address concerns at the Hume Health Centre, where staff are exposed to high levels of smoking by inmates.

ACT Health has since received confirmation from the ACHS that this particular recommendation will not be assessed as part of the advanced completion survey. However, ACT Health is still taking steps to address this issue. A joint workplace health and safety risk assessment with staff from the Justice and Community Safety Directorate has been conducted to address the issue.

A report has been provided to the Executive Director of Mental Health, Justice Health and Alcohol and Drug Services, and Minister Rattenbury and I have been informed that a solution is being implemented.

While still on the subject of governance, I would like to update the Assembly on the work being undertaken to address the two core not-met actions that the ACHS identified as carrying a risk level of “extreme”.

To address these two risks, the following important work is underway: capital works to address ligature points in the mental health inpatient units continues, with 39 of 40 ensuite doors removed at the adult mental health unit as of 4 June. Further work to minimise risk from ligature points is underway and will continue beyond accreditation.

An independent external review of the acute inpatient mental health facilities occurred in May. The independent external review team attended mental health facilities and reviewed the safety and efficiency of the model of care; policies and procedures; patient cohort; workforce, skill mix; unique admission criteria to each unit; physical environment; and service demand.

The final report from this review has been provided to ACT Health for consideration. The mental health advisory body, whose role is to oversee the independent expert review and the implementation of the recommendations from this review, has been established and includes clinicians, ACT Health staff, consumer and carer representatives, and an independent chair. This advisory body will meet in June this year following the completion of the external review.

I turn to standard 3, preventing and controlling healthcare associated infections. The ACHS assessed ACT Health as having seven core actions not met in standard 3, which covers the prevention and control of healthcare associated infections. Concerns were raised about several key infection control indicators. ACT Health facilities management produces environmental reports, including water sampling testing and results, and HEPA filter, or air quality, maintenance reports.

These reports were previously sent to the infectious disease threat planning committee, but following a recommendation from the accreditation report, facilities management now provides their environmental reports to the healthcare associated infections standard committee. This committee is the means for reporting and escalating issues related to standard 3, and the recommendation from the accreditation report offers a useful improvement on what was current practice.

ACT Health has made other improvements in relation to infection control indicators, including updating its risk register with respect to legionella management. Additionally, health infrastructure services have completed a comprehensive water management plan to consolidate current and future planned activities in relation to legionella risk mitigation. An example of this ongoing work is the extensive refurbishment and redesign of water systems pipework on levels 6 and 7 of building 1 at Canberra Hospital that has been underway as part of the UMAHA program of works.

The national standards 3 committee is briefed monthly on the progress of all works associated with the water management plan, and it is important to note that the risk of legionella at Canberra Hospital is very low due to the continued focus on water quality.

In relation to hand hygiene rates across Canberra Hospital and Health Services, I am pleased to note that these rates have improved and are significantly above the national benchmark. However, the rates for doctors are lower than for other healthcare workers. To address this core criterion, targeted initiatives to increase hand hygiene rates for doctors have been introduced and will continue. This has resulted in improved rates for the first audit of 2018. Further audits are underway to ensure sustained improvement outcomes now and into the future.

Overall compliance with dating of the peripheral intravenous cannulas, PIVCs, was 74 per cent at the time of the ACHS survey. This was an improvement from previous audits. However, it also represents an expectation of ongoing improvement. ACT Health is implementing actions, including staff education and training, to improve compliance of dating PIVCs to reach 100 per cent over time.

I understand that the interim director-general has written to staff this week reminding them of their obligations with regard to complying with hand hygiene standards and the correct dating of PIVCs. Staff have been informed that this is considered a performance issue.

To improve hygiene around linen, a new cleaning schedule for the linen storeroom, inclusive of dust mitigation, has been implemented, and an additional soiled linen pick-up from clinical areas has been put in place.

ACT Health recognise that further work is needed in the kitchen; so a work plan has been developed and is being implemented to upgrade the kitchen to provide improved access, including uni-directional work flows to enhance food safety practices.

Following a food safety audit in August 2017, there has been ongoing action to improve general cleaning in the kitchen. This includes the implementation of cleaning schedules and other actions to improve kitchen equipment and occupational safety issues, including those which are identified in the survey report.

Food safety at the hospital is a priority and the actions from the audit are now 95 per cent complete. To ensure an appropriate standard of hygiene in the kitchen, an industrial clean has also been undertaken in the Canberra Hospital kitchens.

I turn to standard 4, medication safety. The ACHS assessed ACT Health as having four core criteria not met under standard 4, which relates to medication safety. One concern raised was the storage of some medications on open shelves within operating rooms. ACT Health has reviewed the storage of medications within the operating rooms. To improve medication monitoring and management, new lockable medication cupboards are scheduled to be installed this month, which will address this criterion.

Another concern related to variable compliance within some wards with manual temperature monitoring of medication fridges. The commissioning and implementation of wi-fi monitoring of medication fridges is also scheduled for early this month, which will address this criterion.

The survey has further recommended that ACT Health ensure there is a robust process for the safe storage and distribution of concentrated potassium. It should be noted that the survey has acknowledged there were already mitigating strategies in place to moderate this risk. ACT Health has moved quickly to implement an audit tool and an audit program that have now been developed and implemented to ensure there is a robust process for the safe storage and distribution of concentrated potassium solutions. ACT Health is also updating its medication handling policy to specifically include a section on the storage and handling of concentrated potassium.

The ACHS also raised concerns about the proportion of patients and receiving clinicians who are not provided with a current comprehensive list of medicines during clinical handover. ACT Health has conducted a comprehensive review and analysis of its processes for completing medi-lists when relevant and for completing discharge summaries within 48 hours. ACT Health is now implementing improvements in these processes which will address these concerns. Communications across CHHS have also commenced to ensure that all staff are aware of the accreditation process, the activities underway and what they need to do to ensure the necessary improvements are made.

Standard 4, medication safety, is one of the key focus areas. All managers have been provided with information regarding medication safety and instructed to discuss the requirements at team meetings. An all-staff forum was also held on Monday, 21 May. A key focus of this was accreditation and medication safety.

The ACHS assessed ACT Health as having three core actions not met under standard 5, which relates to patient identification and procedure matching. The surveyor identified inconsistent positive patient identification practices across different clinical areas, including the practice of accepting Medicare cards to confirm patient identity. An updated clinical handover and transport policy is being developed to incorporate positive patient ID. ACT Health is reviewing all handover documents for compliance and to ensure standardisation.

An education program has been developed and implemented for the hospital and community settings, including clinical lead workshops, dedicated workshops for ward services and clerical staff. A communication strategy has been implemented, including reminders on screensavers, posters and educational videos.

To confirm the effectiveness of these strategies, an organisation-wide audit is occurring to review a number of practices, including positive patient ID and clinical handover. Appropriately, immediate feedback and education are being provided throughout the audits to improve ongoing practice.

Results are being collated and analysed to provide targeted education, training and focused improvement work where needed. I understand the interim director-general has also written to managers at Canberra Hospital asking them to ensure that their staff are compliant with positive patient ID policy and procedure.

The surveyors also found errors in specimen labelling. A number of measures have been implemented to address specimen labelling errors. Positive patient identification is being included in clinical handover training sessions and the clinical safety and quality unit has completed audits of clinical handover in operational areas.

A zero-tolerance policy for the majority of pathology mislabelling incidents is to be implemented. This would exclude precious samples, which are those that would cause more harm than good to re-collect or those that cannot be re-collected, such as from amputated limbs. The Chief Medical Officer has contacted all junior doctors advising that a zero-tolerance policy is being developed and to comply when labelling specimens by using three identifiers.

At the time of the survey, the completion of surgical safety checklists was below the 100 per cent required under CHHS policy. These checklists are important to ensure the safety of patients when they leave the operating theatre. ACT Health is conducting weekly audits to ensure compliance with completing the surgical safety checklist. As of 25 May, that compliance was at 95.11 per cent. This is now well above the 79.8 per cent observed by the ACHS in March and getting closer to the necessary 100 per cent.

There is ongoing communication underway between the Executive Director for the Division of Surgery and Oral Health and non-compliant surgeons to ensure that this is further improved. This is being taken very seriously by ACT Health, with an escalation approach to managing the performance of any doctor identified as not complying with these essential standards and work practices.

The ACHS assessed ACT Health as having two core actions not met under standard 6, which relates to clinical handover. Unfortunately, the surveyor observed inconsistent use of evidence-based handover processes to ensure safe and effective clinical handover is observed across the organisation. Handover is an important clinical communications tool so that the clinical team are abreast of the care and clinical needs of patients so they can plan the next stages of care and what is required for discharge.

A number of steps are being taken to address this. The clinical handover policy has been updated and an education plan is being developed and implemented. Workshops to train senior staff in patient identification and clinical handover have commenced. To remind staff of the core elements of effective clinical handover, identification, situation, background assessment and recommendation—ISBAR—lanyards and

notepads have been distributed across the organisation. At the CHHS staff forum last month, which I mentioned earlier, there was also a focus on ISBAR and safe clinical handover.

A further reminder for staff is being developed with posters to be placed in all work areas. Finally, an escalation process for non-compliant wards and areas has been developed, including formal engagement with the Deputy Director-General, CHHS to discuss standards and expectations with staff and their management teams.

The ACHS also raised concerns about the completion rates for inpatient discharge summaries. It is important that discharge summaries are completed within 48 hours so that patient care in the community can be continued after discharge. Regrettably, CHHS completion rates have been below this target of completion within 48 hours, potentially impacting continuity of care. The directorate has undertaken a large amount of work to address the backlog of incomplete discharge summaries. It is anticipated that the backlog will be complete by the end of June this year.

Unfortunately, a complicating factor in the completion of mental health discharge summaries is that the mental health electronic record system has limited interface with other systems. This significantly slowed their processing. The staff in the adult mental health unit deserve a particular mention here. These staff have worked hard to complete all of those discharge summaries that were outstanding when the ACHS visited in March.

A temporary workaround has been established which has enabled specialists to record discharge summaries in the clinical portal, thus allowing them to be transmitted in real time to GPs, which is vital for these patients to receive ongoing care in the community. A more permanent solution is currently being tested.

As I mentioned earlier, ACT Health is also conducting a comprehensive review and analysis of its processes for completing discharge summaries. It will implement the required changes needed to reach the organisation's 48 hours post-inpatient discharge compliance level on a sustainable basis.

Considerable work has taken place. So far it has included detailed compliance audits, mapping of processes, including the identification of gaps and shortfalls, focused training of medical officers in the functionality of the clinical portal and developing digital solutions to enable integration of programs into the clinical portal to decrease barriers.

Madam Speaker, as you have heard, an enormous amount of work has been done across the ACT Health directorate to achieve re-accreditation. It is a responsibility of all staff to ensure the necessary improvements are made. I welcome the positive approach of staff to deliver what is required. The interim director-general continues to chair weekly meetings of the national standards leadership committee; so accreditation is being managed at the highest levels of ACT Health.

An action plan is in place to ensure that ACT Health addresses the 33 core not-met criteria. Progress is closely scrutinised on a daily basis. Closer to the clinical local

management teams, an accreditation coordination team has been established to oversee and monitor this detailed program plan and escalate issues where actions need to be accelerated.

A comprehensive assurance activity is currently underway, mapping activity against the requirements of the national standards. This is to ensure actions will meet the national standards and, if not, identify further activity required. Quality officers have been moved to be located at Canberra Hospital and are undertaking audits and developing improvement processes to assist each division to address identified areas for improvement in the not-met report.

There is considerable activity and work being undertaken at ACT Health to ensure its accreditation next month. The interim director-general has taken a very proactive approach by keeping in regular contact with the ACHS and the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care to check expectations and requirements around the not-met actions and to seek clarification and advice on ACT Health's progress.

More recently, senior staff from the commission spent a day with key ACT Health staff last month so that they can be certain that all staff understand the expectations and what is required. The commission is the body which sets the standards that ACT Health are working towards meeting. They provide greater clarity as to the requirements necessary to meet accreditation against the not-mets. This will assist ACT Health to monitor progress and keep up the momentum in anticipation of re-accreditation.

I would like to conclude by acknowledging the many dedicated people working in our health workforce: the doctors, nurses, allied health workers, kitchen and laundry staff and many more. They are there to ensure that the Canberra community receives the highest level of health care. They are doing, and will continue to do, an outstanding job.

While it is very important at this stage to focus on the areas for improvement and the standards that have not yet been met, of course the accreditation process also highlights many of the good and outstanding things that ACT Health does.

I acknowledge the many years of experience that many of the ACT Health workforce bring to ACT Health and to the health sector. The next few months and beyond will build on this skill and experience, and have created an opportunity for ACT Health to set its course for a bright and sustainable future.

From the government's perspective, we remain absolutely committed to investing in patient-centred health care to our community, to investing in staff, and to building the right infrastructure that our growing city needs to provide the right health care in the right place at the right time.

However, the focus for ACT Health at the moment must be on making the necessary improvements. The Minister for Mental Health and I are confident that every effort is

being made to ensure that accreditation of Canberra Hospital and Health Services is secured.

I present the following paper:

ACT Health accreditation update—Ministerial statement, 5 June 2018.

I move:

That the Assembly take note of the paper.

MRS DUNNE (Ginninderra) (10.51): This statement by the minister today clearly puts before us all the extent to which the ACT health service is dysfunctional, and how it has become dysfunctional under this minister or these ministers and this government.

We have a 26-page statement that says over and over again, to summarise, that there is considerable activity and work—so there is both activity and actual work—going on to ensure that the ACT hospital becomes compliant with its accreditation requirements by July this year. Of course, what is missing from this is plan B. The opposition has asked the minister on a number of occasions what is plan B. It seems that no-one has thought about plan B, because the prospect of not meeting accreditation in July is just unthinkable. It is unthinkable for the people of the ACT.

This is a litany of failure that we have heard over and over again. It is now put in a 26-page statement showing the extent of the failure of this government. The minister has justified a whole range of things since March in relation to the hospital on the basis of the splitting of the structure. The minister touches on it here again. She says, “The decision was made to split the organisation into two prior to the accreditation.” That was absolutely and strictly correct: the decision to split the structure was made by the Chief Minister on 15 March, and the accreditation took place in the week of 19 to 23 March. The announcement of the splitting was made on 23 March, the week of the accreditation process taking place in the hospital. So that is strictly true.

