



DEBATES
OF THE
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
FOR THE
AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

DAILY HANSARD

Edited proof transcript

7 June 2018

This is an **EDITED PROOF TRANSCRIPT** of proceedings that is subject to further checking. Members' suggested corrections for the official *Weekly Hansard* should be lodged in writing with the Hansard office (facsimile 02 6205 0025) no later than **Tuesday, 19 June 2018**. Answers to questions on notice will appear in the *Weekly Hansard*.

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Thursday, 7 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.

Apprenticeships and traineeships

Ministerial statement

MS FITZHARRIS (Yerrabi—Minister for Health and Wellbeing, Minister for Transport and City Services and Minister for Higher Education, Training and Research) (10.01): I rise today to provide an update on the government's commitment to increasing and supporting apprenticeships and traineeships in the ACT.

The government is focused on ensuring the ACT has an innovative, high performing and safe vocational education and training sector that supports all Canberrans to realise their potential. We are committed to increasing the skilling opportunities available to individuals, supporting our training providers, and delivering skills to the ACT economy to meet industry needs and support regional growth.

The Australian apprenticeships system, which includes apprenticeships and traineeships, provides the opportunity for people to be employed while they train, and develop their competence in the workplace as they learn from employers with industry expertise. This outstanding pathway allows people to gain the skills and knowledge needed to start, or restart, a career, all the while providing the workforce needs of industry.

When people think about apprentices, they tend to think of the traditional trades: plumbers, carpenters and electricians. While training people in these areas always remains a high priority, it is important to remember that Australian apprenticeships are available in hundreds of qualifications. This ranges from certificate II up to advanced diploma, in industries as diverse as health, community services, business, horticulture and ICT, as well as all of the traditional trades.

Since 2015, I am proud to say, the ACT has recorded the largest proportional increase in Australian apprenticeship commencements in Australia, with commencements 47 per cent higher in 2017 than in 2015. This has been against a backdrop of declining commencements across Australia and a transitioning economy that demands an increasingly skilled and agile labour force. Nationally, there has been a steady decline in apprenticeship commencements since 2012, when the commonwealth government withdrew a range of employer incentives for existing workers. This included a 49 per cent decline in commencements from 2012 to 2016.

There have been a number of factors behind the success of the ACT government in supporting apprenticeship and traineeship numbers. We have sought to understand the motivations and the barriers that influence people in taking the first steps and provide

the high quality advice and real outcomes that school students and their parents need to assist their understanding of what apprenticeships can offer.

We have also proactively targeted a number of key groups in our community to take up apprenticeships and traineeships, in particular more mature Canberrans looking to re-skill and change careers, and women in traditional trades. We have a framework in place to provide ongoing advice and support to both apprentices and their employers once the apprenticeship journey has commenced. We also provide considerable support to those registered training organisations who work with employers to deliver the training they need.

I will now outline some specific initiatives. The Australian apprenticeships user choice program provides subsidies to training organisations to train students employed as an Australian apprentice. Responding to the declining apprenticeship commencements, the ACT revised its approach to funding training, and significantly increased subsidies in areas of skills shortage.

This followed significant ACT government investment in the development of an outside modelling tool which informs the ACT skills needs list, ensuring the ACT continues to make well-informed decisions about where we direct VET funding.

The ACT skills needs list is constantly refined through good use of data analysis and industry consultation. The list identifies the VET qualifications more likely to improve an individual's employment outcomes by identifying which skills the territory needs to meet industry demand and get people into these jobs. It is by having this comprehensive understanding of the local labour market, specifically as it relates to apprenticeships and traineeships, that we can target our funding to encourage training in the right areas.

The ACT government is committed to ensuring that all vocational training in the ACT is of the highest quality. The ACT quality framework continues to underpin the delivery of government-subsidised training in the ACT and promote excellence and transparency. The quality framework is about making sure our registered training organisations are well placed to provide the quality training that meets trainee and employer needs.

Ongoing support throughout an individual's apprenticeship is also a vital contributor to success. Additional support funding is available to training organisations to provide any assistance that may be needed.

Our Skills Canberra field officers are a critical aspect of the support provided to apprentices in the ACT. They visit apprentices and employers in their workplaces and on their worksites to provide support throughout the training process. Establishing good practices early is crucial to ensuring safe and successful training, and how important it is for apprentices, and their employers, to know their rights and understand their obligations.

Getting through the early part of an apprenticeship is often the biggest challenge. So it is in these early stages of an apprenticeship that our field officers focus their visits.

Providing information, clarifying responsibilities under a national training contract, or supporting employers and their apprentices to work through simple misunderstandings can be the difference between an apprentice dropping out of their qualification—and potentially out of employment—or remaining in the job in training.

We are serious about encouraging people to follow through with their training, and the ACT is the only jurisdiction to provide a completion bonus for eligible students.

The youngest and potentially most vulnerable apprentices are those of school age. As a result the field officers prioritise visiting all Australian school-based apprentices within the first two months of their training contract being approved. Skills Canberra works closely with the Education Directorate and WorkSafe ACT to support our school-based apprentices and improve pathways for young people into vocational training and rewarding careers.

In addition to working directly with apprentices and employers, our field officers foster the collaborative and growing relationship between the ACT government and training providers, industry, schools, employment service providers and other stakeholders.

We understand assistance has to come in many forms, and we work closely with the Australian government to increase our capacity to support our apprentices and establish good habits. This means more mentoring programs and empowering apprentices to become role models in their industries.

The ACT is in the process of developing programs that emphasise the importance of wellbeing at work. This includes dealing with work stresses, starting tough conversations about mental health and making sure apprentices are aware that help will always be available.

CIT is the ACT's largest provider of training for apprenticeships and traineeships and has a wonderfully broad base of courses in community services, information technology, health, construction, child care, hospitality and tourism. Given the importance of CIT as the public provider of VET in the ACT, the government has provided extensive support. This has allowed CIT to undertake a comprehensive range of quality improvement activities to support the delivery of quality training. These activities aim to ensure CIT is delivering skilled workers of the highest quality, and that apprentices and trainees have access to the supports they need to complete their training.

One of the initiatives implemented at CIT, and since rolled out to a number of private RTOs, has been the use of "My Profiling". This mobile app streamlines assessment and reporting processes and allows apprentices, their employers and their training organisations to more easily track their ongoing progress. The ACT will continue to support CIT so that it remains the pre-eminent provider of high quality, cutting-edge training across the ACT and region.

In March this year I launched the women in trades grants program to help more Canberrans access training opportunities. The program will leverage the creativity of

the VET sector and industry to increase female participation in traditionally male-dominated trades.

I launched the program alongside Leilani McGurgan, a second-year electrical apprentice employed by ACT Property Group. Leilani had a range of employment before taking up a trade and realising it was the perfect environment for her to be challenged, and the perfect opportunity for her to inspire other women to have a go and take up a trade.

The women in trades grants program was the fulfilment of a promise by this government to try to boost the number of female tradespeople and ensure young women are not discouraged from following an interest in historically male-dominated trades. I look forward to making announcements about the outcomes of the grants program shortly.

The government will continue to work with the Australian government to identify opportunities to increase and support apprenticeships and traineeships in the ACT. We are working to make sure ACT dollars go further, to create more apprenticeship pathways and work experience opportunities for young people in ACT schools, more support for registered training organisations in areas of skills shortage, and new higher apprenticeships in priority areas.

We need to make VET available for students who have a passion and talent but are not sure where to apply them. We also need to make sure students are exposed to the possibilities that vocational training provides to embark on long and satisfying careers. The ACT has a role to play in this, and endeavours to increase the number of apprentices employed across our diverse workforce. ACT VET projects are an affirmation of our belief that the chance to upskill or re-skill, and find yourself in a stimulating professional environment, is one that should be afforded to all individuals, regardless of age or gender.

Our successes on the national stage in recent years, through the Australian training awards, are a testament to the success of the ACT ecosystem in providing improved apprenticeship outcomes through quality training and appropriate support. In the past week a number of our male and female apprentices competed on the national stage, with more than 10 Australian apprentices representing the ACT at the national WorldSkills competition in Sydney. I am again looking forward to the ACT training awards later in the year, which will be another opportunity to celebrate the wonderful successes and achievements of ACT apprentices, trainees, employers and training organisations.

The government will continue to support apprenticeships and traineeships as a key part of our high quality VET sector, delivering skilled workers to meet industry needs in the ACT, now and into the future.

In closing, I will table some highlights of facts and figures on apprentices and trainees in the ACT which further demonstrate some of the successes in this important area. I present the following papers:

Public Accounts—Standing Committee—Report 2—Report on Annual and Financial Reports 2016-2017—Response to Recommendation 10—Apprenticeships and Traineeships—Ministerial statement, 7 June 2018.

Vocational Education and Training: ACT Apprenticeship and Traineeship—Highlights, dated 7 June 2018.