The minister also says that she took her responsibility to make this significant decision about the restructure and governance over a period of time. I would like the minister to demonstrate how she did that. In response to a freedom of information request, the Liberal opposition has received no documentation that would support that assertion. When I received the response to the FOI request, I asked our staff to go back to the FOI staff in both Health and Chief Minister’s to check whether they had missed any documentation. The documentation is so scant that there is nothing to support the statement that the minister made here today. In fact there is only documentation to support the fact that this minister was cut out of the decision in relation to the splitting of the agency into two. The Chief Minister locked her out of the process from January to March.

There is not even a post-it note or a diary entry—nothing—from the first week of January to 15 March, in either the documents provided by the Chief Minister’s department or the documents provided by the health department. It is not that these

documents were exempt from being provided to us; they are not in the schedule. These documents do not exist. When I asked that our staff, the Liberal opposition staff, check with Health and Chief Minister's, they came back and said, "There are no other documents that are subject to the FOI request."

What we see here is the Chief Minister cutting the minister for health and the Minister for Mental Health out of the decision-making. We know that he made the decision on 15 March, based on a minute from the Head of Service dated 15 March which clearly says that there was no consultation with the health department. It clearly says it in the minute. Either the minute from the Head of Service is wrong and she misled the Chief Minister, or the minister has misled the community, and possibly the Assembly. The minute from the Head of Service said there was no consultation outside her directorate—there was no public consultation; there was no consultation across directorates—in relation to the proposal that she was putting to the Chief Minister that the Chief Minister signed off on the very same day. There is not even a post-it note anywhere to support the minister's assertion that she was on top of this decision and that she thought about it for a period of time. A minute is a period of time, so I suppose she can be assured that that is strictly true, even if it is somewhat disingenuous.

Dividing the health department into two agencies is seen as the panacea for everything. Given the amount of work that needs to be done on that, I am putting on notice here that I am sceptical at this date that the government will meet its 1 October deadline.

The minister keeps talking about a lot of activities. Then she goes through the standards where we have failed. Just to reinforce it, the standards we have failed include governance for safety and quality in health service organisations, where the minister admitted that even though they knew that they were being accredited, that they were being inspected, the documents relating to some of these issues were out of date. They could not even prepare by updating the documents. What had they been doing? The minister says on page 9:

In the interest of moving ahead with addressing the Governance issues in the not met report, the Directorate's Governance Framework, Clinical Governance Framework and Corporate Plan have been reviewed and updated to provide staff with a clear outline of reporting and accountability under the current organisational structure. These documents are currently being reviewed by the National Standards Leadership Committee.

This is quite typical of this government. There is no stakeholder consultation. These have been written and imposed, and they will gain no traction in an organisation which is dysfunctional and where there is such poor culture.

One of the things which is most alarming about this which has come forward—I suppose in a sense the Liberal opposition knew about this, but I have to confess that I do not think I processed this as well as I should have—is that the health department was essentially completely without a risk register until the AECOM report was finalised in 2016.

I recollect asking questions about the risk register at the time. The minister tells me that that is the risk register for the hospital. But that does not cover things like infection control, failure of the power, or failure if the system goes down. There are a whole lot of other risks apart from the physical structure of the building. The minister has admitted that they do not have a proper risk register and the first approach to a risk register came when the AECOM report was published.

The minister talks about committing to enabling a culture of quality and safety, one that “demonstrates the principles of risk management through proactive, timely identification and reporting of risks by all staff and including risk in the planning, implementation and maintenance phases of all ACT Health systems, processes, policies and procedures”.

Madam Speaker, I ask you: how can we do that when we have a culture of bullying and a culture of fear in the hospitals? I cannot tell you the number of times that members of the public who happen to be employed in the health department come to me and say, “I need to tell you this, but you need to maintain my anonymity, because if anyone ever knew that I had spoken about this, my life would not be worth living.” That happens over and over again. That is a culture of bullying. That is a culture that does not enable people to speak up and say, “Hey, I think we have a risk here.”

When the nurses and midwives in the women’s and children’s hospital speak out through an anonymous letter to say, “We are concerned about the safety of women and babies in our hospital,” they are talked down; no-one takes them seriously. That is why they were driven to making a public, anonymous statement: because the agency that this minister oversees talks them down. The head of the agency came out and said, “There is nothing to see here; this is a perfectly safe hospital.”

The midwives who work there disagree; the midwives who talk to me disagree. The people who work in the Centenary Hospital for Women and Children, in maternity services, who are not midwives but who are there frequently, disagree and are afraid for the safety of women and children. When people are afraid for the safety of women and children, they should feel empowered to speak up, and they are not empowered to speak up.

The minister can speak all she likes about zero tolerance of bullying. I notice she also has zero tolerance of messing up our pathology labelling. There are a lot of things we need to have zero tolerance for. Damn straight we should have zero tolerance for messing up labelling on pathology samples. With everything the minister talks about, she says, “I have zero tolerance for it.” But she does not do anything about it except to say she has zero tolerance. She does not empower midwives to speak up about things that she is concerned about. She does not create an environment where people do not mess up on labelling of pathology samples.

Think about it, Madam Speaker. I will be criticised for talking down the health system, but when we have less than 80 per cent compliance with the observance of post-operative surgical safety checklists, I think that we should be very concerned about the quality of our hospital. Think about it. “I wonder what I did with that spare

scalpel. I hope I didn't leave it in Mrs Smith." "Did I leave a swab there?" They were checking on less than 80 per cent of occasions. They are now saying, "We have got it up to 95 per cent since then, because someone has given us a boot along, and we hope to get it to 100 per cent."

Today we have heard the minister put on record the litany of failures in the hospital system, high-level failures in the hospital system, that make people very concerned about where their tax dollar is going and how well their tax dollar is being spent in this place.

This is a shameful statement. This minister should be ashamed that she has to stand up here and put a good face on this. This report should make this minister hang her head in shame. What would happen to anyone in any other jurisdiction around the place with this sort of report? This minister is running the only major hospital in the jurisdiction. We are not a complex jurisdiction with 20 teaching hospitals and 40 outlying hospitals with bush nursing facilities and things like that. We run two hospitals and a maternal health outlet. We are about to run three hospitals and a maternal health outlet with 20 beds. This is not a complicated system, but the biggest hospital in the system has had a spectacular fail and this minister still has her job. In no other jurisdiction in this country, or across the Western world, would a minister in a Westminster system still have her job with this amount of abject failure.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Residential Tenancies Amendment Bill 2018

Debate resumed from 10 May 2018, on motion by **Mr Ramsay**:

That this bill be agreed to in principle.

MR PARTON (Brindabella) (11.05): The Canberra Liberals will not be supporting this bill, for a number of reasons: first and foremost because it is yet another disincentive for people in our community to invest in property for the purposes of providing rental accommodation in Canberra. The funny thing is that if these provisions—and obviously I am referring specifically to the potential end of tenancy provisions—had just been implied or if they had just been placed on public housing tenancies, which would not have even had to come to this chamber, we would be well and truly in support of them but to extend them right across the private sector just seems a little odd.

We have a genuine housing affordability crisis in the ACT. We understand that there are many people who are finding it nigh on impossible to put a roof over their heads. We understand that for myriad reasons—mostly all of this government's own doing—for so many reasons many people are struggling to pay their rent. This bill seems to be the government conceding that they have a housing affordability crisis but that they are happy for mum and dad investors to carry the can.

Investors are leaving the market in great numbers. If this government continues to place speed bumps in the way of investors that trend will continue as they sell their

investment properties. Many of them are being purchased by owner-occupiers, which is further diminishing the rental supply. Investment properties are for the purpose of making money. As much as property investors, for the most part, are wonderful people, they do not invest hundreds of thousands of dollars of their own money just to provide a community service for their fellow man. If you make it too hard for them to make money then they will not do it.

The minister very clearly does not understand that concept, that this is how the real world works. For some this change adds a fair bit of risk. It is all well and good to say that the lessor can go back to ACAT to seek a determination within 60 days of the first breach of the payment, but of course that does not mean that they will get straight into ACAT to do that because there is going to be a waiting period for them to get in. The minister cannot see that for some this change will be the straw that breaks the camel's back, and he lives in a different world than I.

As I understand it, this bill has three main objectives, one of which is to repair an anomaly in the Residential Tenancies Act. It was highlighted in the Commissioner for Social Housing v Moffatt case. That was back in January 2015. The minister tells us the bill is needed to remove the self-executing provisions of the act. The current act enables lessors to regain immediate possession of their property if a lessee defaults on a rent obligation or defaults on a conditional termination and possession order. This bill makes the lessor's attempt at repossession somewhat more complex. The bill adds a few extra steps, obstacles to barricade lessors from their property, and it makes it more challenging to recover rent entitlement.

On the other side of the argument, it gives a little more certainty for tenants going through a rough patch. The amendment bill means ACAT makes a payment order instead of granting the lessor a termination and possession order. Is a payment order preferable to a termination and possession order? It really depends on whom you are asking, does it not? Most lessors would take the TPO because they have got a mortgage to pay. If you are a tenant who has no intention—and I am not saying that in these cases, when they arise, every tenant has no intention—to address the arrears, it buys you some more free time, under someone else's roof, before you have to move out. As much as the minister may believe that every tenant has every intention to make good any arrears, I have had dozens of discussions with lessors who express a different view.

This bill will achieve a number of things. One of them is to load the ACAT up with more work, and it certainly will delay a final result for out-of-pocket property owners.

When the minister presented this bill he stressed the need for protection of vulnerable people and their residential security and he also spoke of the need to promote model behaviour by landlords. I agree that we should protect vulnerable people in precarious accommodation situations and, for this purpose, the government provides a social housing system and various other arrangements to help. I presume that, for people being supported by the social housing system, the government would only issue eviction warrants in extreme circumstances, including for some situations that are unrelated to defaulting on rent.

The minister's desire to promote model behaviours by landlords is quite interesting and I must point out that the minister offers no real reason for us to move in that direction. In other words the minister is saying that landlords' failures to demonstrate model behaviour are sufficiently prevalent for us to impose this legislative discipline. I have not seen that failure. It would be useful for this chamber to see the extent to which those who rent out their property are not displaying model behaviours or are breaching these. In fact it would be useful to see exactly what these model behaviours are, along with the data on the breaches or aberrations. I am sure the minister will point out in his speech in response that in the private sector there are very few of these orders that are put into place. If that is the case why would we go down this path?

I note that as recently as August last year the Commissioner for Fair Trading put out the *Renting Book* which you would think might be sufficient guidance for tenants and lessors. The *Renting Book* spells out the obligations and requirement of lessors and tenants, along with channels for dispute resolution and guidance on who is responsible for expenses and costs. I would think that this would be sufficient prescription and guidance but apparently it is not. We need more obstacles, more frustration imposed on lessors.

We need to remind ourselves that most lessors have gone into debt to establish their rental property and they have assumed a significant risk. They have contributed or will contribute to the ACT's accommodation supply by investing and taking a major financial risk. They are doing so. They are compelled to pay outrageous levels of rates and land taxes—all into the government's coffers. On top of this when they purchase their property they have to or will fork out towards the \$30,000 slug per unit for the lease variation charge. When you take into account what small investors, including many mum and dad investors, are borrowing and are repaying it would be fair to say that there are also large numbers of vulnerable lessors, which I know is a concept that does not strike those on the other side.

There are those who have gone out on a financial limb to buy an investment property and their margins are so thin, particularly early in the mortgage, that, if after a period of no rental income they have a further three or four weeks without it because of this process, they risk losing their investment property. Why is that risk not taken into account by this government?

I love it how those on the other side assume that everyone who owns an investment property is rich and evil. And when those on the other side consider the word "landlord" I think the first thing they notice is that it has the word "lord" in it. The position from those opposite is that property investors have money and lots of it; so let us squeeze as much out of them as we possibly can. When you take this bill into account, with all this government's other budgetary measures aimed at property owners, there is a significant and growing disincentive for individuals to invest in property. And that is not going to serve anyone well.

We could end up with a situation where small investors cannot receive a sensible return because government taxes and fees are eating away at their returns. And when you add this additional risk—and there is a risk, it is a genuine risk—it is enough to

make them get out of the market or not invest. If legislative provisions erect additional barriers against an owner's ability to recover rental arrears then you can change all the planning rules you want but these will not incentivise investors and will see acres of empty blocks of units or vacant paddocks. It is going to get too hard for mum and dad investors.

It is very easy to get the impression that this government is out to demonise and victimise property owners and property investors. I think we need to appreciate the drivers which supply rental accommodation and what incentivises investors and owners. I cannot help sensing that from a holistic view we are starting to go too far. On this basis the Canberra Liberals will not be supporting this bill.

MS LE COUTEUR (Murrumbidgee) (11.14): I rise today to support the amendment bill. The bill contains a number of amendments to the Residential Tenancies Act. The first area I want to talk about is that which Mr Parton has talked about, but with a slightly different bent. The first of the concerns is about replacing the previous provisions for granting a conditional termination and possession order, a CTPO, with a payment order. The JACS review of the Residential Tenancies Act, completed in 2016 but started in 2014, noted that many CTPO decisions made by ACAT relate to social housing tenants. Submissions to the review suggested that the current provisions lacked clarity, especially because of the interaction between two sections of the RTA—that is, section 49(1) and section 42A—which meant there could be legitimate confusion about when a tenancy is terminated and the legal arrangements between the parties if a tenant remained in the property.

The amendments also remove the self-executing component of a CTPO. Under current arrangements when a breach of a CTPO occurs—that is, a failure to pay rent—the lessor becomes entitled to possession and all rent is payable immediately regardless of whether the rent is a day late or if a payment plan is in place. The bill before the Assembly inserts a procedural speed hump before a tenancy is terminated for the people at greatest risk, such as social housing tenants and/or people suffering from mental illness or people who have just lost their jobs and have to urgently reorganise their affairs. This change could be the difference between maintaining a tenancy or homelessness.

I note the comments of Mr Parton, and it is important to be fair on all sides of the equation. But he did not talk about the fact that most landlords actually have insurance, and while it may take some time for the insurance company to pay, I am hopeful and assume that this would be the sort of thing that, in fact, is covered by landlord insurance.

The bill also includes some administrative tidying up following the regulatory changes introduced on 17 May 2018 by the Attorney-General. The changes to the Residential Tenancies Act's regulation are designed to ensure that business models of entities offering rental bond guarantees do not disadvantage tenants compared to if they had paid an up-front bond. On the surface, of course, rental bond guarantees may be an attractive proposition, and may work for some people. But it is exactly the same situation as with payday lenders or post-pay credit companies—that is, the companies concerned expect to make significant amounts of money from ongoing payments

which, over a period of time, will eventually amount to considerably more than a bond would have or from vulnerable people because either they do not understand the situation or because they are simply and understandably desperate to get into a house. It is my understanding that if a tenant becomes part of a dispute it could be particularly financially difficult for them compared to the current situation, which can be difficult enough for tenants.

By the very nature of their business model, these rental bond guarantee companies place themselves between tenants and landlords. The terms and conditions of one such company, Snug, state:

The Lessor appoints Snug as its attorney and agent to take action against the Tenant/s in the Lessor's name on our behalf in respect of the Claim Amount (Recovery Action) and agrees that:

- a. Snug will have full discretion in the conduct of the Recovery Action; and
- b. The Lessor will provide all information and do all things that Snug reasonably requests, in a timely manner, to enable Snug to conduct the Recovery Action.

The regulations introduced earlier this month mean that the tenant-landlord relationship cannot be subrogated in this way, nor can the provider of a rental bond guarantee be a party to a tenancy dispute. Perhaps most importantly the regulations will stipulate that the provider cannot recover an amount from the tenant which is greater than what could be deducted from a bond. The measures that I expect will be passed today do not prevent the use of bond guarantees but they provide additional protection to a tenant in the event that they enter into one, and I think this protection is well needed.

One of the other things we need to think about is why people are even interested in rental guarantees like Snug. There are prospective tenants who, while they can pay their rent, do not have the easily available funds to pay a bond up-front. Because of that the ACT government offers an interest-free bond loan scheme, administered by Housing ACT, and the recent debate about rental bond guarantees has served to highlight the difficulties in accessing such a loan.

The ACT Housing website just says people must meet an income test based on their household size, but it does not appear to give any information online about what the test would be. Instead the website very helpfully suggests that people "obtain a rental bond application kit from the central access point". This turns out to be Nature Conservation House in Belconnen, which is not going to be convenient to everybody who is hoping to rent in the ACT. I intend to follow up on this. Given it is 2018, surely there is some way that you could apply for a rental bond loan online or at the very least access all the information that you need so that you can find out whether you are likely to be eligible thus making it worthwhile to make the trek out to Nature Conservation House.

The rest of the ACT government has been moving on to digital access for information and I would hope ACT Housing could do this as well. Or if they have and I have not found it, I apologise but suggest they could improve their website so that people can

find it. This is not the only instance where the ACT government have a very good program that is impossible for people to access because they cannot find out anything about it. If you were cynical, you might conclude the ACT government do not want to encourage people who would benefit from this service accessing it.

In this instance I am not that cynical. I think it is purely poor service provision. I do not think the government are trying to stop it being accessed; I think they just have not thought about how people will access it, because I do not know how they would. I know of only one person who has accessed it, and they did that through another service provider who knew about the bond. But if you have the misfortune of being a low income person and are not well and truly in the service provision system, it is beyond me how you would work it out.

While this amendment is welcome, it is not the only amendment that will be needed as part of the rental reform puzzle. After conducting consultation in 2014, the review of the Residential Tenancies Act was published in June 2016. It included two tranches of recommendations. The first were largely non-controversial or low-hanging fruit, and they have all been implemented. Thank you. The second tranche, not all of which the Greens support, are being progressed, but they are being progressed very slowly.

I understand the Attorney-General will release further legislation on this subject later in the year, and I look forward very much to seeing the content of this. Hopefully, this might include: developing occupancy agreements for those who are boarding or lodging or in a caravan park, allowing tenants to give 14 days notice to leave a rental property if they have been offered social housing, and reducing the maximum amount of rent payable in advance from four weeks to two weeks, which would bring the ACT in line with New South Wales. That is also relevant to the discussion about the need or otherwise for ways to make providing rental bonds easier. If you have to produce less rent up-front then you will find it easier to provide a bond and not have to think about the bond guarantees.

Other areas where we would like to see work being done on the RTA include: removing discrimination against pet owners or at least facilitating pet ownership—I understand this is a sometimes fraught and difficult issue, but it is a real issue to many tenants; instituting minimum standards for security in tenancies; and extending some of the notice periods for evictions with grounds and placing more onus on landlords to provide evidence as to why an eviction is necessary. To conclude, I thank the Attorney-General and his directorate for the work on this bill, which the Greens support.

MR WALL (Brindabella) (11.25): I rise to speak to the Residential Tenancies Amendment Bill and echo some comments made by my colleague Mr Parton. This bill clearly strikes the wrong balance. When dealing with residential tenancies clearly there is a requirement to properly balance the rights and the needs of the tenant and also the rights and the needs of the property owner. For me and members of the opposition, this bill clearly strikes the wrong balance. The pendulum has swung too far in favour of tenant rights and leaves a substantial and enlarged risk being carried by the property owner.

When bundled with the economic mismanagement of the government through huge slugs to land tax and rates that have occurred over previous years, the economic argument for investing in Canberra is rapidly starting to look like a bad investment decision. The budget the Chief Minister and Treasurer will hand down today undoubtedly will call for more land sales, more unit block developments, most of which will be bought, hopefully, by investors who are now subject to a foreign investor tax if they are from overseas who will now carry further risk if they choose to rent that property out.

When I did a small stint working in real estate many years ago, the way it was explained to us about why it is a four-week bond and how the legislation is structured was very simple: the tenant is required to put forward a four-week bond of rent when entering a property. If there is a failure to pay, the standard terms of the tenancy agreement and the legislation mean there is a seven-day late period. The managing agent or the property owner is required to send a notice to remedy to the tenant and give them seven days to fix up that payment. If the tenant fails to do that, a two-week termination notice is able to be issued, which also allows for an application to ACAT to terminate the tenancy. In all, it is designed so that if a tenant fails to pay the rent the process to evict is four weeks. The landlord holds a four-week bond, therefore, everything is square on the ledger at the end of the day.

What has happened since is clearly illustrated in the ACAT annual report from last year, which highlights:

The average number of days elapsed between the opening of a residential tenancies file and the closing of that file is 56 days.

Currently, should a tenant fail to pay their rent, the landlord or the managing agent issues a notice to remedy and then seven days elapse. You issue a notice to terminate and another 14 days elapse. So three weeks have gone. Onto that you add the 56 days before ACAT can resolve the matter. Very few property investors in the ACT would not have a mortgage on their properties. So for the best part of three months the owner of a property is without an income to service the loan on their property.

Despite that, the government is seeking to pass changes that add a further layer into that eviction process which will require the landlord to apply to ACAT in the first instance to put in place a payment plan. If the tenant continues to breach the agreement the landlord will need to apply to ACAT yet again to have an eviction noticed served. So that 56 days is going to blow out and the process will take even longer.

As I said in my opening remarks, in the view of the opposition the pendulum has swung too far in favour of the rights of the tenant. If the government choose to apply these terms for some of the most vulnerable people in the community who are in social and public housing, go for it; it does not require this legislative change. It can be done by simply changing the standard terms of the rental agreement issued to public housing tenants. If they choose to that, there is compassion from those in the

opposition to support that change. But the broad-brush approach that it applies to all residential tenancies in the ACT is a step too far.

We want to see investment in the city; we want people to see Canberra as an opportunity. We also want to see affordable housing here, affordable accommodation and affordable rentals. But all the while the landlords or property owners are required to carry the bulk of the risk, and we are going to see that cost transfer in the weekly rental payment. If we want to encourage cheaper rentals, make it easier for people to invest. Give them a sense of assurance that when they make an investment in the ACT their investment is safe and they are going to be looked after. Encourage that.

There is a supply problem in our rental market. If we discourage investment, we are clearly discouraging people from putting properties on the market for rental. It is that simple. If we do not have sufficient supply the price of the supply increases. Every time the government comes into this place and makes it harder for people to invest by increasing the level of risk to the investment they make in this city, the less likely it is that that investment will be made.

If we want to address housing affordability and if we want to fix this problem we need to be clear about how we go about it. The government have clearly missed the mark—they are trying to have their cake and eat it too. You cannot have both. For that reason the opposition will not be supporting this amendment today.

MS BERRY (Ginninderra—Deputy Chief Minister, Minister for Education and Early Childhood Development, Minister for Housing and Suburban Development, Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence, Minister for Women and Minister for Sport and Recreation) (11.31): I want to speak briefly to this amendment bill today. These amendments to the Residential Tenancies Act will improve security for our vulnerable tenants and will ensure due consideration is given to the circumstances of tenants before ACAT. I am glad to see more of this work being done to protect renters when it comes to using commercial alternatives to a rental bond.

This work closely aligns with the development of the new Housing ACT strategy. I have had many conversations in the community about improving the security in rental housing, particularly for vulnerable people. And this bill will help in achieving these goals.

With regard to rental bonds, I want to draw members' attention to the government's bond loan scheme that is available to help people get into the private rental market. The ACT affordable rental office offers people on low to moderate incomes a low-interest rental bond loan to put towards a private rental bond. Rental bond loans cover up to 90 per cent of an eligible person's bond. Repayments can start three months after it starts and then are repaid over a 20-month period with an average repayment of around \$27.

For the information of members of this place, anybody who might be struggling to get together a bond for a rental property can go to the Community Services Directorate website, type "rental bond loan" into the search bar and the information will come up on how a person can get the information that they need to access a rental bond loan

and to ensure that they are eligible. They can also go directly to Housing ACT at Emu Bank in Belconnen or they can call the OneLink phone number 1800 176 468. On the Community Services website for the rental bond loans there are about four phone numbers for people who want to get advice on a rental bond loan, for people for whom English is a second language or for people who are deaf or hearing impaired to get support as well when they are making those applications. Changes like these are part of ongoing reform to make housing more affordable, secure and accessible for more people in our community.

The government is continuing its important work with the community, building and development sectors towards the development of a new housing strategy. The government has done extensive consultation with the Canberra community in the development of the strategy, including last year's housing and homelessness summit. While the strategy is due to be finalised later this year, early initiatives to improve affordable housing options are already underway. These include the new affordable public and community housing targets, the affordable home purchase database and the \$1 million innovation fund, with its year 1 projects to be announced soon. I look forward to releasing the new strategy. Every step that we take in this chamber will help address the broader challenges out there in our community.

MR RAMSAY (Ginninderra—Attorney-General, Minister for Regulatory Services, Minister for the Arts and Community Events and Minister for Veterans and Seniors) (11.34), in reply: I am very pleased to speak in support of the Residential Tenancies Amendment Bill 2018. I table a revised explanatory statement which provides details about how the provisions in relation to the commercial guarantees in this bill will operate.

I thank members for their contributions, even though it did become apparent during the debate that the Canberra Liberals have not truly come to grips with the intent, the background or the effect of the legislation. What this bill provides is fairer outcomes for vulnerable people. It does this through changing the processes for managing rental arrears and by ensuring that the government has sufficient time to carefully consider and regulate new products that are offered to renters. This government is committed to making sure that vulnerable people in our community have the protections that they need in the rental market.

As the Deputy Chief Minister outlined, she is currently developing a new housing strategy for the ACT. The focus of that strategy will be on assisting those who need help the most: people who are experiencing homelessness and low income households in housing stress.

The first set of amendments in this bill deals with commercial guarantees. Commercial guarantee products are new in the Australian rental market and the idea behind them is that, instead of saving for a bond, a tenant can pay a smaller monthly fee to a private company that guarantees payment to lessors. Innovation, however, cannot happen at the expense of our most vulnerable people. This is a product that by its very nature is going to be marketed to people who cannot afford a bond. And that means that there needs to be a clear role for a strong consumer protection framework.

We introduced a legislative stay on these products last year so that more work could be done to develop an appropriate regulatory regime. And since that time we undertook two further rounds of community consultations, including an open consultation on 20 October 2017 for three weeks and further targeted consultation on exposure draft regulations. During that consultation it became clear that real questions about the impact of these products on vulnerable tenants remained to be addressed. The role of debt collection agencies, the rights of tenants to dispute amounts owed and the rights of lessors, in dealing with these companies, need to be more thoroughly examined. Accordingly, this bill reintroduces that legislative stay.

I would like to thank the Tenants Union, Better Renting and Care Financial Counselling Service in particular for their engagement during this process. Their practical experience in helping tenants and people with financial issues has informed the government's position on bond alternatives and will continue to inform its policy on residential tenancy reform more broadly.

Turning to the way that this bill improves ACAT's ability to deal with unpaid rent, these amendments respond to concerns that were raised with the government by Canberra Community Law about conditional termination and possession orders, or CTPOs. CTPOs are essentially a tribunal-ordered payment plan for rent. They are not made with very high frequency. And most of them are made in relation to public housing tenants. Last year, for example, the ACAT made 35 of these orders.

Today's bill does not mean that all tenants and lessors will have a completely different experience where there is unpaid rent. It only applies to limited situations where the ACAT has looked at a rental dispute and then, in turn, has decided that a payment plan rather than any other alternative is the correct way forward.

The existing legislation has in practice created problems for both tenants and lessors. And these problems were highlighted in the Supreme Court case of the Commission for Social Housing v Moffatt. In that case, the then Master Mossop found that legal rights and responsibilities of lessors and tenants became unclear whenever a CTPO was breached. And His Honour suggested that legislation should be amended.

Through consultation with Canberra Community Law and the Real Estate Institute of the ACT, or REIACT, we developed the amendments in the bill to resolve the uncertainty. Also, in response to the decision by then Master Mossop and our consultations, what this bill does is establish a new way of managing rental arrears called a payment order.

The payment order process has been designed to provide certainty to both parties, tenants and lessors alike. It is a fundamental misunderstanding of the provisions and it is quite inaccurate to characterise this as a disincentive for landlords. It provides certainty for both. The key difference from the existing process—

Mrs Dunne: It is certain that the landlords will lose money.

Mr Wall: And carry more risk.

MR RAMSAY: Again our Canberra Liberals are demonstrating not only an inability but an unwillingness to engage with the legal realities of what has been recommended from the Supreme Court. The key difference from the existing process is that the legal basis for moving forward when a payment plan is breached is set out step by step in the legislation. That makes clear the roles and responsibilities.