I move:

That the Assembly take note of the ministerial statement.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

ACT volunteering statement action plan 2018-2021 Ministerial statement

MS STEPHEN-SMITH (Kurrajong—Minister for Community Services and Social Inclusion, Minister for Disability, Children and Youth, Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs, Minister for Multicultural Affairs and Minister for Workplace Safety and Industrial Relations) (10.12): I rise to talk about the importance of volunteering for the people of the ACT and the ACT government's recently released volunteering statement action plan 2018-21. National Volunteer Week was held from 21 to 27 May. It is an annual celebration to acknowledge our nation's volunteers. I was pleased to launch the action plan during National Volunteer Week, delivering on a commitment I made to the Assembly last May.

In the ACT more than one in three people volunteer. That is around 130,000 people. It is estimated that the value of volunteer contributions to our community each year is \$1.5 billion, but it is difficult, if not impossible, to measure the true value of volunteering. Volunteers make our city stronger, fairer, more inclusive and more sustainable. Every week, thousands of people give their time to help others, organise local sports and cultural activities, and protect and preserve our natural and built heritage.

This time last year I launched the ACT volunteering statement, updating the original 2011 statement. The statement presents an inclusive vision for volunteering in the ACT. The ACT volunteering statement sets out four high-level principles: that volunteers in the ACT are recognised, valuable, diverse and supported. This provides a platform for good practice in volunteer engagement, management and support. As a central point of reference for volunteering, it reflects a whole-of-government and community commitment to recognising and supporting volunteers.

Since the launch of the ACT volunteering statement, the government has been working to develop an action plan to realise its intentions. Extensive consultations with the community in 2016 and across government and the community in 2017-18 have contributed to the development of the ACT volunteering statement action plan 2018-21. The formal consultation for the action plan ran from 5 December 2017 to

18 February 2018 and was conducted in partnership with Volunteering and Contact ACT.

Consultation was facilitated through a paper which included eight proposed actions for discussion. An online survey received 174 responses. The eight actions in the consultation paper received 78 per cent approval from the respondents, and the two most popular actions identified in both the survey and quick poll were: to provide volunteer-involving organisations with access to resources to facilitate effective, safe and sustainable volunteer involvement; and to encourage collaboration to link people with meaningful volunteering opportunities. These actions have been captured in the action plan.

The Community Services Directorate is the lead agency for implementation of the action plan and will work with other ACT government directorates and other stakeholders to implement its actions. The actions provide opportunities for improved coordination and collaboration, including an ACT government volunteering webpage. The webpage will provide a central location that includes links to volunteering news and opportunities across directorates; some free resources, such as position descriptions and a volunteer agreement; and a link to Volunteering and Contact for more resources and support.

The outcomes in the action plan have corresponding milestones to help measure the effectiveness of the actions. As the action plan is implemented, baseline data will be gathered to assist in developing future outcome indicators. All directorates will be required to report annually on their progress in implementing actions, and their input will contribute to an annual ministerial statement.

The overall rate of volunteering in the ACT is about 37 per cent, which is high compared to most jurisdictions. People volunteer for a range of organisations, including education, sport and recreation, welfare and community, religious and emergency services organisations.

A number of vital services and programs across the ACT government rely on the tireless and skilled contribution of volunteers. ACT Health has over 440 volunteers who contribute to the delivery of a range of client services and support the patient journey through the healthcare system, including within the emergency department, intensive care unit, cancer services, paediatrics, speech pathology, and auxiliary services. Volunteers also provide wayfinding assistance across the hospital campus, participate in the prevent alcohol and risk-related trauma in youth program, and provide justice of the peace services.

Volunteers play an integral part in the delivery of environmental programs coordinated by the Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate, including Waterwatch and the parks and conservation service ParkCare program. ParkCare facilitates community volunteer engagement in land management, wildlife programs and visitor services. ParkCare volunteers carry out a broad range of activities across our parks and reserves and contribute an average of 22,000 hours of volunteering each year.

The ACT Emergency Services Agency within the Justice and Community Safety Directorate provides emergency management services to the Canberra community. The agency includes volunteers from ACT State Emergency Service, ACT Rural Fire Service, mapping and planning support, ACT community fire units and ACT Fire Brigade Historic Society.

Volunteers are a vital component that enable the ACT Emergency Services Agency to meet its obligations to government and the community in protecting life, property and the environment in the ACT. Volunteers and the commitment they bring to the protection of the ACT community remain part of the core strength of the ACT Emergency Services Agency, and its volunteers enhance the safety of the community by providing front-line response to emergencies such as bushfires, storms and floods.

The Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate maintains a close relationship with volunteers, including volunteer dog walkers, who are an essential part of the domestic animal services, and Libraries ACT volunteers, who play an important role in enhancing and extending the services that libraries provide to the Canberra community.

Volunteers support students and a range of educational programs in Canberra's schools. For example, the volunteer playground engagement team contributed significantly to Macquarie Primary School's playground enhancement project, co-designing a brilliant outdoor learning space with students and staff. They dedicated over 120 volunteer hours and oversaw the construction of gardens, play spaces, planting forest, and a bush tucker garden. For their efforts, the team was recognised in the 2017 ACT public education awards.

The education sector involves huge numbers of parent volunteers who share their time and expertise to run school P&Cs and sporting teams. Parent volunteers are critical to the functioning of school ecosystems, helping to foster a culture of community within schools. Parent volunteers ensure carnivals, fetes and sporting events can take place in the Canberra region and that these events are accessible and fun.

Parent, family and community involvement in schools ensures that education is about more than just what takes place in the classroom. For example, volunteer Bev Crittall was recently awarded the 2018 friend of public education award at the ACT Australian Education Union public education awards. Bev was recognised, and not for the first time, for her outstanding work on behalf of the Garran school community, working tirelessly every day of the week as a volunteer in their canteen, helping to create a community atmosphere in many different ways.

Arts and culture are an integral part of the lives of individuals as well as the social and economic fabric of Canberra. The arts help to define our community's identity and give expression to community values. Canberra's arts and cultural sector has a strong community of volunteer workers. In 2016 17 per cent of ACT residents volunteered for the arts or helped artists or community groups with arts activities. There were more than 700 volunteers in artsACT funded organisations in 2016 such as the

Canberra Glassworks, Belconnen Arts Centre, Canberra Potters Society, QL2 Dance and Tuggeranong Arts Centre, and these volunteers contributed over 40,000 hours of their time.

The skilled capital initiative facilitated by the Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate provides subsidies to improve access to high quality training in areas where a skilled workforce is needed, including sectors with a high reliance on volunteer labour, such as the disability services and aged-care sectors. Skilled capital provides a good avenue for volunteers and volunteer supported organisations to access relevant subsidised training in the ACT.

EventsACT also relies on the contribution of numerous volunteers to support events such as the National Folk Festival. One of Canberra's largest public events, the National Multicultural Festival, depends on 4,500 community volunteers who take on the roles of stallholders, performers and showcase coordinators. In addition to these community volunteers, the Community Services Directorate has partnered with Volunteering and Contact ACT to coordinate a volunteering team for the festival. In 2018 more than 120 community members and over 60 staff from the Community Services Directorate volunteered their time to provide information to festival goers and liaise with area wardens and festival staff to ensure the safe and smooth conduct of the event.

The Community Services Directorate also supports and coordinates the Connect and Participate Expo which was held on 24 March 2018. The expo is a community event that since 2014 has been showcasing the range of opportunities available for Canberrans of all abilities and ages to join groups and build social connections around common interests.

Scores of community organisations, of course, depend on the hard work, commitment and compassion of their volunteers. An example of hard work is people like Allannah Marshall, who was recently named 2018 ACT young volunteer of the year. Allannah has contributed over 640 hours to the Canberra community in the past year alone, devoting her spare time to volunteering with St John Ambulance Australia, the CBRNightcrew, Camp Quality and the Calvary hospital in Bruce.

An example of commitment is people like Andrew Prowse, who was recognised as a profound influencer at the 2018 ACT volunteering awards. Andy has been a dedicated volunteer with Cystic Fibrosis ACT for five years, sharing his own story of living with cystic fibrosis to inspire others and raise awareness about the essential support services needed to change lives.

An example of compassion is people like Natalie Wright, Canberra's 2018 ACT volunteer of the year. Natalie is a prominent leader in the Canberra community and an influential role model for hundreds of Canberra school students through her volunteer work with the St Vincent de Paul Society as the Mini Vinnies coordinator, a social justice group for primary school children.

These individuals, just a few of those recognised at the 2018 ACT volunteering awards, exemplify the contributions that volunteers make to critical organisations

within our community. National Volunteer Week is an opportunity to celebrate volunteers, and the 2018 volunteering awards acknowledged the contributions of outstanding individual and team volunteers across our community.