Lessors can still seek to move out tenants who do not meet their rental obligations but their basis for doing so is clear. It is legislated and the avenues for a tenant to make a case, including hardship, are clearly set out. Importantly, the new process provides a clear avenue for the ACAT to look at the circumstances and to make a fair, impartial decision before anyone is evicted. I would have thought that the Canberra Liberals may have at least paid lip-service to being fair and impartial but today they have chosen not to.

I have met with REIACT as part of this legislative development in regard to both aspects. There is a clear benefit for lessors in this legislation which has increased certainty about how to proceed when a payment plan does not work out. The view that REIACT did put forward, which has been echoed by the Canberra Liberals today, is that legislation governing tenancy and public housing should be different from other kinds of tenancies.

Let me reiterate the government's view. Our intention is not to create different classes of tenants but to ensure that all people—tenants and others—have secure, affordable housing, and in today's legislation we are focusing on those people who are at most risk. I do thank REIACT for its willingness to engage. It was a very positive conversation, a very fruitful conversation, and the views of the people who manage rentals and own rental properties are, of course, very important. The government will remain open to hearing from them throughout the course of our ongoing residential tenancy reforms.

The amendments today are, as a package, a win for vulnerable Canberrans. They ensure that people who are vulnerable and who are behind on rent have clear rights and that the ACAT has a clear process for looking at the situations. They also allow for important work to be done to make sure that any alternatives to rental bonds meet the needs of the entire Canberra community.

We are currently undertaking a broad examination of residential tenancy laws. Reform to the way that occupancy agreements cover diverse living situations, such as student housing and caravan parks, is currently under development. We are also looking closely at developments in Victoria to help make renting more secure and safe. These efforts will be guided, like this bill, by a focus on the most vulnerable people in our city. And we will not apologise for that. We will keep working to ensure that our community is safer, is stronger, and is more connected. I commend the bill to the Assembly.

Question put:

That this bill be agreed to in principle.

The Assembly voted—

Ayes 13

Noes 10

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

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Bill agreed to in principle.

Leave granted to dispense with the detail stage.

Bill agreed to.

Casino and Other Gaming Legislation Amendment Bill 2018

Debate resumed from 10 May 2018, on motion by **Mr Ramsay**:

That this bill be agreed to in principle.

MR PARTON (Brindabella) (11.48): Wow, the casino and poker machines: what a mess, what a mess, what a complete and utter shambles. Haven't we come a long way since the days that Aquis made a glittering presentation on what the casino precinct was going to look like as they built hotels, retail and restaurants to transform the city?

In actual fact, Mr Assistant Speaker, we have not come a long way at all. Nothing has happened. I seriously doubt that it ever will. If you thought that the minister was struggling to make a decision on anything in this space, this bill indicates that you would be right. Despite having the Gambling and Racing Commission and despite all of the ministerial staff and directorate staff that surround him, the minister feels the need to appoint more people to make decisions that he is not capable of making himself. This bill represents another instalment in the saga of granting the casino access to poker machines and automated table gaming machines.

Back in 2015 the Chief Minister opened the door to the possibility of poker machines in the casino. With a grimace, Greens members had to quietly look the other way. The Chief Minister's idea stopped, started, stalled and rerouted over the months. Then years after originally leading the conversation, Aquis were completely left out of it, which well and truly quelled their enthusiasm.

History shows that our Greens colleagues eventually got partial retribution by using the parliamentary agreement to force a reduction in poker machine numbers from around 5,000 back then to 4,000 by 2020, which is a tale in itself. And this would

affect large numbers of poker machines operating in Labor affiliated clubs, such as the Labor Party's Labor clubs and the closely related Tradies clubs, owned and operated by the CFMEU.

This reduction measure is designed ultimately to get poker machines down to very low numbers for all clubs, irrespective of whether the Canberra community wants that outcome or not. The casino would get some poker machines out of the overall reduction. Their vision was for around 500 in return for a very substantial investment in Canberra.

This was untenable and out of reach for many reasons, not the least being that it flew in the face of the long-accepted community clubs model for Canberra. Eventually this government did settle on a figure of 200 machines. But the endorsement came with a suffocating set of shoestrings, crafted mainly by the Greens.

Last year's Casino (Electronic Gaming) Act paved the way for providing poker machines to the casino, but at the price of considerable restraints, including \$2 betting limits, a mandatory precommitment system and connection to a central monitoring system.

The next instalment in the yellow brick road created by this government for the casino is the bill before us today. The minister has presented us with a comprehensive and complex bill that sets a framework for controlling the acquisition and disposal of the casino, including leases, licences, approval of owners and conversion of gaming machine authorisations.

One of the curious features of the controlled framework created by this bill is the way that decision-making input will be provided to the minister. On the one hand the minister will draw on advice from the Gambling and Racing Commission while, on the other hand, he will create another advisory body in the form of the casino advisory panel.

This new panel will have powers and features that, in some respects, would look not unlike an ICAC. For example, the minister must take on broad recommendations tendered by the panel. The panel must be established before the minister can make any of the decisions specified.

The bill gives the panel some interesting powers. For example, it requires that so-called information holders must comply with requests for information from the panel. "Information" is defined in the broadest possible sense, as is the list of entities that must respond to information requests by the panel, which includes the Gambling and Racing Commission itself, the ACT Planning and Land Authority and any other territory authority, along with any other entity prescribed by regulation. It is interesting to note that police and other security agencies are not specifically mentioned. Perhaps these are outside the information boundary intended by this bill.

In order to power up this panel, its members will be legislated as protected persons with immunity from civil liability. Protected persons will include people assisting the panel. This casts a broad net in terms of who will be protected. The panel will produce

some reports to this Assembly, defined as so-called disclosable reports. There will also be other protected reports whose contents will be deemed contrary to the public interest and therefore not for the public domain or for this chamber.

As conveyed in the explanatory statement to the minister's bill, there also appear to be some finely tuned boundaries in relation to section 136 dealing with human rights and privacy considerations. The importance of these are dealt with at some length in the explanatory statement. We can only hope that the right balance has been struck here.

I must confess that I am a little unsure of what we are dealing with here in the sense that we have a multiplicity of advisory sources feeding the minister's decision-making process. On one hand we have the Gambling and Racing Commission, which is already established as an independent body under the Gambling and Racing Control Act. On the other hand the minister wants to create this additional advisory source with powers vaguely resembling some sort of royal commission.

When these sorts of organisational overlays are created, you are prone to creating a number of negative outcomes—administrative tensions, competition for resources, frictions over functional responsibilities and boundary disputes. Someone needs to sit over the top of all of this to make sure it stays cohesive, coordinated, productive and effective. The minister needs to explain how this will be done without consuming the rest of his day job and impacting on good governance.

This organisational dichotomy does not come without a price. And we are not sure whether this will be considerable or not. We can be certain that the three-person panel described in section 136E will not have a hope in hell of covering off on all the professional skill stream specifications listed in that section. Some of these streams will require very high-priced help indeed.

No doubt, given the classified nature of some of its information collection, analysis and reporting, it will require its own dedicated corporate services infrastructure—I do not know; perhaps even its own accommodation and IT system. I am not sure that this represents value for money or that it will provide the solutions to the problems that the minister cannot seem to find.

In terms of functional efficiency we would have to ask this: why can this sort of body not be stood up inside the Gambling and Racing Commission itself? The commission is a longstanding body with a remit to oversee and regulate the gaming sector, and has a wealth of corporate memory and expertise fit for this purpose. I hope that Canberra's ratepayers are not going to be slugged in order to set up this sort of show.

In conclusion, we have a bill that appears to amplify the deterrent effect of the previous bill in terms of enticing a casino body to invest in Canberra. It does provide a comprehensive set of controls, checks and balances, but these are at the expense of organisational fragmentation and costs incurred in creating an additional source of advice for ministerial decision-making. On balance, this side of the chamber does not believe that the minister has got it right and we will be opposing this bill.

MR RATTENBURY (Kurrajong) (11.56): The Greens will be supporting this bill because it provides additional scrutiny and transparency over decisions relating to the casino and helps strengthen the requirements around key harm minimisation measures that were introduced last year.

When looking at any legislation related to the casino, there are always a number of considerations to be made. These include how it will affect the gambling model in the ACT; impacts on development; impacts on the life and entertainment options in the city precinct; and, most importantly, how it will minimise gambling harm.

In November last year, this Assembly passed a bill to allow the introduction of poker machines in the casino, while also bringing in nation-leading harm minimisation measures such as \$2 maximum bets, mandatory precommitment and a centralised monitoring system. I believe this legislation provides strong protections to ensure that any introduction of poker machines into the casino will not increase harm from gambling in the territory.

At the same time we must recognise that poker machines can be a highly profitable asset and therefore there are many parties with an interest in accessing any available licences. In a town the size of Canberra, where we have a relatively small number of organisations operating large numbers of poker machines, there is always going to be the potential for conflicts of interest to arise.

As long as the ACT government continues to receive revenue from poker machines through gambling taxes, the government, regardless of its political persuasion, will always have an interest in providing more poker machine licences. Of course, that interest is usually counteracted somewhat by a desire to reduce gambling harm in the community. Nevertheless, the government's motivations and interests in granting authorisations can be brought into question.

The Canberra community should be able to have full confidence that these kinds of decisions are being made in the best interests of the community and not solely in the interests of raising revenue. That is why the Greens support the proposal to establish an independent casino advisory panel to make recommendations about these kinds of decisions.

In particular, it is crucial that the advisory panel must make a recommendation to the minister about whether the proposed activity is in the public interest. The independence and separation of the panel from government are an important factor in giving the community confidence in their recommendation, and this will be enhanced because the advice comes from a panel with expertise in a range of relevant areas, including law, integrity, probity, planning and, of course, gambling harm minimisation.

This bill also includes some important provisions relating to the regulation of social impact assessments. As we learnt last year, while social impact assessments are fundamentally important to reducing gambling harm, they are of little use if the process is not accessible or understood by the general community. Thankfully, those

issues have been addressed for assessments under the Gaming Machine Regulation, and this bill provides similar requirements for the casino.

I am pleased to see that the social impact assessments for poker machines at the casino must identify the impact on both the local community, within three kilometres of the venue, and the broader Canberra community. This is a recognition that poker machines have the potential to cause harm not just to those in the immediate vicinity but right across our community, with the impacts on families and friends not being any less significant.

The bill also makes the important recognition that any poker machine licensees within 200 metres of the casino that have links with the casino licensee should be required to operate as if they were in the casino. That means these machines are also subject to \$2 maximum bets and mandatory precommitment in order to ensure best harm minimisation practice. It is also a recognition that there is the potential for a loophole where machines could be considered close to the casino but not in the casino and therefore avoid the harm minimisation requirements in the legislation. This clause prevents that kind of behaviour and sends an important signal that the harm minimisation measures in the casino act are to be taken seriously and be fully implemented.

Finally, I would like to speak briefly to the impacts of this legislation on the gaming machine trading system. Under the existing scheme, when it expired on 31 August 2018 there would be an automatic requirement for machines to be forfeited in order to meet the target of having no more than 15 machines per 1,000 people in the ACT. This deadline was originally set to create an incentive for trades to occur and for the number of machines to reduce without the need for forced forfeitures. In reality, due to a number of factors, I think it is fair to say that the trading scheme has not been as effective as was intended, and we have now reached a plateau where very few trades are occurring.

In this environment, I accept that it would have a big economic impact on clubs if the government were to simply force them to forfeit the remaining 900 or so authorisations to get down to 4,000 machines. Therefore, I think Minister Ramsay has taken the right path by engaging an external consultant who is working with the clubs on a clear path to get down to that 4,000 figure.

I want to be clear that the Greens remain absolutely committed to reducing the number of poker machines in the ACT, and the move down to 4,000 is an important first step. I also think, from my conversations with a number of clubs, that many of them recognise that we have too many machines in Canberra and want to be part of the solution. Therefore I am hopeful that the process that Neville Stevens is undertaking will provide an outcome that gets us to 4,000 machines and actually helps clubs to find alternative, more sustainable revenue streams. That is why I am happy to support the deferral of the next stage of the trading scheme, to give a bit more time for the current process to reach a conclusion.

This bill presents a range of amendments relating to gaming in the ACT. The Greens are supportive of the intent to improve the integrity and transparency of processes

relating to poker machines in the casino, as well as the clauses relating to social impact assessments. Overall, the bill aligns with our desire to reduce gambling harm and increase public confidence in the process. That is why we will be supporting this bill today.

MR RAMSAY (Ginninderra—Attorney-General, Minister for Regulatory Services, Minister for the Arts and Community Events and Minister for Veterans and Seniors) (12.03), in reply: I am pleased to close the debate on the Casino and Other Gaming Legislation Amendment Bill. We should pause to note that we have heard today that the Canberra Liberals have stated that they will be voting against transparency and integrity. We should pause on that one and hear again that that is exactly what they have chosen to do today. They have made that very clear.

Mr Parton has said he is a little unsure of what we are dealing with here today, so please allow me to make it a bit clearer for him. There are three key reasons why we regulate the gaming industry: to ensure industry integrity, to protect consumers and, most importantly, to reduce gambling harm. It is vital that all government decisions about the industry be transparent and that the benefits to the community of a regulatory approach are clear.

This bill provides for an unprecedented level of transparency in relation to key decisions under the Casino Control Act 2006. It does this through the establishment of independent casino advisory panels. A casino advisory panel will consider whether a proposed change in the ownership or leasing of the casino, or the grant or transfer of the casino licence, is in the public interest. A casino advisory panel will also advise on any application by the casino licensee to operate electronic gaming machines and fully automated table games.

Each casino advisory panel will be unique, and its composition will reflect the decision that is under consideration. A panel that is appointed to advise me about a transfer of the casino licence would obviously be quite different from another one that is considering the amendment of a casino lease or the conversion of restricted authorisations.

A range of knowledge, skills, and experience will be relevant to panel membership. These include governance, law, integrity and probity, finance, risk, urban design, and property development. The panel will make a recommendation to me about the specific decision that it has considered. Balancing transparency with fairness to the applicant, the panel's report will be tabled in this Assembly once the applicant has been advised of the decision.

A new independent process to oversee these key casino decisions is an important addition to our existing industry integrity, consumer protection and harm reduction measures.

The Chief Minister's directorate continues to liaise with Aquis Entertainment about its redevelopment proposal; however, as with the Casino (Electronic Gaming) Act that was passed last year, this legislation is not about any particular licensee or proposal. It is proponent neutral. We have been clear that, whoever holds the casino licence,

redevelopment of the casino and its precinct will be required before any electronic gaming products can be operated.

In order for the casino licensee to start acquiring the authorisations, it will need to eventually operate gaming machines or FATG terminals. It will have to be issued an authorisation certificate. That certificate will only be issued after a social impact assessment has been completed.

As is set out in the bill, the new casino electronic gaming regulation of 2018 will require details of the redevelopment of the casino and its precinct to be provided as part of the SIA. The casino licensee will need to demonstrate to the community, and to the Gambling and Racing Commission, the economic and social benefits of its proposal, and that the redevelopment warrants the number of gaming machines and FATG terminals it is seeking to operate.

In addition, when considering whether to convert any restricted authorisations so that electronic gaming operations can commence, the casino advisory panel will consider the casino licensee's compliance with any agreement with the territory about the redevelopment of the casino and the casino precinct.

The bill also includes a measure to ensure that the stringent gambling harm reduction measures that were passed in the Assembly last year cannot be undermined. Any gaming machines that are operated within 200 metres of the casino by a gaming machine licensee that is related to the casino licensee will be subject to the same harm minimisation measures as casino gaming machines. These measures include a maximum bet level of \$2, mandatory precommitment to a set loss limit, and connection to a central monitoring system. This government is also progressing its commitment to reducing gambling harm through the reduction of the number of gaming or machine authorisations in the territory.

There has been some interest by the media about the amendment included in this bill that delays the commencement of schedule 1 of the Gaming Machine (Reform) Amendment Act 2015. Under this schedule, the ratio of 15 gaming machine authorisations per 1,000 adults was to commence from 31 August 2018 at the latest, with a pro-rata compulsory surrender of authorisations from all but the smallest clubs. These provisions were to be the second phase of the gaming machine trading scheme.

In line with an increased awareness of the risks of gambling harm, a population-based ratio for the number of authorisations no longer represents government policy. We have committed to reduce the number of gaming machine authorisations in the territory to no more than 4,000 by 2020, and we are working with industry towards achieving that outcome.

The report from Mr Stevens' club industry diversification support analysis will be soon considered by government, including his findings and his recommendations. As a result, this bill includes a provision that delays the commencement of the population-based ratio for 12 months. However, it is my intention to bring forward amendments before that time that will remove the ratio and include new provisions about the pathway to 4,000 authorisations.

I thank the Standing Committee on Justice and Community Safety in their legislative scrutiny role for their review of this bill. I note that the committee has drawn to the attention of the Assembly the human rights analysis of the bill in relation to the bill's engagement of the right to privacy and reputation under section 12 of the Human Rights Act 2004 and the right to the presumption of innocence under section 22 of that act. I note that the committee generally agrees with the assessment in the explanatory statement. The committee has further requested justification for the ability to extend by regulation the range of persons who may be required to provide information to a casino advisory panel.

It is not possible to anticipate in advance all of the entities that may hold information that is relevant to a casino advisory panel's considerations. The information required will vary depending on the decision on which the panel is providing a recommendation and the specific circumstances of the applicant. For this reason, the bill includes section 136C(1)(d) to provide for flexibility and responsiveness where required to support a casino advisory panel's function. The power has been carefully considered and has been limited so that a panel can only ask for information where it will assist the panel to make its recommendation to me. The provision does not provide a general power to ask for information from anyone about anything. I have provided this additional justification in my response to the committee.

We are ensuring that the casino legislation is robust and is appropriate to the inherent risks that come with casino operations. We are committed to reducing harm from gambling, and I will continue to bring forward legislation to support that aim.

I said last year that there would be more casino legislation introduced. I can also say that there is more to come in due course should a casino redevelopment proposal progress. As we all know in this place, legislation is not a static thing; it must be revised and reconsidered to fit changing circumstances. I make no apology for ensuring that the right legislation is in place at the right time, particularly when it comes to ensuring that gambling harm is reduced and that the community benefits from any increased access given to gambling products. I commend the bill to the Assembly.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Bill agreed to in principle.

Leave granted to dispense with the detail stage.

Bill agreed to.

Sitting suspended from 12.12 to 2.30 pm.

Questions without notice

ACT Health—Proposed organisational changes

MR COE: I have a question for the Chief Minister. I refer to the government's decision on 15 March to restructure the Health Directorate by splitting it in two. This

decision was based on a brief by the Head of Service which shows there was no internal or cross-directorate consultation. No documents have been provided under FOI requests to show that either the minister for health or the Minister for Mental Health were consulted before this decision was taken. Chief Minister, why didn't the proposal to drastically restructure the Health Directorate go to cabinet?

MR BARR: Of course, the administrative arrangements are a matter for the Chief Minister to determine, but to put this conspiracy theory to bed, let me be clear that the minister for health and the Minister for Mental Health discussed, over many, many months, this particular issue and consulted with me on numerous occasions. The Head of Service and those associated with the delivery of administrative changes were involved in a discussion over a period of time. But it of course remains the prerogative of the executive government to at any time announce changes to the administrative structure of government. I sign an instrument that outlines such changes on a regular basis. This particular decision involved, as I say, many months of discussion and consideration, and is being developed over a period of some months still to come.

MR COE: Chief Minister, are there any documents or anything that suggests any rigour was undertaken or was all of this simply done at water-cooler conversations?

MR BARR: The government has undertaken an extensive process of assessment in relation to these matters. We have considered and discussed these matters at some length and reached a decision, which we have taken and announced.

MRS DUNNE: Chief Minister, are there any documents to substantiate your claims that this was considered over a lengthy period of time, and that you consulted the Minister for Health and Wellbeing and the Minister for Mental Health?

MR BARR: There certainly are diary meetings and, indeed, the discussions that have been publicly aired by the Minister for Mental Health. The government, as I say, can make administrative changes at any point. I repeat: the government can make administrative changes at any point. I do so regularly, and I will do so in the future.

Planning—Territory Plan

MS LE COUTEUR: My question is to the Minister for Planning and Land Management. It relates to development proposals that threaten our important public spaces with overshadowing. Minister, we have had a rash of these proposals recently: Curtin, Woden town centre and Garema Place in the city. What are you doing to strengthen the Territory Plan so that these types of proposals are rejected?

MR GENTLEMAN: I thank Ms Le Couteur for her question and her interest in planning. There is the opportunity to provide the best urban open space as we move forward in renewing the city and ensuring that we have enough opportunity for people to live in the city itself as well. We have, of course, strategic codes underneath the Territory Plan and its coding to ensure that we do not overshadow public areas.

As we move forward with any changes to planning in the future, we look at overshadowing, particularly with development applications that are of some height, to ensure that those urban open spaces are not overshadowed in the winter solstice.

MS LE COUTEUR: Minister, I think you are basically saying that the rules are currently strong enough.

MADAM SPEAKER: Ms Le Couteur, go straight to your question.

MS LE COUTEUR: If so, why did the multistorey car park on the western side of Woden town square get approved when it will significantly overshadow the Woden town square?

MR GENTLEMAN: I will have to take the details of that question on notice.

MR PARTON: Minister, are you considering any changes to the Territory Plan, or is the directorate considering changes to the Territory Plan, to protect what Ms Le Couteur is speaking of in terms of overshadowing? Is there anything that is being considered at the moment?

MR GENTLEMAN: As I said earlier, we are always looking at future changes to the Territory Plan. It is of interest, where the community perceives overshadowing, that in most of these development applications we provide detailed briefs to the community on development applications, and 3D modelling on overshadowing as well. I am confident that the codes in the Territory Plan at the moment stand up to the need for providing the best urban open space for Canberra as we renew the Canberra city central area and some of the other areas as well. But, of course, there is always opportunity to change the Territory Plan should the community want it.

Visitors

MADAM SPEAKER: Members, I bring to your attention that in the gallery we have members of the Canberra Quakers club. Welcome to your Assembly and to question time.

Questions without notice

Education—skills development

MR STEEL: My question is to the Minister for Education and Early Childhood Development. Minister, how is the government ensuring that ACT students are equipped with the skills they need for the future?

MS BERRY: I thank Mr Steel for his question. The ACT government is funding a skills academy, which has been announced as part of this budget. It is a resource for local public schools to deepen education in science, technology, engineering and maths disciplines. With a commitment of \$5.76 million, this initiative will complete and build on ACT Labor's election commitment to establish a coding and cyberskills academy.

Madam Speaker, I know this is something that is dear to your heart, having turned the sod at the start of the development of the centre for innovation and learning at Caroline Chisholm School, now a very busy centre working on increasing access by young people in the ACT to science, technology, engineering and maths. What has been great about it is making sure that we look at how we introduce STEM to young people in a way that makes it inclusive; in a way that will encourage young people to engage in those sorts of learning experiences, and not discourage them.

Particularly for young women, those kinds of skill areas are not always seen to be an exciting pathway. Through the future skills academy and the learning I have seen in Caroline Chisholm School, we will make sure that STEM is as inclusive as possible.

It has been great to have the Chief Scientist, Dr Finkel, encouraging and applauding us for the work we are doing in the ACT on these two academies: the future skills academy and the Caroline Chisholm School. I also give a shout-out to Paula and her pink lab coat at the Caroline Chisholm School for being such a great host and always looking for interesting and fun ways to introduce young people to STEM.

MR STEEL: Minister, how will the future skills academy support teachers across all schools?

MS BERRY: To make sure that the academy benefits as many people as possible, these hubs will be available for teachers to learn through as well. Teachers will be able to access professional learning and accredited training in STEM, which will strengthen the delivery of the Australian curriculum. The hubs will feature 3D printers, augmented reality equipment and robotics kits. It was a great pleasure to hear from a student who had developed a 3D artificial foot for his duck using one of the 3D printers. I hope that it was put to good use and that that duck now has two feet and not just one.

It is because of the hub's expert teachers and staff that they are able to support all of their colleagues across the ACT school system as well as facilitate strong industry, government and tertiary sector partnerships that individual schools would otherwise not be able to universally and equitably access.

Teachers will be able to take these skills to their classrooms, supported by the Chromebooks that all high school students were delivered by last year's budget and the excellent facilities that are provided in our public schools.

MS CODY: Minister, how will the future skills academy support local industry?

MS BERRY: I thank Ms Cody for the supplementary. The academy was developed in consultation with CSIRO, the ANU, the University of Canberra, the CBR Innovation Network and other industry representatives. It will connect schools with local industry for students to work on real-world scenarios.

The ACT economy is growing in sectors like defence, sports science, multimedia and digital arts, fashion and renewable energy—all fields that will increasingly require

strong science, technology, engineering and maths skills. By providing real-world situations for students to work on, we can show them how valuable their education is, what they are capable of, and get them passionate about the classroom of their future.

The academy will also aim to increase the workforce representation of students from low SES backgrounds, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, as well as students for whom English is an additional or second language.

Engineering Australia reports that fewer than six per cent of girls across Australia studied physics in year 12 and over five per cent more boys studied advanced math than girls. Connecting students with local industry and problem solving scenarios engages students to keep them keen to learn STEM and on track to continue this work in the local industry after they finish school.

ACT Health—governance

MRS DUNNE: My question is to the Minister for Health and Wellbeing. Minister, in your ministerial statement this morning about the accreditation process at the Canberra Hospital, you stated, “The directorate’s governance framework, clinical governance framework and corporate plan play an important role in guiding and demonstrating how the organisation goes about achieving its vision.” But you then went on to acknowledge that these documents were out of date at the time of the accreditation process. Minister, why were these important standards out of date at the time of the Canberra Hospital accreditation process?

MS FITZHARRIS: I thank Mrs Dunne for the question. They should not have been. They have since been reviewed, as I acknowledged in my statement this morning.

Mrs Dunne: Did you get an explanation?

Mr Wall: You are responsible.

MS FITZHARRIS: The directorate is responsible for the production and the update of business plans and corporate plans within the directorate. They were clearly not up to date and every effort is being made, as I outlined extensively this morning, to make sure that they are for re-accreditation of the hospital.

MRS DUNNE: Minister, did you seek an explanation as to why these documents were late, and what responsibility did you as the minister for health take for not updating these important documents?

MS FITZHARRIS: Again I refer to my statement this morning and also inform the Assembly that everything is being done for ACT Health to achieve re-accreditation next month. It is certainly the case that there has been significant work underway within ACT Health for what are very clearly directorate-level responsibilities to undertake clear corporate and clinical governance.

Mrs Dunne: And you take no responsibility? You were responsible.

MS FITZHARRIS: Madam Speaker, I am taking responsibility for making sure that ACT Health does everything it can to achieve re-accreditation next month.

MR WALL: Minister, how will two agencies keep key documents up to date with regular reviews when you have failed to manage one directorate properly? Do you ultimately take supreme responsibility for those shortcomings?

MS FITZHARRIS: I am sorry; I did not get the back end of that question.

MR WALL: How will two agencies keep key documents up to date with regular reviews when you have failed to manage one directorate properly? And: do you ultimately take responsibility for the shortcomings of the current directorate?

MS FITZHARRIS: In terms of the two organisations, absolutely. The leaders of those two organisations will ensure that governance is properly and effectively managed within the organisation. That is very clearly the responsibility of officials within directorates. Certainly, I am taking very clear responsibility for making sure that ACT Health achieves re-accreditation, and for making significant governance and structural changes within ACT Health to remedy the situation.

Hospitals—emergency departments

MS CODY: My question is to the Minister for Health and Wellbeing. Minister, can you please outline how the government's significant emergency department investment at both Calvary and Canberra Hospital will support the wellbeing of Canberrans when they access emergency care?

MS FITZHARRIS: I thank Ms Cody very much for her question and note her ongoing interest in health care in the ACT. Of course, the health and wellbeing of our community is the government's clear priority. That is why we are investing even more in our emergency departments and emergency surgery to help people when they need it most. Recently the demand for emergency procedures has grown at six per cent each year, and presentations to Canberra Hospital's ED are increasing.