The host of the awards, Volunteering and Contact ACT, is a vital partner working throughout the year to link people, government and non-government organisations. It fosters community networks and undertakes research, advocacy and public education programs. I look forward to continuing to work with Volunteering and Contact ACT as well as with other community organisations and volunteers themselves as we implement the ACT volunteering statement action plan 2018-21.

Finally, on behalf of the ACT government I again express my appreciation and that of the government to all those who volunteer or who use their skills to help others volunteer in a way that is meaningful and rewarding. I present the following papers:

ACT Volunteering Statement Action Plan 2018-2021—Ministerial statement, 7 June 2018.

ACT Volunteering Statement—Action Plan 2018-2021.

I move:

That the Assembly take note of the ministerial statement.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Animal Diseases Amendment Bill 2018

Mr Gentleman, pursuant to notice, presented the bill, its explanatory statement and a Human Rights Act compatibility statement.

Title read by Clerk.

MR GENTLEMAN (Brindabella—Minister for Police and Emergency Services, Minister for the Environment and Heritage, Minister for Planning and Land Management and Minister for Urban Renewal) (10.24): I move:

That this bill be agreed to in principle.

I am pleased to present the Animal Diseases Amendment Bill 2018 to the Assembly. The bill makes a number of amendments to the Animal Diseases Act 2005. The purpose of this bill is to extend the use of the national livestock identification system, known as the NLIS, to owners of sheep, goats and pigs. At present it applies only to cattle owners. The bill makes it compulsory to identify these animals with a permanent identifier and to record their movements.

The bill also requires that movement information about cattle, sheep and goats be uploaded electronically to the NLIS database. It is not required to record the movement of pigs to the NLIS database, although this may change when the

New South Wales regulation is finalised so that there is consistency between the jurisdictions.

These measures are being introduced for the improvement of biosecurity in the ACT. Biosecurity is a high priority essential for animal disease control and ensuring food safety and market access for our primary producers. Our clean and green reputation is a major trading advantage; so an animal disease outbreak or chemical residue incident could cripple the industry and lead to the collapse of export markets.

The ability to effectively track stock is critical in an emergency animal disease response. This was most recently demonstrated in the 2017 bluetongue virus incident in Victoria where the property and identification codes and NLIS databases were instrumental in tracing and surveillance activities. They provided vital information that helped determine the extent of the problem and informed the response plan.

Being able to trace livestock movement is increasingly important to assure our trading partners about the safety of our food and the integrity of our animals. Modern and effective biosecurity legislation is required to ensure that ACT primary producers have continued access to interstate and overseas markets. The legislation also helps protect the industry, the broader community and the environment from potential disease outbreaks.

Before I go into the details of the bill, I will give some background information about the rural sector in the ACT, the limitations in our current legislation and what the NLIS is all about. Sheep and cattle grazing is the primary activity conducted on rural land in the ACT. We have about 48,000 sheep, 7,000 cattle and 1,500 horses. We have 195,000 chickens on four poultry farms and currently there are no feedlots, abattoirs or piggeries.

The ACT government is responsible for monitoring Canberra saleyards, with approximately 400 cattle passing through monthly. Currently there is limited legislation in the ACT mandating the recording of stock movements. There is an offence under section 47 of the Animal Diseases Act 2005 to move taggable stock that is not tagged. There is also a requirement in the Animal Diseases Regulation 2006 for cattle to be tagged with a national livestock identification device.

However, it is currently not mandatory in the ACT for sheep, goats and pigs to be fitted with an identification device. It is also not mandatory for these livestock owners to have a property identification code, or PIC. This means that a mob of sheep can be moved within the ACT from property to property without movements being recorded on the NLIS database. This creates difficulties in tracing the movements of the stock in the event of a disease outbreak.

The national livestock identification system is a database for Australia's permanent whole-of-life identification system. This system aims to ensure individual cattle, sheep, pigs and goats can be traced from birth to slaughter. The database is endorsed by major producers, feedlots, agents, saleyards and processor bodies. The database identifies animals, their physical location—by the property identification codes—and provides electronic access to information.

In the ACT only cattle are required to have a device fitted and their movements traceable through the database. As cattle move between properties with different identification codes, this is recorded on the database. Cattle can be traced on and off different properties, saleyards and abattoirs.

This is important. If, for example, chemical or antibiotic residues are detected in meat at an abattoir, the property where the affected stock were last held can be identified and investigations done on that property as to why the residue has occurred. Knowing all the properties on which the animals resided means that the problem can be more quickly addressed.

I would now like to provide some information about the property identification codes, or PICs, because they are an important component of an effective biosecurity system. Property information helps build a territory-wide biosecurity picture about agricultural use and livestock numbers. PICs are fundamental to the NLIS because they provide traceability to specific properties. With a PIC, property occupiers can obtain identification devices for their animals, identify their property for movement recording and enrol in industry quality assurance programs. PICs are currently not mandatory.

I will now go into a bit more detail about the bill itself. The bill affects a variety of livestock industry stakeholders, including primary producers, hobby producers and people who own livestock as pets, stock and station agents, livestock saleyards, and operators of stock events such as agricultural shows.

Division 4.2 of the bill requires a PIC to be held by people who keep cattle, sheep, goats, pigs, camels, alpacas, llamas, horses, mules, donkeys, more than 10 emus and ostriches, and more than 100 chickens. If a PIC is not obtained, an offence is committed, with a penalty of a maximum of 50 penalty units. Anyone operating an abattoir, saleyard and stock event must also obtain a PIC, with a maximum penalty of 50 units if they do not do so.

This new requirement to have a PIC reflects recent past experiences where the government's response to outbreaks of equine influenza and avian influenza was hampered by a lack of knowledge about the location of these animals. Given that camelids and deer are susceptible to foot-and-mouth disease, information on their location will help if we need to respond to this disease.

PICs will only be needed where people have more than 10 emus or ostriches or more than 100 small poultry. This means that recreational backyard keepers are not subject to the new requirements. The updated PIC requirements also provide consistency with New South Wales regulations.

The bill sets out requirements for the identification of cattle, sheep, goats and pigs. These stock, known as identifiable stock in the bill, will have to be properly identified by having a permanent identifier properly attached. The bill defines what is "properly identified" and "properly attached". Using counterfeit identifiers and altering and removing identifiers from stock are offences under the bill.

We use the term “permanent identifier” rather than the term “tag”, which many people will be familiar with. Livestock can be tagged for a number of reasons. We use the term “permanent identifier” to make the legislation perfectly clear that we are talking about the endless identifier and to keep our terminology consistent with New South Wales.

The bill makes it an offence to move identifiable stock that is not properly identified unless the movement is an exempt movement. For example, they can be moved in an emergency, such as a flood or a bushfire, as long as their owner gives the chief vet certain information within seven days.

The bill requires certain delivery information to be provided when identifiable stock is involved. Records of the delivery information must be kept for seven years by the stock owner. Buyers must be given the delivery information and keep it for seven years, or two years in the case of a stock and station agent.

Crucially, the bill requires the various people involved in moving cattle, sheep and goats to provide information, including certain transaction information, about the movement to the NLIS administrator by uploading it to the database. This is the final link in the chain of the database for recording the movements of identifiable stock.

As I said earlier, pigs are not yet included in the last step of the process as it is yet to be finalised and made consistent with New South Wales. Finally, the bill provides for the director-general to establish a register that contains information the director-general considers necessary, having regard to the purpose for which the register is maintained.

Maximum penalties in the Animal Diseases Act 2005 have increased. I would like to explain why. In recent times governments have been placing greater emphasis on managing biosecurity risks. Greater global trade is creating new opportunities for pests and diseases to enter the country. A warming climate is allowing the spread of pests and diseases into new areas and declining resources could limit our ability to prevent and respond to pest or disease outbreak.

Pests and diseases do not recognise judicial boundaries or fences and it is important that we have legislation that is compatible with our neighbours. The commonwealth and New South Wales have introduced biosecurity bills that include much tougher penalties for breaching the biosecurity duty. While this bill is not about biosecurity duty per se, the NLIS is the fundamental tool for managing an outbreak of an animal disease. Ensuring ACT farmers comply with the NLIS is fundamental to minimising biosecurity risks in the ACT.

At first glance, the offences seem minor. Tampering with identification devices, not properly identifying stock and not recording movements of stock may seem to be minor infringements but they can have far-reaching consequences, including the loss of export markets for an entire industry.

With this in mind, and taking into account the views of our neighbouring jurisdiction towards biosecurity, it was considered appropriate that penalties be set at a higher level. Under the Animal Diseases Act 2005, most penalties were a maximum of 10 penalties. The bill increases most penalties to 50 penalty units or \$7,500 for individuals and five times that for corporations.

The government is of the view that this increase is well justified given the far-reaching consequences of a breach. This bill will help the ACT to be better prepared for outbreaks of disease and protect the ACT as our agricultural industry expands. I commend the bill to the Assembly.

Debate (on motion by **Ms Lee**) adjourned to the next sitting.

Stock Amendment Bill 2018

Mr Gentleman, pursuant to notice, presented the bill, its explanatory statement and a Human Rights Act compatibility statement.

Title read by Clerk.

MR GENTLEMAN (Brindabella—Minister for Police and Emergency Services, Minister for the Environment and Heritage, Minister for Planning and Land Management and Minister for Urban Renewal) (10.37): I move:

That this bill be agreed to in principle.

I am pleased to present the Stock Amendment Bill 2018 to the Assembly. The bill makes limited amendments to the Stock Act 2005 with the aim of updating the act. The bill provides the Director-General of the Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate with more flexible options for dealing with impounded stock and updates the provisions in the act relating to permits for moving stock on foot.

I would first of all like to provide some relevant information about the Stock Act. One of the aims of the Stock Act is to encourage property owners to ensure their livestock are contained securely on their properties. The risks posed by escape of trespassing livestock include collisions with motor vehicles and the potential for people to be seriously injured or even killed. There is a real risk in Canberra because of the many high-speed roads adjacent to livestock paddocks. Furthermore, the impact of straying livestock trespassing onto neighbouring properties can include the spread of disease, injury to livestock, inseminating stud livestock, consuming fodder and damaging crops.

To deal with straying or trespassing stock, the Stock Act has a number of provisions about the impounding of stock. Part 5 of the act permits the director-general and the occupier of the land to impound trespassing stock. The act requires the director-general to give notice of the impoundment of stock either to the owner, if identified, or publicly.

There are provisions about the release of impounded stock and fees payable to the territory to maintain and travel the impounded stock. If impounded stock are not released, the act presently provides that the impounded stock must, in the first instance, be disposed of by selling them at auction. Section 39 in part 5 of the act provides that the director-general must offer the stock for sale at auction if the stock is not released within 14 days of notice of the impounding being given.

It has become apparent that this requirement to sell at auction is not the best use of government resources and is not always the best outcome for the stock involved. The costs associated with administering the auction process when only a small number of animals are involved is not justified and there may be potential for animal welfare issues associated with keeping social animals in isolation from their normal mob-based social environment.

The requirement for the director-general to sell impounded stock by auction works well in situations involving large numbers of stock but is not as suitable when small numbers of animals or single animals are involved, and small numbers or single animals is the norm for Canberra. The bill therefore makes amendments to the Stock Act to enable the director-general to exercise some discretion when implementing solutions, in relation to impounding stock, that are more cost effective, pragmatic and avoid potential animal welfare issues associated with keeping social animals in isolation away from their normal mob-based environment.

The bill amends part 5, section 39 to provide sale of the stock as one of the options available to the director-general. The new section 39 permits the director-general to dispose of the stock by selling them at auction or other means of sale or by disposing of the stock, including destroying the stock, as the director-general considers appropriate. I would like to emphasise that the director-general can only destroy or dispose of the stock after the 14-day notice period of the impoundment has expired and it is not practicable or desirable to sell the stock because of cost, animal welfare or other reasons. I would also like to point out that the bill in no way affects the ability of a veterinary surgeon to humanely destroy an animal that is sick, diseased or injured, in accordance with section 86 of the Animal Welfare Act 1992.

I would now like to turn to the second set of amendments made by the bill. These relate to part 4 of the Stock Act, which is about travelling stock. Part 4 of the Stock Act has historically been about requiring anyone transporting stock to have a document from the government or the owner of the stock that provides ownership of the stock and point of origin of the stock. The permit system was also about tracing stock movements in case of a disease outbreak.

Since the Stock Act was made, there have been changes that affect the movement of livestock in the ACT. Much of the land that was previously rural has been repurposed for urban development, with a corresponding decrease in the number of farms and livestock. This, and better modes of vehicle transport, has resulted in the droving of stock by foot decreasing significantly. Also, the national livestock identification system, Australia's system for the identification and traceability of stock, has expanded and provides a better way of tracing stock movements.

This means that part 4 of the Stock Act is now only about ensuring the public's safety when the stock is being moved on foot in areas accessible to the public. The government needs to be able to review the proposed movement and assess any risk to the public of the proposed movement.

The bill amends part 4 of the Stock Act to clarify that owners of stock must obtain a permit to travel stock when it involves driving the stock on foot in public areas such as along roads. This could be long-distance travel by stock walking from one area to another, roadside grazing for short periods of time or routine movements between two or more properties owned or occupied by the same person.

The Stock Act is also amended by the bill to remove the right of an owner of stock to issue a permit to travel stock. This requirement was needed historically so that people droving stock along a road could prove the stock had not been stolen. This is no longer necessary because the Animal Diseases Act 2005 includes schemes for the identification of stock and it is not appropriate for an owner to issue a permit when the risk associated with the movement of the stock needs to be assessed by the government for public safety reasons.

In finishing, I would like to point out that the bill contains two strict liability offences. These offences are already in the Stock Act and are only amended by the bill for technical reasons to remove the reference to an owner issuing a permit. There has been no change to the maximum penalty of 50 penalty units.

This bill is another example of the government keeping a close eye on the territory's legislation and making sure it is as up-to-date as possible and works effectively, of course, to reduce red tape, allows the government to meet its obligations in a way that makes best use of resources, and continues to have animal welfare as a priority. I commend the bill to the Assembly.

Debate (on motion by **Ms Lawder**) adjourned to the next sitting.

Prostitution Amendment Bill 2018

Mr Rattenbury, pursuant to notice, presented the bill, its explanatory statement and a Human Rights Act compatibility statement.

Title read by Clerk.

MR RATTENBURY (Kurrajong—Minister for Climate Change and Sustainability, Minister for Justice, Consumer Affairs and Road Safety, Minister for Corrections and Minister for Mental Health) (10.45): I move:

That this bill be agreed to in principle.

I am pleased to present the Prostitution Amendment Bill 2018. This bill is the result of careful consideration, consultation and collaboration and makes a range of amendments to improve the operation of the Prostitution Act 1992.

In 2012 the Standing Committee on Justice and Community Safety completed its inquiry into the Prostitution Act, and the majority made 17 recommendations to improve the regulation of the sex work industry in the ACT. The government agreed to a number of those recommendations which formed the basis of discussion for the implementation working group established afterwards. Following extensive consultation, a number of legislative amendments have been developed to implement key recommendations of the standing committee.

The regulation of sex work is a controversial issue. Some believe that in order to best protect sex workers, the majority of whom are women, we need a robust legal framework to ensure that the sex work industry is safe. Others are of the view that in order to protect women and vulnerable individuals the sex work industry should be criminalised altogether. What both sides have in common is the desire to protect individuals in our community who are working as sex workers from issues such as trafficking, violence, exploitation and illness. Regardless of how we think it should be done, the desire to protect one another is an admirable one.

However, nobody has better knowledge and understanding about how their rights and safety should be protected than sex workers themselves. It is sex workers who will be most affected by any changes to the Prostitution Act, and therefore it is sex workers that we must listen to. The government have listened to key representatives of the sex worker advocacy groups and we have heard that, under the current legislative framework, sex workers have concerns about ongoing stigma, safety issues and discrimination.

The amendments proposed by this bill seek to address those issues and also to uphold the objects of the act by helping to promote the welfare and work health and safety of sex workers. Another very important goal of the bill is to better protect children from sexual exploitation.

The amendments in this bill will help to reduce stigma against sex workers by removing pejorative terminology. The Prostitution Act will be renamed the Sex Work Act 1992 and the terms “prostitute” and “prostitution” will be replaced with current terminology, “sex worker” and “sex work”. The word “prostitute”, which has a negatively moralistic dictionary definition, is derogatory and stigmatising and contributes to the discrimination against individuals in the sex industry. Changing the language to “sex work” and “sex worker” will shift the focus to the individual rights of those engaging in commercial sexual services.

The bill will also amend sections 12 and 13 of the act to remove the requirements for sole operators to register or provide annual notices to the Commissioner for Fair Trading. Sometimes laws, despite their best intentions, simply do not work in practice and, given the very low rate of compliance, the requirement for sole operators to register with Access Canberra has not been working. Instead of protecting sex workers as it is intended to do, the requirement for sole operators to register causes many sex workers to have serious concerns about their privacy and personal safety.

As failing to register is a criminal offence, these requirements have instead become an additional barrier to sex workers feeling safe and comfortable in accessing health and outreach services. Removing the registration requirements for sole operators will improve social inclusion for sex workers. These amendments will also uphold the government's commitment to reducing red tape and remove regulatory burdens on sole operators.