Through this budget, the ACT government is making a sustainable investment in core public hospital services, such as emergency services, by expanding the capacity of our emergency departments to respond to this growth on an ongoing basis. We will invest \$47.2 million in acute care to support the emergency department, intensive care and additional inpatient beds. This will mean more acute care beds for admission and will help bring down emergency department wait times. We are also investing \$10.9 million in Calvary Public Hospital to undertake significant upgrades in their emergency department on Canberra's growing north side.

By taking a territory-wide approach to health services, we are making sure our community have better access to emergency care when they need it. By expanding health care right across the territory, ensuring a sustainable funding base for essential hospital services and building new facilities, we are making sure that Canberra's public hospitals can continue to deliver high quality services to Canberrans, reduce wait times and keep our growing community healthy.

MS CODY: Minister, what will the emergency department expansion and upgrades consist of?

MS FITZHARRIS: The government will be working closely with Calvary Public Hospital in Bruce to deliver this funding for Calvary, to deliver a vital upgrade and expansion of its emergency department and also to purchase the necessary clinical and diagnostic equipment.

With Calvary being an important hospital for Canberra's fast-growing north side, this upgrade will deliver additional treatment spaces, improved access and triage arrangements, enhanced waiting areas and an expanded short-stay unit, importantly including paediatric short-stay beds within the emergency department.

In particular, the upgrade will deliver eight short-stay unit beds, bringing the total number of these beds at Calvary Public Hospital to 19. The ED upgrades will benefit patients, visitors and staff by making people more comfortable before and during their presentation and treatment.

A reconfigured setting will also facilitate the introduction of new models of care for emergency department presentations. This investment in Calvary will also support upgrades and replacement of essential equipment, including clinical and diagnostic equipment such as patient monitoring equipment and a new CT scanner. People living in Canberra's north especially will see real benefit as a result of these works at Calvary Public Hospital, which will get underway next month.

MR PETTERSSON: Minister, how will this investment improve emergency waiting times and the delivery of emergency health services for Canberrans?

MS FITZHARRIS: Indeed, with a growing population, the Canberra Hospital emergency department anticipates close to 90,000 presentations this year, with further growth expected next year. Presentations at Calvary emergency department will reach almost 60,000 this year.

The expansion of Calvary Hospital's emergency department will provide for the improved flow of patients through the ED, which will have a positive effect on emergency department wait times. Importantly, it will build on our investment in other areas of Calvary, including the maternity unit and recently completed upgrade to operating theatres to modernise the hospital and make the patient experience much more comfortable and provide a more modern and contemporary healthcare setting for Calvary staff.

The government's significant commitment of additional funding for emergency services at Canberra Hospital will provide certainty, enabling the hospital to plan for and sustainably respond to demands more efficiently, effectively and in accord with our community's growing needs. It will help improve hospital performance by investing in more acute beds for admission while enabling patients who do not require admission to be treated in a timely manner and, as a result, bring down emergency department wait times.

It is a whole-of-hospital investment. This is all part of the government's commitment to invest more in core health services so that we can provide better and faster access to health care for the Canberra community.

ACT Health—proposed organisational changes

MS LAWDER: My question is to the Minister for Mental Health. Minister, the Chief Minister decided to restructure the Health Directorate on 15 March, the same day on which the Head of Service made a formal recommendation to him to do so. The background supporting that recommendation noted that there was no consultation internally or across directorates. The schedule of documents released under FOI in relation to this matter lists no records of meetings between you, the minister for health or the Chief Minister to discuss a restructure of ACT Health. Yet you claimed in the media on 4 June that you and Ms Fitzharris had been in regular contact for as long as 12 months before this decision was taken. Minister, why are there no records in the schedule of documents of meetings between yourself, Ms Fitzharris and Mr Barr to discuss this restructure?

MR RATTENBURY: As I have been perfectly clear about in my public comments, Minister Fitzharris and I meet quite regularly. There is obviously a significant degree of crossover of the areas that we work on. Whilst we each have our particular areas of responsibility when it comes to the Health Directorate, there are obviously areas that cross over, and, as I said in my public comments, we have over a period of time discussed the best way and the best model for ACT Health to operate under. That is the basis on which I made those public comments.

The framing by the Liberal Party is an interesting one. They are seeking to generate a conspiracy theory where clearly the Chief Minister acted—and has been in discussions with me and Minister Fitzharris—in response to advice that had been provided to him by the ministers who have direct responsibility for this. I was sitting here reflecting on the line of questioning, and I can imagine a parallel universe where—

Ms Lawder: A point of order, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: Yes, Ms Lawder.

Ms Lawder: The question asked: why are there no records? It is quite a simple question. Why are there no records?

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms Lawder.

Opposition members interjecting—

MADAM SPEAKER: Ms Lawder, can you resume your seat. Mr Wall!

MR RATTENBURY: I have nothing further to add, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: You have nothing further to add.

MS LAWDER: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Minister—

Opposition members interjecting—

MADAM SPEAKER: Mr Wall! Mr Hanson can be quiet. Indeed, the benches on my left can be quiet. Ms Lawder, you have the floor.

MS LAWDER: Minister, will you table any documents relating to the meetings between Ms Fitzharris and yourself to discuss the restructure by the close of this sitting period?

MR RATTENBURY: The Liberal Party have conducted a freedom of information application under our new and improved freedom of information laws. They have received all the documents that are available to them.

MRS DUNNE: Minister, why is it that no staff in mental health were consulted before the decision to restructure the directorate was made?

MR RATTENBURY: This is exactly the point I was about to go to when Ms Lawder came in. There are two possible ways to go about this. The minister and I discussed this and we have taken—

Opposition members interjecting—

MADAM SPEAKER: You asked a question of the minister. He is providing an answer. Have regard and respect, and just listen.

Mrs Dunne: I'm waiting to see whether it's relevant yet.

MADAM SPEAKER: Mrs Dunne!

MR RATTENBURY: The approach that has been taken here is that the broad decision has been taken, and now there is a significant period of time for discussion to go on with staff to plan the specific details relevant to ACT Health. The minister and I, with the Chief Minister's endorsement, have taken a decision to make this the future direction for the structure of ACT Health, and now the staff will be involved in extensive discussions.

We could have taken another approach where we did all of this work in the background, and the Liberal Party would have been in here outraged, confecting their outrage, about the fact that we have not made a public announcement about it. They would have said, 'You're doing this in secret. You're not telling anybody. What are you actually doing here?'

We have been very up-front from the get-go about the direction we are going in, and there is now an extensive process, working with staff, to ensure that the details are sorted through.

Emergency services—government support

MR PETTERSSON: My question is to the Minister for Police and Emergency Services. Minister, how is the ACT government helping to keep our growing community safe by supporting our police and emergency services personnel?

MR GENTLEMAN: I thank Mr Pettersson for his interest in community safety. Last week I was pleased to announce that the 2018-19 budget will be investing in various measures aimed at ensuring that our police and emergency services personnel receive the support they require. This will ensure that Canberrans can continue to enjoy a safe community.

In order to do this, ACT Policing will be recruiting for six more specialist positions, and Fire & Rescue will recruit 18 new firefighters to keep our growing city safe. The recruitment of these 18 new firefighters delivers on the government's commitment to ACT Fire & Rescue to replace retiring firefighters.

Canberra's firefighters do not just help out in putting out fires. They also respond to a range of other emergencies, from car accidents to power outages. This is in addition to the police officers previously funded in the 2016-17 ACT budget and the December 2017 announcement to deliver 23 more paramedics to the ACT Ambulance Service.

Another way that we will be supporting our police and emergency services is by providing equipment and technology that helps these personnel to better serve their community in new and innovative ways. I congratulate the work that our emergency services front-line personnel do in the ACT.

MR PETTERSSON: Minister, how is the ACT government supporting emergency services personnel to do their job safely and effectively?

MR GENTLEMAN: As mentioned earlier, through the 2018-19 budget the ACT government will be investing further in our police by providing six new specialist positions to provide support and to effectively prevent and fight crime. Four of these new specialist positions will be dedicated to expanding ACT Policing's strategic analysis capability and to helping to identify and target crime hot spots and emerging risks.

Another two specialist officers will be recruited to combat organised crime, strip criminal wealth and deliver an improved surveillance capability to monitor the activities of criminal gangs. The 2018-19 ACT budget will also aim to use our resources effectively and invest in new smartphone equipment for all officers to improve operations.

This will allow police officers to do more of their work while mobile and spend more time in the community. Having a greater police presence within our community allows officers to better keep Canberra safe. We are delighted that we are able to use technology to achieve this. These strategic investments in upgraded technology and intelligence-led policing will help ensure that even as our city grows it will remain the safest city in Australia.

MS ORR: How is the ACT government supporting our police to prevent and fight crime?

MR GENTLEMAN: There are many ways that the government will be supporting emergency services personnel effectively. I have talked about the work that we are investing in in ACT Policing that goes also to our work that we funded last year in looking at the police futures model. This will mean that we will be able to look at the work that is needed for ACT Policing across the territory in both a resource sense and an infrastructure sense. The CPO will be finalising that model in the not-too-distant future and will report back to me on the future needs for ACT Policing in the territory.

It being 3 pm, proceedings were interrupted pursuant to the order of the Assembly.

Appropriation Bill 2018-2019

Mr Barr, pursuant to notice, presented the bill, its explanatory statement, a Human Rights Act compatibility statement and the following supplementary papers:

Budget 2018-19—

Financial Management Act, pursuant to section 10—

Budget Speech (Budget Paper 1).

Budget in Brief (Budget Paper 2).

Budget Outlook (Budget Paper 3).

Budget Statements—

A—ACT Executive | Auditor-General | Electoral Commissioner | Office of the Legislative Assembly.

B—Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate together with associated agencies.

C—Health Directorate | ACT Hospital Network.

D—Justice and Community Safety Directorate | Legal Aid Commission (ACT) | Public Trustee for the ACT and Guardian.

E—Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate | City Renewal Authority | Suburban Land Agency.

F—Education Directorate.

G—Community Services Directorate | Housing ACT.

H—Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate | ACTION | ACT Public Cemeteries Authority.

Financial Management Act, pursuant to subsection 62(1)—Statements of Intent 2018-19—

ACT Building and Construction Industry Training Fund Authority, dated 18, 24 and 25 May 2018.

ACT Long Service Leave Authority.

Title read by Clerk.

MR BARR (Kurrajong—Chief Minister, Treasurer, Minister for Economic Development and Minister for Tourism and Major Events) (3:00): I move:

That this bill be agreed to in principle.

Growing services for our growing city

The 2018-19 Territory Budget invests in the core public services Canberrans need.

At the same time as we deliver on our commitment to return the budget to balance, we are growing services and infrastructure to make sure this city keeps getting better for everyone who lives here.

We are delivering new local schools and more places for kids at our existing ones. We are strengthening front-line care in our hospitals and making commuting quicker with better transport infrastructure. We are boosting our investment in services for our city and suburbs, and keeping Canberrans safe by recruiting more first responders for our police and emergency services.

Madam Speaker, Canberra is growing.

People from across Australia and around the world are moving to Canberra because we are a city of brilliant possibilities. A place full of good jobs that make a difference. A hub for world leading study and research institutes. A community that embraces creativity and champions new businesses.

Our city's growth is an opportunity. Canberra is more diverse and dynamic today because more people from many different places call it home. But we understand that it also brings some challenges. Services and infrastructure have to step up alongside our community to make sure Canberra keeps getting better as we grow.

No other government in Australia delivers as many services as we do. We take seriously our task to keep Canberra livable with great schools and health care, efficient public transport and local government services, more housing options, a clean environment and exciting events for people to enjoy.

That's why the ACT Government is growing services for our growing city through the 2018-19 Budget.

Strong and sustained growth, delivering a balanced budget

Four years ago our Government made an important decision.

We chose to prioritise protecting local jobs and services by using the ACT's budget to keep our economy growing and ensure the Commonwealth's cuts and the Mr Fluffy crisis did not mean cuts to the local services Canberra families rely on.

That decision came with a plan to return the budget to balance over time. Today, we have achieved that goal.

The 2018-19 Budget confirms a balanced fiscal position in the current fiscal year and in every year across the forward estimates. This means we are fully covering the cost of delivering services for Canberrans while building in a responsible buffer against future risks or shocks.

Madam Speaker, our work to support the Territory economy through tough times has paid off. Canberra has now seen a sustained period of very strong economic growth over the past few years.

This Budget estimates this year's growth for our economy will be 4½ per cent—the fastest in Australia. This will bring our total economic growth since 2014-15 to a very strong 13.6 per cent.

This rapid economic growth drove the creation of almost 10,000 new jobs in 2017, the great majority of them full-time, secure jobs. There are 2,000 more businesses operating in Canberra today than there were three years ago. And our companies are doing more international business than ever before, with the ACT's services exports rising by 22 per cent since 2015.

Canberra is seeing the benefits of economic growth where it really matters: in the creation of more good jobs and better opportunities for local businesses.

Our tax reform plan is also working to cut costs for homebuyers while providing a fairer and more stable revenue base from which to fund essential services for Canberrans.

We have cut residential duty rates in every budget since 2012, and we will continue to do so every year across the forward estimates. By 2021-22, someone buying a \$500,000 home in Canberra will be paying half the amount of stamp duty they would have been up for when we started this reform—that is a saving of \$10½ thousand.

We are also continuing to reform commercial conveyance duty. I am pleased to advise that from 1 July this year commercial property transactions worth \$1.5 million or less will be abolished. This will mean about 70 per cent of commercial property purchases will no longer involve duty, a significant boost for small businesses and investment.

But we know there is still more we can do.

That is why we are abolishing stamp duty for eligible first homebuyers through this year's Budget.

We understand that buying a home is a challenge for many, particularly young people and those on low incomes. Stamp duty can put another hurdle in front of these Canberrans by adding tens of thousands of dollars to the price of a home.

From 1 July 2019, first homebuyers with a household income below \$160,000 will pay no stamp duty, whether they are buying an established property or a newly built home.

At the same time, we will abolish the payment of First Home Owner Grants. A range of experts and long-run analysis has found the grants have not been effective in helping first homebuyers enter the housing market.

In fact, they can actually make housing less affordable by inflating people's borrowing power and channelling too much demand into one small segment of the market.

Together, these changes will help more Canberrans buy their first home, sooner.

More places at our local schools and faster front-line health care

We know that great local schools and easy to access, high quality health care are two of the things that matter most to Canberrans.