Another key amendment in the bill is the amendment to change the offence of causing a child to provide commercial sexual services under section 20 of the act to absolute liability offences, no matter the age of the child. Currently, section 20 distinguishes between children over and under the age of 12. The offence against children over the age of 12 is currently a strict liability offence, whereas the offence relating to children under 12 is an absolute liability offence. The current strict liability status of the offence relating to children aged 12 years and over means that a defendant charged under this section could use the "mistake of fact" defence under section 36 of the Criminal Code 2002 to claim that they had a reasonable but mistaken belief that the child in question was 18 years old or over. This defence is not available where absolute liability applies to the offence.

A further defence currently exists under section 22 of the act. This section provides that it is a defence to an offence under section 20 if it is established that the defendant took reasonable steps to ascertain the age of the child concerned and believed on reasonable grounds that the child was 18 years old or over. This defence currently applies in respect of children both under 12 years and children who are 12 years and over.

The bill will amend section 20 of the act so that absolute liability will apply to an offence under that section regardless of the age of the child or young person. This will mean that the mistake of fact defence under the Criminal Code will not be available to someone who allows an underage person to provide commercial sexual services, regardless of the age of the young person. However, the defence currently under section 22 of the act will continue to apply to both offences under section 20, as it does now.

The practical effect of this change is that a defendant charged with the offence of causing, permitting, offering or procuring a child aged 12 years or over to provide commercial sexual services will no longer be able to rely on mistake of fact but could still rely on the defence in section 22 of the act of taking reasonable steps and reasonably believing that the child was 18 or over. "Reasonable steps" would be determined by the court in the case of a prosecution but may include, for example, sighting a drivers licence or other proof of age document that identified the child in question to be over the age of 18.

Under our Human Rights Act 2004, every child has the right to protection without distinction or discrimination of any kind. By changing the offence relating to children aged 12 years and over to an absolute liability offence, children of all ages are better protected from sexual exploitation.

The bill also removes discriminatory provisions from the act by repealing sections 24 and 25. These sections make it an offence for a sex worker or a client to provide or receive commercial sexual services if they are infected with a sexually transmissible infection, or STI. These offences are discriminatory because they hold sex workers and clients infected with STIs to a higher public health standard than the general population who are simply required to take reasonable precaution not to transmit a notifiable infection under the Public Health Regulation 2000. This is despite the fact that sex workers represent a low-risk demographic for STI transmission due to a high rate of prophylactic use. That use is supported by the requirement under section 27 of the act to use prophylactics when providing certain kinds of commercial sexual services.

The bill will remove these discriminatory provisions and instead insert a cross-reference to the Public Health Regulation to make it clear that the standard of taking reasonable precautions that applies to the general community also applies equally to sex workers. This amendment means that sex workers and their clients who have STIs will be treated the same as other members of the community with STIs, by focusing the offence on the failure to take reasonable precautions to prevent the transmission of infection rather than on providing or receiving commercial sexual services when infected with a transmissible infection.

The bill also improves the work health and safety of sex workers by requiring operators of brothels and escort agencies to provide appropriate personal protective and safety equipment, including prophylactics, to sex workers free of charge. This amendment is drafted so that it mirrors the Work Health and Safety Regulation 2011 and makes it clear that sex workers have the same right to be safe at work as workers in other industries. The amendments include a list of examples of personal protective and safety equipment that is non-exhaustive in order to capture the wide variety of safety requirements that exist under a diverse range of sex work.

This bill also makes a number of minor and consequential amendments to ensure consistency across the statute book. The bill redrafts sections 12, 13 and 14 without changing the substance to ensure consistency with the Criminal Code and changes the term “authorised nurse practitioner” to “nurse practitioner” for consistency with the Legislation Act 2001.

The bill also makes amendments to a range of legislation to ensure that pejorative terminology is removed. Finally, the bill repeals the Prostitution Regulation 1993 and replaces it with a new Sex Work Regulation 2018, which is otherwise identical.

The government recognises that sex work is a valid occupational choice and that sex workers are entitled to the same protection of their health and safety, rights and freedom from discrimination as workers in any other profession. The government is committed to a progressive and socially responsible approach to the commercial sex industry. These amendments update the act by better balancing legalisation with effective regulation to protect the rights of sex workers, their clients and the broader community. I commend this bill to the Assembly.

Debate (on motion by **Ms Lawder**) adjourned to the next sitting.

Work Health and Safety Amendment Bill 2018

Ms Stephen-Smith, pursuant to notice, presented the bill, its explanatory statement and a Human Rights Act compatibility statement.

Title read by Clerk.

MS STEPHEN-SMITH (Kurrajong—Minister for Community Services and Social Inclusion, Minister for Disability, Children and Youth, Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs, Minister for Multicultural Affairs and Minister for Workplace Safety and Industrial Relations) (10.57): I move:

That this bill be agreed to in principle.

Today I am pleased to present the Work Health and Safety Amendment Bill 2018 to the Assembly. The purpose of this bill is to improve the safety culture in the ACT's construction industry by facilitating greater consultation on major construction projects.

“Safety culture” is a subset of the overall organisational or company culture. The safety culture of an organisation is the product of individual and group values, attitudes, perceptions, competencies, and patterns of behaviour. It determines the commitment to, and the style and proficiency of, an organisation's health and safety management. Organisations with a positive safety culture are characterised by communications founded on mutual trust, by shared perceptions of the importance of safety and by confidence in the efficacy of preventive measures.

The national work health and safety strategy acknowledges that work health and safety improvements are best achieved when health and safety are supported by the organisation's culture and embedded in its procedures and processes. The national work health and safety strategy identifies that a positive culture for health and safety can be achieved by: communities and their leaders driving improved work health and safety, organisational leaders fostering a culture of consultation and collaboration which actively improves work health and safety, and health and safety being given priority in work processes and decisions.

Last year the RMIT University Centre for Construction Work Health and Safety Research conducted an independent survey of the safety culture in the ACT construction industry. The research highlighted the importance of meaningful consultation with workers on health and safety matters but found that the quality and effectiveness of formal consultation mechanisms on construction sites in the territory was variable.

In making this finding RMIT suggested there were opportunities to review the way workers are engaged and the way they are able to raise concerns about work health and safety and provide meaningful input into the design of safe and healthy ways of working. This finding followed the 2012 *Getting home safely* report, which had similarly emphasised the importance of a consultative approach to project safety.

This bill is a signal to the construction industry that the way safety is being communicated between employers and their workers needs to be improved. Indeed the government views consultation and worker representation so highly that it is willing to make amendments to the law to facilitate improved communication. We know that collaboration and meaningful consultation between employers and workers play a critical role in improving safety outcomes. We also know they contribute to the safety culture, which is critical to ensuring our workers remain healthy and safe. Workers must be able to participate in the identification of safety problems and the development of solutions. There needs to be a joint effort by all parties in ensuring that workplaces are safe and people are protected.

The amendments made by the bill I present today will raise the bar in terms of the expected level of communication and consultation regarding workers' health and safety matters in the construction industry. These amendments will impose additional obligations on a person conducting a business or undertaking who is the principal contractor for a major construction project. The bill will mandate a new consultation step in the establishment of work groups, mandate the election and training of health and safety representatives and mandate the election and training of health and safety committees.

The government acknowledges that mandating training is a big step, but it is an important one. Ensuring training of health and safety representatives and committee members on major construction projects in the ACT will build lasting capability in work health and safety.

As noted, the amendments will only apply to major construction projects, which are defined as construction projects with a contract price of \$5 million or more, and do not apply to single residential dwelling construction projects.

The bill requires a principal contractor to consult with eligible unions when establishing work groups. Currently, the legislation only requires consultation with unions in forming a work group if requested by a worker. Work groups are an important means of establishing a pool of workers who are likely to have common safety concerns and issues from which a health and safety representative can be elected. The workers in the work group can then readily access a health and safety representative to discuss health and safety matters.

Health and safety representatives facilitate the flow of information about health and safety between workers and their employers. They also monitor safety actions taken by their employer, investigate workers' complaints and look into anything that might be a risk to the health and safety of the workers they represent. Trained health and safety representatives can also direct unsafe work to stop if they have a reasonable concern that carrying out the work would expose a worker to serious risk, and can issue provisional improvement notices.

This bill also makes it compulsory for the principal contractor for a major construction project to facilitate the conduct of an election of one or more health and safety representatives. The principal contractor must also ensure that health and safety

representatives attend relevant training. This will ensure that workers have a trained colleague on site to report and take action on their work health and safety concerns.

The bill will also make it compulsory for the principal contractor of a major construction project to establish a health and safety committee for the project and to train committee members via a relevant course. Health and safety committees bring together workers and management to assist in the development and review of health and safety policies and procedures. These committees are a useful forum for consultation on work and safety issues. They enable worker representatives and management to meet regularly and to work together to improve safety outcomes. They are particularly useful for consultation in workplaces where there are a number of different persons conducting a business or undertaking, which is often the case on large construction projects.

The bill will further require that at least half the health and safety committee members at worksites at which a major construction project is being carried out are workers carrying out work at the workplace. Mandating worker representation levels on health and safety committees, along with compulsory training of committee members, will ensure that engagement and collaboration between employers and workers result in meaningful consultation and improved safety outcomes.

In recognising that there may be some circumstances where the formation of work groups and the election of health and safety representatives and committees should not be required, the bill includes a provision to allow the regulator to exempt a principal contractor from complying with some of the obligations imposed by the amendments on application by the principal contractor.

A delayed commencement of 1 January 2019 for the bill has deliberately been chosen. This is to give the construction industry in the territory time to prepare and familiarise itself with the new obligations.

The amendments contained in this bill will enhance collaboration in the construction industry and, by doing so, improve safety outcomes for construction workers across the territory. I commend the bill to the Assembly.

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

Senior Practitioner Bill 2018

Ms Stephen-Smith, pursuant to notice, presented the bill, its explanatory statement and a Human Rights Act compatibility statement.

Title read by Clerk.

MS STEPHEN-SMITH (Kurrajong—Minister for Community Services and Social Inclusion, Minister for Disability, Children and Youth, Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs, Minister for Multicultural Affairs and Minister for Workplace Safety and Industrial Relations) (11.05): I move:

That this bill be agreed to in principle.

I present the Senior Practitioner Bill 2018 to the Assembly. The bill creates a new role of senior practitioner as well as providing a formal framework for the overall reduction of restrictive practices in the ACT and for working to achieve the elimination of their use in individual circumstances where possible.

A restrictive practice is defined by the bill as a practice that is used to restrict the rights or freedom of movement of a person for the primary purpose of protecting the person or others from harm. It may include, for example, the use of a chemical substance to restrict or subdue a person's movement; limiting a person's ability to move freely, access their surroundings or engage in an activity; or the seclusion or sole confinement of a person in a room or other space from which free exit is prevented, explicitly or implicitly, or not facilitated.

This bill has been informed by extensive consultation with the ACT community. Consultations were undertaken through all phases between November 2016 and May this year. I take this opportunity to thank all of our community and sector stakeholders, including the ACT Human Rights Commission, for their generous participation in this process.

In various discussions with community members, there has been overwhelming support for the senior practitioner role. The community has welcomed the educative role of the senior practitioner, which will begin ahead of the bill, proposed to commence on 1 September 2018, and well ahead of the offences provisions, which are not proposed to commence until 1 July 2019. This staggered timing ensures that the senior practitioner will have time to engage, educate and work through implementation issues with those organisations and people affected by the legislation.

The senior practitioner will help to guide decisions and provide education to foster positive alternatives to restrictive practices which preserve a person's rights and freedoms. Key stakeholders have welcomed the senior practitioner providing greater clarity about when the use of restrictive practices should be authorised.

This bill will ensure that, in the circumstances that restrictive practices are required, people will have clear and expert advice and support. It will ensure that the practices will be part of a positive behaviour support plan and that they will be used for the shortest time possible—in short, working towards their elimination in any particular instance.

This bill will provide greater and much called for assurance for all providers who work with people who have challenging and complex behaviours. We know that restrictive practices are more likely to be used in response to the behaviours of some of the most vulnerable people in our community: people with disability, older people, people living with psychosocial disability and children and young people.

The bill enables greater protection from the unnecessary use of restrictive practices by establishing a formal protection and oversight mechanism for the ACT. It enshrines the principle that providers should only use restrictive practices in very limited

circumstances: as a last resort, in the least restrictive way and for the shortest possible period of time in the circumstances.

It is important to note that the bill is aimed at regulating the use of restrictive practices by service providers. It does not apply to families or informal carers for the person. Nor does it seek to regulate reasonable action to monitor and protect a child from harm: for example, holding a child's hand while crossing a road or putting a fence around a school or childcare centre. Such reasonable actions are specifically excluded from the definition of restrictive practices under the bill.

A key aspect of the senior practitioner's role is to work closely with the ACT community to provide education and improve awareness on the reduction and elimination of restrictive practices. The senior practitioner will produce and disseminate policies, standards and guidelines to promote best practice and will lead sector capacity building to minimise or eliminate the use of restrictive practices. These objectives will be supported by the collection and reporting of key data on the use of restrictive practices over time.

The bill has broad scope to give greater protection for those members of our community who may otherwise be subject to abuse or harm. The senior practitioner's powers will extend to: disability services, including psychosocial disabilities; schools and other education settings; and children and young people in out of home care.

The bill also makes specific exemptions for persons receiving care under the Mental Health Act 2015 to the extent that that act applies; patients in secure mental health facilities; and those in custodial or prison detention, including the Bimberi Youth Justice Centre. This is due to existing oversight arrangements specific to those settings already providing legislative oversight and regulation.

Families and informal carers providing supports are also excluded under the bill. Other services such as health and hospitals are neither explicitly included nor excluded in the bill. Those services will not be subject to oversight by the senior practitioner when it is established.

However, the definition of provider may be expanded by regulation made under section 8(1)(a)(iv) of the bill. This would be done in close consultation with key sector and community stakeholders and allows for further rollout once the senior practitioner is established and operational.

Under the bill, a restrictive practice is only permissible if used in a way that is consistent with a positive behaviour support plan for the person. The positive behaviour support plan must be approved by a registered behaviour support panel and registered by the senior practitioner. The bill enables the senior practitioner to receive complaints about anything done by a provider in relation to a positive behaviour support plan that permits the use of a restrictive practice, or about the use of a restrictive practice by a provider. The senior practitioner will also have powers to conduct investigations, either in response to a complaint or on their own initiative, where restrictive practices are a concern. If, after an investigation, the senior practitioner is satisfied that the provider is using a restrictive practice that is

inconsistent with a registered positive behaviour support plan, the senior practitioner must give the provider a direction to stop the practice.

As noted previously, the bill includes offences, which are to take effect from 1 July 2019. This will coincide with the start of the NDIS quality and safeguarding framework in the ACT and will give providers time to get ready to meet their responsibilities under the bill. Under part 8 of the bill, it will be an offence for providers to use a restrictive practice on a person that is not permitted under a registered positive behaviour support plan. It will also be an offence for providers to fail to comply with any directions issued by the senior practitioner after investigating the use of a restrictive practice.

A priority for the senior practitioner will be to build strong working relationships with other key oversight agencies, with the aim of leveraging and enhancing existing safeguarding arrangements, and to best meet the needs of people who may be vulnerable to restrictive practices.

The Senior Practitioner Bill supports the ACT government's commitment to improving the lives of all people who are vulnerable and potentially subject to restrictive practices, as well as upholding their human rights. The bill ensures we meet our commitments under the NDIS quality and safeguarding framework and the national framework for reducing and eliminating the use of restrictive practices in the disability sector. I commend this bill to the Assembly.

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

Health, Ageing and Community Services—Standing Committee Reference

MRS DUNNE (Ginninderra) (11.12): I move:

That the Standing Committee on Health, Ageing and Community Services inquire into and report on the delivery of high quality maternity services, including, but not limited to, the support of staff in a high-pressure environment, and any related matters.

This is an important issue for the Canberra community, and this motion is a simple one. It refers the matter to the Standing Committee on Health, Ageing and Community Services but does not set a time frame because the committee already has a body of work underway. It is the belief of the Liberal Party that issues in relation to maternity services are important and warrant more consideration by this Assembly. The best way to do that would be through a committee inquiry allowing members of the community the capacity to tell their stories about the provision of maternity services and how we might improve them.

There is wide recognition—and especially since the letter received by Minister Fitzharris on 16 April—that maternity services in the ACT are under pressure. As a result, I think it is time we allowed people to tell their stories and had an open

discussion about how we will best come to some solutions of general appeal across the community to ensure we continue to deliver high quality maternity services and to support the staff in their working environment.

On 16 April Minister Fitzharris received a letter from a group of health professionals at the Centenary Hospital for Women and Children. The letter raised a long list of concerns about conditions at the Centenary hospital, including long wait times and daily overbookings for procedures such as inductions and epidurals; no privacy for labouring or unwell women waiting for rooms and that there was a long line of women waiting for rooms and labouring in inappropriate circumstances; women and babies being discharged inappropriately early with feeding, pain and other issues unaddressed; staff being unable to provide adequate breastfeeding support and cuts to Midcall; bullying being rife and part of the ongoing culture at the Centenary hospital; problems with staffing in the maternity assessment unit; and the neonatal intensive care unit often at capacity and short-staffed.

When the minister received this letter she deployed her army of 29½ spin doctors—I know that number because I asked the question on notice—and a meeting with staff was organised for the following day. I have obtained a copy of the relevant documents relating to that meeting under the Freedom of Information Act. I have a copy of a track changes document of talking points. Some of the amended talking points include: “We accept there is room for improvement”; “Some of these issues are already on our radar”; and “We acknowledge that as senior executives we need to do better.”