The ACT Government already invests an average of \$10,000 for every Canberra household on delivering health care through our hospitals and local health services. We provide \$7,600 per household to deliver quality local public schools attended by over 46½ thousand students and that employ 3,800 teachers.

This Budget will grow our investment with more places for kids at new and expanded schools and a major new investment in front-line hospital services, nurses and doctors.

We are delivering on our commitment to build a new primary school in Molonglo, which will provide places for 600 students from Kindergarten to Year 6 as well as a preschool and early learning centre. The school will be ready to take students from the start of the 2021 school year, while the funding delivered through this Budget will also support the preparation of services for a future Year 7 to 10 campus on the same site.

As the next big frontier of our city's growth, the Government is committed to making sure services are ready and available in Molonglo as more people move into that region.

We are also expanding capacity at four schools in Gungahlin so that kids can continue to find a place at a great local school, close to home. We will deliver capacity for an additional 500 students across Amaroo School, Gold Creek and Neville Bonner Primary, as well as expanding the Franklin Early Childhood School so that current students can continue on past Year 2. We will also continue the planning work that is underway for another new school to cater for Gungahlin's ongoing growth.

At the same time as delivering new and better school facilities, we are also investing in more teachers and support staff.

We will hire the equivalent of 66 more teachers and support staff to meet growing school enrolments, and we will recruit a further 15 school psychologists—fully delivering on our election commitment to make mental health services more accessible for kids through their schools.

We are also investing in more support for students with disability and those who have complex health needs to ensure local schools can offer them the same learning opportunities as other Canberra kids.

Like our schools, Canberra's hospital and health services need to keep growing to make sure all Canberrans can access quality care when they need it.

The number of people presenting to local emergency departments has grown by about 40 people a day since 2015, while at the moment elective surgery waiting lists are growing faster than our hospitals can reduce them.

Canberra's doctors, nurses, midwives and allied health staff are working incredibly hard to keep up with this growth. This Budget will back them up with a significant new investment in front-line staff and services.

We are funding 4,000 more elective surgeries over the next four years, raising ACT Health's annual target to around 14,000 surgeries a year.

We are growing funding for emergency surgery and the Emergency Department at The Canberra Hospital, to cut wait times and ensure more patients get the care they need sooner.

We are delivering on our election commitment to upgrade critical parts of our public hospitals, including an expansion of the Calvary Public Hospital Emergency Department.

And we are funding more hospital beds across the Territory including more maternity places and more beds to cope with the annual winter surge that hits The Canberra Hospital during flu season.

We are making these investments in hospital beds and staff now while we continue to invest in new health infrastructure for the future. This includes progressing the development of SPIRE and developing new Northside hospital options.

Importantly, we are also investing in other front-line health services to help take the pressure off our hospitals. This Budget delivers a significant expansion of the *Hospital in the Home* program—with 30 nurses and six doctors added to the service so that an additional 3,000 patients a year can receive the care they need in their own homes and community health centres.

With the Government's investment in the new University of Canberra Hospital also coming online this year to provide rehabilitation and sub-acute health care, we are ensuring more tertiary hospital beds are available for those who need the most intensive and specialised care.

We understand that mental health services and supports are also a critical part of front-line health care. That is why the Budget delivers new supported accommodation options for people with complex mental health needs, and a boost to the targeted services that support teenagers, older people and those transitioning out of the justice system.

We will establish three community-based mental health accommodation facilities to provide long-term care for people who need 24-hour support. We will also establish a Step-Up-Step-Down facility on the south side of Canberra to provide short-term residential and clinical treatment for people discharged from hospital, and refurbish the 10-bed Extended Care Unit at the Brian Hennessey Rehabilitation Centre, to help provide a secure facility for people to transition back into the community.

Our support for Canberra's healthcare services and schools already accounts for over half the ACT Budget each year. But from this year we are stepping up our investments on the front line—on top of the major expansion in hospital and school infrastructure already underway that will come online in the next few years.

Keeping Canberra moving and delivering more services across our city and suburbs

Madam Speaker, we are overhauling Canberra's public transport system. We are designing a system that can move large numbers of people around quickly, efficiently and with the lowest possible impact on our environment; one that is simple to use and provides a genuine alternative to the car.

Light rail is at the heart of our plan for a city-wide integrated public transport network. That is why this year's Budget delivers more funding to progress the planning and approval of Stage 2 from the City to Woden, as well as to start the design work on the enabling infrastructure.

We will continue working through the design and approvals process with the National Capital Authority and the Federal Parliament to progress Stage 2 of Light Rail because this is the next step in delivering the essential public transport spine we need to connect Canberra's north and south.

Keeping Canberra moving also requires more investment in road and active travel connections—not just from our suburbs to the city, but between our town centres too.

That is why this Budget funds design and planning work on duplicating William Slim Drive from Ginninderra Drive to the Barton Highway, to help reduce congestion between Gungahlin and Belconnen.

Along with Commonwealth funding, our investment in upgrading the Monaro Highway will deliver shorter travel times and improve road safety. We will also start planning and design on the extension of John Gorton Drive and a bridge across the Molonglo River. This will provide a major new transport link for Molonglo as the region's community grows.

At the same time as we are building new roads, we are actively working to cut the ACT's emissions from local cars. Once Canberra reaches our target of being powered by 100 per cent renewable electricity in two years time, tackling emissions from our transport fleet will be the next big task on our path to zero net emissions by 2045.

That is why this Budget will invest in 50 electric vehicle charging stations at ACT Government sites across Canberra. This builds on our recently-released Transition to Zero Emissions Vehicles Action Plan, and will see us pursue Australia's most ambitious emissions reductions effort across the transport fleet.

We are also helping to cut this city's emissions by getting more people out of their cars for the daily commute.

Canberra is already Australia's most active community, with many of us walking or cycling to work and school. We gave a commitment to deliver an additional \$30 million in active travel infrastructure over the life of this Parliamentary term, and I am very happy to say that the 2018-19 Budget fully achieves that.

We are delivering an integrated bike network for Belconnen which links suburbs like Macquarie and Florey with the Belconnen Town Centre, the Lake Ginninderra foreshore, and major sporting and study institutions in Bruce.

We are improving cycling and footpath connections in the Woden and Tuggeranong town centres, constructing an off road "rapid" bikeway network and completing the Lyons to Weston Creek (Heysen Street) cycle path link.

These investments will make it easier than ever for Canberrans to get active when they are moving around our city.

On top of these improvements to our town centres, this Budget steps up services for our suburbs.

We are delivering more funding every year for mowing, weeding, cleaning up graffiti, maintaining local waterways and tree trimming. We are investing in playgrounds through a community-led process that will give Canberrans a say in where funds should be targeted to provide the most community benefit.

We are also significantly expanding the funding provided to City Services, because we recognise that a growing city means more demand for municipal services. The number of homes receiving rubbish collection has risen by about 6,000 in the past five years, while we have added four new ovals, 24 new suburban playgrounds and 10 playground upgrades in that same time.

More investment in core municipal services will mean tidier suburbs across Canberra, along with parks, playgrounds and public spaces we can continue to be proud of.

This builds on last year's Budget funding for the rollout of green bins to every Canberra suburb by 2019—a key election commitment and a time and cost-saving benefit for households.

More support for Canberra families and inclusion

By all measures, Canberra is the wealthiest, best educated and longest-living community in Australia. That brings huge advantages for many of us, but it also comes with responsibilities: to support those who are not doing as well, to take good care of those who need our protection, and to work to close the gaps that some members of our community might otherwise fall through.

The ACT Government currently delivers half a billion dollars each year for community services and public housing. But we know there is more to do.

With this Budget, we are delivering 36 more places for women seeking safe and secure accommodation through services like the Beryl and Doris women's refuges, as well as for asylum seekers and migrants with uncertain immigration status. We are also funding three more counsellors for the Canberra Rape Crisis Centre and Domestic Violence Crisis Service, to ensure women in crisis can get the help they need as quickly as possible.

Building on the investments made in keeping Canberra's children safe through recent budgets, we are investing in a dedicated team within the Community Services Directorate to improve the adoption process for kids in out of home care and help more young people find a permanent home, sooner.

We are also providing new resources to deliver family group conferencing for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families who are at risk of ongoing involvement with the child protection system.

Secure, suitable and affordable housing is one of the basics that people build a good life from, and we understand that finding the right place to live is a growing challenge for Canberrans on low incomes and those who have complex needs.

Our ongoing Public Housing Renewal program is currently delivering the largest overhaul of the Territory's housing stock since self-government, with 810 new properties already delivered and a further 478 to go by mid-2019.

The Deputy Chief Minister has been leading a detailed conversation with the Canberra community about what comes next after this program and how we can work to ensure our affordable housing supply keeps up with our city's growth. That will come together in the new housing strategy that will be released later this year, laying out the next phase of our investment in public, community and affordable housing.

But there are some priority investments we are getting on with now through this Budget, including delivering on our commitment to build a second culturally-appropriate housing complex for older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Canberrans.

This Budget also kick-starts the development of a second Common Ground complex at Dickson with funding for design and approvals. We know that it will take a

significant further investment to ensure vulnerable Canberrans can access safe, suitable and affordable housing, and we are taking the time to get this right in partnership with service providers, clients and the sector.

The ACT Government is doing what we can to support vulnerable Canberrans and families who are finding it hard. But our programs and services are only one part of the equation.

Today, I add the ACT Government's backing to calls being voiced around Australia for a rise in the level of income support available through Newstart. At just \$273 a week—some \$400 less than the national minimum wage—the current rate of Newstart is too low to help people get back on their feet when they end up out of work. Instead, it simply traps them in disadvantage.

Progress towards lifting Newstart was a glaring omission in last month's Commonwealth Budget, and we urge all sides of the Federal Parliament to do the just thing by providing better support for Canberrans, and all Australians, who rely on it.

A better Canberra, as we grow

Canberra's growth is both a challenge and an opportunity.

As a Government, it challenges us to think harder about how this city works, where we need to invest more and what we can do smarter, better or differently.

As Canberrans, it challenges us all to consider what we value about this unique place we call home; what we can protect and preserve, and what will change.

For this city, and our community, the opportunities are limited only by our collective imagination and goodwill.

We believe Canberra can take hold of the opportunities in front of us. By growing services for our growing city through the 2018-19 Budget, we are backing our community to do it.

Debate (on motion by **Mr Coe**) adjourned to the next sitting.

Appropriation (Office of the Legislative Assembly) Bill 2018-2019

Mr Barr, pursuant to notice, presented the bill, its explanatory statement, a Human Rights Act compatibility statement and the following supplementary papers:

Budget 2018-2019—Financial Management Act, pursuant to sections 20AA and 20AC—Appropriation (Office of the Legislative Assembly) Bill 2018-2019—Departures from Recommended Appropriations—Statement of Reasons.

Title read by Clerk.

MR BARR (Kurrajong—Chief Minister, Treasurer, Minister for Economic Development and Minister for Tourism and Major Events) (3.25): I move:

That this bill be agreed to in principle.

I present the Appropriation (Office of the Legislative Assembly) Bill 2018-2019 to the Assembly. The bill contains appropriations of \$21.981 million to the Office of the Legislative Assembly, \$2.958 million to the Auditor-General and \$3.440 million to the Electoral Commissioner. As the amount proposed in the bill to be appropriated to the Office of the Legislative Assembly is a departure from the amount requested by the Speaker, I have provided a statement of reasons regarding this departure as required under section 20AA of the Financial Management Act 1996.

As the amount proposed in the bill to be appropriated to the Auditor-General is also a departure from what was requested by the Speaker, a further statement of reasons is provided regarding this departure, as required under section 20AC of the Financial Management Act 1996.

In relation to the Office of the Legislative Assembly, the government has agreed to provide additional funding for three new initiatives requested by the Speaker: to support the transition to digital committees, to plan for the future digitisation of broader Legislative Assembly workflows and materials, and to install additional double glazing on the Legislative Assembly building.

Whilst the total amount proposed for the Legislative Assembly for these initiatives is less than requested, the government considered that the proposed amount reflects an appropriate balance between provision of services to the Assembly and not imposing an unnecessary burden on ACT taxpayers. Moreover, in recent years the government has provided supplementary funding for the larger Assembly, for extra staff for non-executive members in the Assembly and for various works to upgrade the building.

The government has also provided an interim allocation of funding to the Office of the Legislative Assembly to enable it to establish an independent integrity body. The head of this organisation would be created subject to the passage of legislation as an officer of the Legislative Assembly who would report to the Speaker. The government envisages that, once established, the future funding would be transferred to the new agency.

In relation to the proposed funding for the Auditor-General, the Speaker sought a recommended appropriation of \$400,000 in 2018-19 to cover costs of recruiting a new Auditor-General and to undertake an additional performance audit across the outyears. The government has agreed to the audit office having a net operating deficit, excluding non-cash expenses, for 2017-18 of \$608,000, which exceeds the budgeted deficit of \$464,000. This operating deficit will allow the audit office to complete an additional performance audit this year and to meet the one-off costs associated with recruiting a new Auditor-General.

The government has also provided additional funding to increase the number of performance audits from seven in 2018-19 to eight in 2019-20, and then to nine per year ongoing from 2020-21. I commend the appropriation bill to the Assembly.

Debate (on motion by **Mrs Dunne**) adjourned to the next sitting.

Papers

Madam Speaker presented the following papers:

Auditor-General Act, pursuant to subsection 17(5)—Auditor-General’s Report No 6/2018—Physical Security, dated 31 May 2018.

Ombudsman Act, pursuant to section 21—Ombudsman complaint statistics—Quarterly report for the period 1 January to 31 March 2018 and annual report for the financial year-to-date—1 July 2017 to 31 March 2018, dated 9 May 2018.

Budget 2018-2019—Financial Management Act, pursuant to section 20AB—Audit Office—Recommended appropriation—Draft budget—Copy of letter from the Speaker to the Treasurer, dated 23 May 2018.

2016 ACT Election and Electoral Act—Select Committee—Report—*Inquiry into the 2016 ACT Election and the Electoral Act*—ACT Electoral Commission response, dated 25 May 2018.

Committee Reports—Schedule of Government Responses—Ninth and Eighth Assemblies, as at 23 May 2018.

Standing order 191—Amendments to the Land Tax Amendment Bill 2018, dated 14 May 2018.