Another example is notes of a communication and incident briefing meeting on 17 April. It states that a senior executive expressed her surprise and sadness that the writers of the letter felt they had to take this action and felt they had to voice their concerns regarding their employment anonymously. She said she was sad they did not speak to others before going to the media and had taken this approach.

The senior official asked the people in the meeting to put up their hands if they had felt bullied in their workplace. One staff member said it was inappropriate for the senior official to ask the question in such a way and that the staff would be scared to come forward about bullying in such a forum. That staff member was absolutely right. The very action of the senior staffer was in itself bullying, and the person should have been counselled. It was clearly inappropriate for a senior executive to ask staff in a meeting of 41 people to say whether they had been bullied.

We have a culture of bullying and a culture of fear across the entire health system, including the maternity services. There are serious concerns about the mental health of many staff who are under constant pressure, which can largely be attributed to bullying and harassment in the health system itself. Those of us who have been here long enough will remember the former minister, Katy Gallagher, speaking a few years ago about what was then the 10-year war in obstetrics, as she called it. There is a long history of bullying in maternity services.

Madam Assistant Speaker, I cannot tell you the number of times that members of the public have come to me and told me they are employed in the health department and

say, “I need to tell you about this or that or the other, but I can’t tell you this unless you can ensure my anonymity. Because if anyone knew I had told anyone about this, my life would not be worth living.” That is a fear of bullying. 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 to by the minister for health and her battalion of spin doctors.

The minister has summarily batted away the claims of bullying and harassment, simply saying that there are clear and respectful pathways to deal with these matters. Asking for a show of hands is not respectful, and this has never been the case. Anyone venturing down the so-called clear and respectful pathways is vilified in such a brutal way as to destroy their career. This minister does nothing to support the people who venture down these perilous pathways.

On 8 May 2018 Minister Fitzharris claimed in this place that the letter had come from one midwife. There is no evidence of that. It is clear from the letter that it was written by more than one person. Indeed the documents indicate that the management at the hospital acknowledged it reflects widespread concerns of the staff. A significant number of people have backed the midwives at the Centenary hospital. Those people are the patients in the hospital.

On 26 April the *Canberra Times* reported some of the patient experiences at the Centenary hospital. One woman said she had given birth in a car because the Centenary hospital was full, and she was advised to wait until she had a proper labour before coming in because the ward was full. Another mother spent hours in the hospital before being discharged. Another mother cited in the *Canberra Times* made formal complaints and sought legal representation after the birth of her twins in the hospital. Her labour lasted over three days due to delays at the Centenary hospital. She had one baby naturally and the other baby was delivered by a caesarean section. In this day and age that should not happen.

I recently asked Canberrans to have their say about health services. It was a survey about health services generally, but probably 50 per cent of the submissions I received were about maternity services. It is the highest issue raised in the survey. To be fair and quite frank, many of the people who responded to the survey across the board, including in maternity, said they had nothing but good experiences at the hospital. But many people were unhappy and a considerable number of concerns were raised, and some of them are quite alarming.

Patients talked about bullying and harassment that they had seen and experienced. They often felt they were harassed to leave the hospital when they were unready to do so, that they were harassed to take particular courses of action when their gut indicated they should be taking another form of action. A number of people said quite patently that they would not go back to the Centenary Hospital for Women and Children if they had further children. This is alarming.

Other issues raised were flawed advice that did not take into account the particular circumstances of patients; a lack of support from staff and assistance with

breastfeeding; early discharge of patients home despite problems; one patient from Captains Flat and one from Goulburn being sent home even though they were in the early stages of labour and were high-risk pregnancies; patients feeling like staff were not listening to their concerns; and a lack of pain relief.

Something that has always been an issue for me as a health consumer is the quality and availability of food in the wards. It was reported to me through the survey that often after labour women go for long periods without being given any food because there is none available and there are no kitchen staff. One woman who is a vegetarian claimed she was unable to get appropriate food until she was given vouchers to cash in at the staff canteen. So she had to go off the ward to the canteen to obtain appropriate vegetarian meals.

It is clear from the midwives' letter and from the experiences of a significant number of patients—I am talking around 100 patients who have responded to my survey—that there are major problems with maternity services at the Centenary Hospital for Women and Children, and I am concerned about the pressure that this puts staff under. It is clear there is much we need to do in this area.

I have had complaints about the under-utilisation of the birth centre for its principal purposes, even though there is a waitlist for people who want to access the birth centre. The minister has admitted they are perplexed about the fact that there is such high demand for maternity services at the Centenary hospital while Calvary hospital is somewhat under-utilised. I also note that, while it is a private hospital, John James hospital is somewhat under-utilised as well.

We need to find a happy medium whereby we fully and appropriately utilise all the maternity facilities available to us in the ACT to ensure we have, as much as possible, safe, natural births for those people who wish it; safe interventions in birth for those people who need it; and people labouring in our hospitals in appropriate circumstances and with appropriate care in the post-natal period so we do not have high rates of readmission, which is one of the issues raised by the letter writers to the minister on 16 April as well as by respondents to my survey. A number of people reported readmission of their babies as a result of substantial weight loss after birth, and that is a matter of considerable concern to me. This should not be happening in a First World country in the 21st century.

It is clear we have problems in our maternity system, and they are not just problems of money; they are problems of how those resources are divided up, how we administer our maternity services and how we make sure the services are available as equitably as possible at the right level for the right person.

I have moved this motion today to refer this issue to the health and community services and ageing committee because the matter is becoming of considerable concern to women of the ACT in particular, as well as to their widespread families and to the staff in maternity services. It is time we had a proper airing and exploration of the issues.

Because I am a member of the committee, I know there is a considerable workload with two important inquiries currently underway. It would be up to the committee to find the space for this if the Assembly agrees to this reference. I believe it is sufficiently important to raise the issue in this place so that this Assembly can say that maternity services are important for women of the ACT, and that this matter should be dealt with in a way that gives consumers and providers of maternity services an opportunity to speak about their concerns and their suggestions for improvement.

We certainly need to do better than we currently are; therefore I commend the motion to the Assembly and hope the Assembly agrees with me that maternity services are sufficiently important to warrant a committee inquiry.

MS LE COUTEUR (Murrumbidgee) (11.28): I am a member of the HACS committee. The HACS committee is a perfectly functional committee, and I think it is appropriate that we as a committee make the decision as to what we do or do not work on. Clearly, there is some merit in Mrs Dunne's idea, and there may be other ideas with equal merit. Due to the lack of time I think it would be more appropriate to leave this discussion to the HACS committee to work it out for ourselves.

MR STEEL (Murrumbidgee) (11.28): I speak as an ordinary member of the Assembly and not as the chair of the HACS committee. I agree with Ms Le Couteur's sentiments—the Standing Committee on Health, Ageing and Community Services currently has two inquiries underway. I think it is very sensible for the committee to be able to consider the proposed inquiry in the context of its current and future work plan and any future inquiries that also need to be conducted, not limited to annual reports coming up closer to the end of the year. We have taken that approach with other inquiries and we should also do that with this inquiry before a decision is made as to whether we will actually undertake the inquiry.

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

Education, Employment and Youth Affairs—Standing Committee

Statement by chair

MR PETTERSSON (Yerrabi) (11.30): Pursuant to standing order 246A, I wish to make a statement on behalf of the Standing Committee on Education, Employment and Youth Affairs relating to petition No 25-17, ACT safe and inclusive schools, as referred to the committee on 8 May 2018, pursuant to standing order 99A.

As signatories to petition No 25-17, ACT safe and inclusive schools, 1,483 residents of the ACT have sought to:

... draw to the attention of the Assembly that students present to all schools, government and non-government, with a range of personal characteristics, including diversity in gender identity and presentation, sexual orientation and intersex status.

As an inclusive community, Canberrans overwhelmingly support schools respecting, welcoming and celebrating diversity and encouraging children to be themselves.

When this does not occur, children can face bullying and discrimination that damages mental health, lowers academic achievement, lowers rates of school attendance and increases rates of self-harm and suicide.

... petitioners, therefore, request the Assembly to support the Government's efforts to ensure all children are safe and supported at any school, and support the ACT Safe and Inclusive Schools initiative being available to all ACT schools.

This committee has noted the petition.

The committee's response to petition No 21-17, relating to the safe schools program, was presented to the Assembly on 12 April 2018. In considering petition 21-17, the committee was provided with a briefing by Education Directorate officials on 3 April 2018, aimed at better understanding ACT government's safe and inclusive schools initiative and how it differed from the Safe Schools Coalition Australia program.

In light of that briefing, the committee will not be inquiring further into the matters raised in petition 25-17. The committee notes that the safe and inclusive schools ACT website provides a menu of supports offered to schools who choose to engage with the safe and inclusive schools initiative. All schools, government and non-government, have access to the materials.