Mr Barr presented the following paper:

Auditor-General Act, pursuant to subsection 21(1)—Auditor-General’s Report No 2/2018—ACT Government strategic and accountability indicators—Government response.

Financial Management Act—consolidated financial report Paper and statement by minister

MR BARR (Kurrajong—Chief Minister, Treasurer, Minister for Economic Development and Minister for Tourism and Major Events) (3.31): For the information of members I present the following paper:

Financial Management Act, pursuant to section 26—Consolidated Financial Report—Financial quarter ending 31 March 2018.

I seek leave to make a statement.

Leave granted.

MR BARR: I present to the Assembly the March quarter 2018 consolidated financial report for the territory. This report is required under section 26 of the Financial Management Act 1996. The March quarter headline net operating balance for the general government sector was a deficit of \$106.5 million. This result was \$75.6 million lower than the budgeted deficit of \$182.1 million. This improvement mainly reflects lower expenses as a result of timing of payments for initiatives.

Net debt of the general government sector as at 31 March 2018 was \$1,478.8 million, in line with the 30 June 2017 result of \$1,452.9 million. Net financial liabilities decreased by \$2,532.5 million compared to 30 June 2017, largely reflecting a change in the defined benefit superannuation liability estimate for 31 March 2018, which is based on a discount rate of six per cent, compared to 3.51 per cent at 30 June 2017. I commend the March quarterly report to the Assembly.

Papers

Mr Barr presented the following paper:

Financial integrity and compliance, pursuant to the resolution of the Assembly of 2 November 2017.

Ms Fitzharris presented the following paper:

Auditor-General Act, pursuant to subsection 21(1)—Auditor-General's Report No 1/2018—Acceptance of Stormwater Assets—Government response.

Mr Gentleman presented the following papers:

Subordinate legislation (including explanatory statements unless otherwise stated)

Legislation Act, pursuant to section 64—

ACT Teacher Quality Institute Act and Financial Management Act—ACT Teacher Quality Institute Board Appointment 2018 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2018-85 (LR, 17 May 2018).

Animal Welfare Act—

Animal Welfare (Keeping and Breeding of Racing Greyhounds in the ACT) Mandatory Code of Practice 2018 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2018-76 (LR, 27 April 2018).

Animal Welfare (Land Transport of Livestock) Mandatory Code of Practice 2018 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2018-90 (LR, 17 May 2018).

Children and Young People Act—

Children and Young People (Approved Care and Protection Organisations—Intervention) Guidelines 2018 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2018-97 (LR, 17 May 2018).

Children and Young People (Approved Care and Protection Organisations—Monitoring) Guidelines 2018 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2018-96 (LR, 17 May 2018).

Children and Young People (Care and Protection Organisations and Responsible Persons—Suitability Approval Application) Guidelines 2018 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2018-95 (LR, 17 May 2018).

Domestic Animals Act—Domestic Animals (Fees) Determination 2018 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2018-77 (LR, 27 April 2018).

Independent Competition and Regulatory Commission Act—Independent Competition and Regulatory Commission (Inquiry into beverage price impacts relating to the ACT Container Deposit Scheme) Terms of Reference Determination 2018—Disallowable Instrument DI2018-69 (LR, 30 April 2018).

Magistrates Court Act—Magistrates Court (Work Health and Safety Infringement Notices) Amendment Regulation 2018 (No 1)—Subordinate Law SL2018-7 (LR, 10 May 2018).

Medicines, Poisons and Therapeutic Goods Regulation and Medicines, Poisons and Therapeutic Goods Act—Medicines, Poisons and Therapeutic Goods (Medicines Advisory Committee) Appointment 2018 (No 2)—Disallowable Instrument DI2018-78 (LR, 2 May 2018).

Planning and Development Act—

Planning and Development (Lease Variation Charge Deferred Payment Scheme) Determination 2018—Disallowable Instrument DI2018-88 (LR, 16 May 2018).

Planning and Development (Remission of Lease Variation Charges for Environmental Remediation) Determination 2018—Disallowable Instrument DI2018-92 (LR, 16 May 2018).

Planning and Development (Remission of Lease Variation Charges for the Housing Commissioner) Determination 2018—Disallowable Instrument DI2018-93 (LR, 16 May 2018).

Planning and Development (Remission of Lease Variation Charges) Determination 2018 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2018-94 (LR, 16 May 2018).

Planning and Development (Remission of Lease Variation Charges—Environmental Sustainability) Determination 2018 (No 2)—Disallowable Instrument DI2018-89 (LR, 16 May 2018).

Plant Diseases Act—Plant Diseases (Importation Restriction Area) Declaration 2018 (No 1), including a regulatory impact statement—Disallowable Instrument DI2018-86 (LR, 8 May 2018).

Public Place Names Act—

Public Place Names (Coombs) Determination 2018—Disallowable Instrument DI2018-83 (LR, 7 May 2018).

Public Place Names (Taylor) Determination 2018 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2018-84 (LR, 7 May 2018).

Race and Sports Bookmaking Act—Race and Sports Bookmaking (Sports Bookmaking Venues) Determination 2018 (No 2)—Disallowable Instrument DI2018-71 (LR, 26 April 2018).

Remuneration Tribunal Act—Remuneration Tribunal (Fees and Allowances of Members) Determination 2018—Disallowable Instrument DI2018-108 (LR, 31 May 2018).

Residential Tenancies Act—Residential Tenancies Amendment Regulation 2018 (No 1)—Subordinate Law SL2018-5 (LR, 4 May 2018).

Road Transport (General) Act—

Road Transport (General) (Parking Permit Fees) Determination 2018 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2018-75 (LR, 27 April 2018).

Road Transport (General) (Pay Parking Area Fees) Determination 2018 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2018-74 (LR, 27 April 2018).

Road Transport (General) Application of Road Transport Legislation Declaration 2018 (No 5)—Disallowable Instrument DI2018-73 (LR, 27 April 2018).

Road Transport (General) Application of Road Transport Legislation—Securing Coles Refrigerated Delivery Vehicles Declaration 2018—Disallowable Instrument DI2018-79 (LR, 1 May 2018).

Road Transport (General) Application of Road Transport Legislation—Stopping in Permit Zone Declaration 2018—Disallowable Instrument DI2018-72 (LR, 27 April 2018).

Road Transport (General) Numberplate Fees Determination 2018 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2018-81 (LR, 3 May 2018).

Road Transport (General) Vehicle Registration and Related Fees Determination 2018 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2018-80 (LR, 3 May 2018).

Road Transport (General) Withdrawal of Infringement Notices Guidelines 2018 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2018-70 (LR, 27 April 2018).

Road Transport (Offences) Amendment Regulation 2018 (No 1)—Subordinate Law SL2018-6 (LR, 7 May 2018).

Terrorism (Extraordinary Temporary Powers) Act—Terrorism (Extraordinary Temporary Powers) Public Interest Monitor Panel Appointment 2018 (No 2)—Disallowable Instrument DI2018-87 (LR, 14 May 2018).

Veterinary Surgeons Act—Veterinary Surgeons (Fees) Determination 2018 (No 1)—Disallowable Instrument DI2018-91 (LR, 17 May 2018).

Adjournment

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

That the Assembly do now adjourn.

Ramadan

MRS KIKKERT (Ginninderra) (3.33): As we approach the final week of the sacred month of Ramadan in the Islamic calendar, I rise today to pay tribute to Canberra's various Muslim communities. For adherents of the Islamic faith, this is the most sacred time of the year, characterised by a number of important religious practices. Of

these, the most well-known is probably the observation of a daily fast. The fasting period begins each day at dawn and ends at sunset. This means that Muslims must arise extra early each day to prepare and consume a pre-fast meal called the suhoor. Throughout the daylight hours they abstain from all food and drink until it is time to break fast with the meal known as iftar. This daily fasting continues without interruption throughout the entire lunar month, lasting 29 to 30 days.

I honour the commitment and sacrifice demonstrated by our Muslim friends and neighbours as they observe this fasting period. At the same time I acknowledge that religious fasting goes far beyond merely not eating or drinking. The desire to satisfy one's appetite for food or drink is a natural human urge. Fasting, however, helps to develop and strengthen self-restraint and self-discipline, traits that are at the core of self-improvement in nearly every area of life.

People who learn to deny their cravings for the things that give life are more capable of denying things that harm themselves and others—things like anger, impatience and selfishness. Fasting also helps to teach both compassion and charity. Experiencing a small dose of privation each day for an entire month reminds participants that many people in the world go without food month after month. Self-restraint, however, puts us in a better position to share what we have with those whose lives are characterised by deprivation and hardship.

I have experienced firsthand the kindness and generosity of many Muslim friends and neighbours from a variety of communities and across all aspects of my life. During Ramadan invitations to participate in iftar meals are abundant, and I personally cherish these opportunities to mingle with people who desire to share not just their food but also their faith and compassion.

If we consider the deeply personal and formative role of religious beliefs and practices in the lives of people of faith, we will come to understand just how generous it is when people seek to share their faith with us. I am grateful that at this time of year we are welcomed into the hearts and lives of so many followers of the Islamic faith. I am grateful for all that Muslim communities bring to the city of ours. I am inspired by their examples of commitment and sacrifice in the pursuit of becoming better people. I am thankful for all they do to build strong homes and communities as they seek to serve others. I hope our Muslim friends and neighbours will find these final days of Ramadan a time of peace and joy.

National Capital Rally

MS CODY (Murrumbidgee) (3.36): I thank all the competitors in the Netier National Capital Rally that took place on the weekend both in Kowen Forest and out around Cotter and Tidbinbilla. For a rally rookie, as they have called me, it was an amazing experience. It was wonderful to see locals Harry Bates and Lewis Bates make an appearance at the Netier National Capital Rally. Unfortunately, Lewis had some car issues where he managed to get a little bit too much air over a certain part of the Kowen Forest section of the rally and was unable to finish. Better luck next time, Lewis, because my money was on you beating your brother. Harry Bates did well to

finish both days of the rally and just missed out on a top-three position. Well done to Harry and his co-driver.

It was a wonderful experience to see Molly Taylor, a well-known Australian female rallier, who drives a Subaru WRX STI. Molly and co-driver Malcolm Reid had some major issues on the Saturday but managed to finish in the CAMS Australian Rally Championship around fourth or fifth; we are still waiting for final results to come in. Well done Molly and co-driver Malcolm.

It was a wonderful experience to get out in the forests around the ACT, watching all the children who were so excited to see the start in Garema Place on the Friday night, and being able to talk to the drivers and look at the cars. There were even a few young ladies with their nails painted in Molly's Subaru's colours and stars, so that was really exciting. It was great to watch them get out to the Kowen Forest on the Saturday in the freezing cold to watch their heroes rally around the forest. Canberra is a wonderful venue in which to hold rallies, and I look forward to next year's event and hopefully being able to get back out there.

I thank Adrian Coppin and Harry Bates for allowing me to go for a little bit of a spin in Harry's Toyota. I have never been so exhilarated and petrified in all my life. Those people can really drive. They are quite amazing. With the effort they put in and the work they do behind those cars, it was a real honour to be a part of it and to watch and listen to what they do.

I thank everyone involved and all of the volunteers, particularly those from the Brindabella Motor Sport Club. They give up their time and allow the national capital to have such a wonderful rally. Without those volunteers we would not see those cars in the ACT and racing in the National Capital Rally.

Evonne Goolagong Foundation

MR MILLIGAN (Yerrabi) (3.40): I rise today to outline the amazing work being done by the Evonne Goolagong Foundation. It is pleasing to note that it cuts across both my portfolios: sport and recreation, and Indigenous affairs. On 17 May I ventured to the Melba Tennis Club. On arrival I heard the morning briefing from Evonne Goolagong herself.

Let me tell you a little bit about Evonne. Evonne Goolagong Cawley AC, MBE is a proud Wiradjuri woman. She has been Australian of the Year and Australian Sportsman of the Year. She is an Officer of the Order of Australia, AO, and an MBE. She has been inducted into the International Tennis Hall of Fame and the Aboriginal sporting hall of fame, and has been recognised with sporting awards too many to list. She has served on the National Indigenous Advisory Committee for the Sydney Olympics.

In her outstanding tennis career, Evonne was ranked world No 1 in 1971 and 1976. In total, she won 92 pro titles and was finalist in 18 grand slam singles events. On her second Wimbledon win in 1980, Evonne became the first mother to win since Dorothea Lambert Chambers in 1914. She represented Australia seven times in the

Federation Cup, winning three times, and was Australia's Fed Cup captain from 2002 to 2004. Evonne is an Australian icon.

I was surprised when Evonne hardly mentioned any of this in her speech to the kids at Melba Tennis Club. Instead, she told them the story of how it all started, with a princess storybook in which she read about the magical place called Wimbledon. At first she did not even know this place was a real place, but once she did she applied her determination and started to practice.

At Melba, she brought out her little wooden bat that she had used hour after hour, day after day, to hit a ball against a wall. She explains that it was hard work and determination that was the secret to her success. It took a real community effort to get her from the skinny kid hitting a ball against a wall to playing in tournaments around the world.

Evonne told the kids about her two dreams: first, to play and win at Wimbledon, just like in her princess storybook; and second, to start a foundation that would help others to dream big and realise their potential. She has achieved both. Since 2005 Evonne has run the Goolagong National Development Camp for Indigenous girls and boys, using tennis as a vehicle to promote better health, education and employment.

Since 2012 the Evonne Goolagong Foundation has encouraged kids to dream, believe, learn and achieve. It holds come and try tennis days across the nation, which feed into state development camps and an annual national development camp, which in turn offers scholarships and sporting opportunities.

Over 5,000 kids have participated in the program, which creates outstanding health benefits and provides kids with positive role models, access to a broad range of networks, and a wide range of opportunities. Evonne has assisted over 60 young people to complete a university education and countless more in finding vocational pathways and meaningful employment.

This program is a win-win: the kids win; the Indigenous community wins; and we all win because this initiative promotes health, fitness and education. It was so heartening to see the kids out there on the courts of Melba Tennis Club and to hear the stories of their coaches and past participants from this amazing foundation.

I commend the work of the Evonne Goolagong Foundation. I also send thanks to the other organisations involved: Winnunga, Melba Tennis Club, and the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet. Well done to all involved. We need to see more of these types of initiatives: straightforward, common-sense solutions that are providing outstanding outcomes for the Indigenous community.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

The Assembly adjourned at 3.45 pm.