Environment and Transport and City Services—Standing Committee

Statement by chair

MS ORR (Yerrabi) (11.32): Pursuant to standing order 246A, I wish to make a statement on behalf of the Standing Committee on Environment and Transport and City Services relating to the inquiry into a proposed mammal emblem for the ACT. The committee received 29 submissions from the community, suggesting a range of animals for consideration as the territory's mammal emblem. The animals which gained prominence in submissions were the eastern bettong, the echidna, spotted tail quoll, southern brush-tailed rock-wallaby and the little forest bat.

In May 2018 the committee met with wildlife and conservation experts at Mulligans Flat Woodland Sanctuary and Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve to learn more about the mammals put forward. Committee members greatly appreciated the opportunity to see the significant conservation efforts being made at Mulligans Flat and Tidbinbilla to protect and reintroduce mammal species to the Canberra region.

The committee identified a list of factors to inform its consideration of candidates for a mammal emblem: connection to the ACT region, contribution to the local environment, vulnerable or endangered status of the animal and potential for publicity as the territory emblem to contribute to important conservation efforts underway or

planned. Based on these criteria, the committee decided that the two primary contenders for selection of a mammal emblem are the eastern bettong and the southern brush-tailed rock-wallaby.

The eastern bettong once lived across southern Australia but, due to human activity and the introduction of feral species, became extinct on the mainland in the 1920s. A population of bettongs from Tasmania was reintroduced to Canberra in 2012 and can be seen at Mulligans Flat Woodland Sanctuary. They have an important role in the ecosystem, turning over soil and promoting regeneration of vegetation.

The brush-tailed rock-wallaby has a long association with the ACT and important cultural connections with the local Indigenous population. Due to farming and the introduction of feral species, the wallaby is at risk of being extinct in the foreseeable future. In 1996 Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve began a conservation program to save the wallaby from extinction.

From a captive population of three wallabies, Tidbinbilla has now grown the population and in doing so pioneered breeding techniques now used by many conservation programs. The Tidbinbilla population is now around 30. This number is expected to grow once an expanded sanctuary is constructed in 2018. Tidbinbilla hopes to grow the population to over 100, which will ensure the survival of the brush-tailed rock-wallaby.

The committee will now open an online poll for a period of two weeks to enable the ACT community to further inform which animal would best represent the territory as our mammal emblem. The poll results, as well as other material, will inform the committee as it prepares a report on the inquiry.

Statement by chair

MS ORR (Yerrabi) (11.35): Pursuant to standing order 246A, I wish to make a statement on behalf of the Standing Committee on Environment and Transport and City Services relating to the inquiry into nature in our city. The committee has received requests for permission for individuals to make their submission after the closing date of 8 June 2018. The committee has decided to extend the closing date for all submissions to 29 June 2018.

Health, Ageing and Community Services—Standing Committee

Statement by chair

MR STEEL (Murrumbidgee) (11.35): Pursuant to standing order 246A, I wish to make a statement on behalf of the Standing Committee on Health, Ageing and Community Services. On 30 November 2017 the committee notified the Assembly that it had resolved to conduct an inquiry into the implementation, performance and governance of the national disability insurance scheme in the ACT. The committee conducted public hearings throughout May 2018 and heard testimony from the Shepherd Centre on Friday, 11 May.

The committee heard that the new referral pathway for children in the ACT identified with hearing loss at birth has become significantly longer with the introduction of the EACH pathway under the NDIS. The EACH pathway is designed only for early intervention with children under the age of six.

The committee heard that the EACH pathway can result in children not being referred to auditory specialists in time to commence therapy before the auditory cortex closes. The committee was told that, if treatment starts after six months of age, the child will have permanent delays in regard to speech. The committee was understandably concerned about the effect that such delays could have on children born in the ACT with hearing loss.

Since hearing from the Shepherd Centre the committee has heard conflicting reports about what the correct process is for referrals of this nature. As a result the committee has written to the federal assistant minister responsible for the NDIS, the CEO of the National Disability Insurance Agency, the chair of the federal joint committee on the NDIS, and the responsible ACT minister, Minister Stephen-Smith, highlighting this significant shortcoming in the current operation of the scheme.

The committee is making a statement today in an effort to encourage immediate action in relation to this crucial matter. The committee also takes this opportunity to thank all submitters to the inquiry and those that appeared before the public hearings. The committee plans on tabling its final report before the end of the year.

Executive business—precedence

Ordered that executive business be called on.

Leave of absence

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

That leave of absence be granted for all members for the period 8 June to 30 July 2018.

Ombudsman Amendment Bill 2018

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

That this bill be agreed to in principle.

MRS KIKKERT (Ginninderra) (11.38): I rise today to resume debate on the Ombudsman Amendment Bill 2018. In doing so, I wish to speak from a very personal space and once again make clear my absolute commitment to the protection of children. I believe that my public record on this issue should be abundantly clear already. In March last year I raised concerns in this chamber that the government's Family and Personal Violence Legislation Amendment Bill did not adequately protect children because it forces the Magistrates Court to amend protection orders even in

cases that could theoretically involve coercion or distress—realities that a number of stakeholders who spoke with me insisted they had seen too much of.

These amendments were rejected by this government. Then, just one year ago, I moved a motion in this Assembly calling upon the ACT government to recognise the importance of providing for external review of important child protection decisions—a recommendation made in the 2004 Vardon report endorsed by Legal Aid ACT and raised again with this government in the 2016 Glanfield inquiry.

My motivation to do this was because I am thoroughly dedicated to the protection of children, and external review has been identified as an important safeguard when it comes to the safety of young people who have been removed from their birth parents. After all, 36 per cent of survivors who contacted the royal commission reported having been abused whilst in various forms of out of home care. This was the single largest group of respondents.

In March this year, I moved another motion specifically calling upon the ACT government to work with nationally recognised and accredited organisations in order to provide all first-time parents and other primary caregivers with evaluated information packets that address child sexual abuse, including how to recognise offender tactics, potentially risky situations and warning signs, as well as how to helpfully respond to suspected abuse and actual discovery of abuse. I fully expect this government to keep its commitment to this motion, as it was passed, and I look forward to an update on what is happening in this space.

By themselves, these actions should show my unwavering commitment to the protection of children and young people. To them I could add the concerns I have raised on numerous occasions, both in this chamber and in numerous hearings, about how some of our most vulnerable kids are treated in our youth detention centre, including experiencing and witnessing violence. I could also add the concerns I have raised about kids who spent too long in care, the quality of our residential care system, the lack of adequate foster carers and so forth.

If this is all somehow not clear enough, let me clarify here and now that I have zero tolerance for the abuse of children, sexual or otherwise. That means that I have zero tolerance for those who would in any way shelter or protect those who abuse children or who would allow such abuse to continue when they might be in a position to stop it. There are no exceptions. This means that I and the Canberra Liberals fully endorse the recommendations of the royal commission and, as the opposition, we will be supporting this bill today in its entirety, including the clauses that deal with religious confession.

At the same time I feel obligated to acknowledge that there are right-minded people who harbour concerns about aspects of this proposed legislation. In making this acknowledgement, I put those opposite on notice. On this issue, concern with how a legislative instrument has been drafted does not imply in any way a lesser commitment to the protection of children. Any attempt to make such a point will correctly be seen by those both inside and outside this place as a reprehensible and inexcusable political move.

As the Chief Minister himself has acknowledged, the issue of how exactly to deal with the existing provision for confessional privilege is a complex issue that “goes beyond questions of how best to protect children,” one that ideally needs “a nationally consistent approach”. For this reason the scrutiny committee itself raised a concern that part 11 of this bill should be delayed until the necessary policy development and consultation have been concluded.

The Chief Minister has provided assurances that this government will engage in this consultation and policy development within the time frame provided in the bill. I sincerely hope that this will be the outcome. It certainly needs to be the outcome. I understand that no-one on either side of this chamber wishes for the inclusion of religious bodies into the reportable conduct scheme to be delayed for any reason. In my personal opinion, it must not be delayed.

At the same time I call upon this government to do literally everything in its power to work with other jurisdictions, including the commonwealth, to find the absolutely best way forward over the next several months. Our kids deserve nothing but the best protection that we can provide to them. I commend this bill to the Assembly.

MS LE COUTEUR (Murrumbidgee) (11.44): I rise today to speak in support of the bill presented by the Chief Minister. This amendment bill introduces an important expansion—indeed, a fundamental expansion—of the reportable conduct scheme to include religious organisations. I strongly called for this inclusion as soon as I became aware of the gap last year. As I stated in the Assembly last month, I am both pleased and relieved that the government is preparing to implement the expansion from 1 July this year. I again welcome the \$615,000 that has been allocated for this to happen.

It is important that all organisations and institutions working with children are child safe and child friendly, and that any misconduct in relation to children can be reported appropriately and swiftly addressed. I hope the additional funds will improve the scheme’s capacity to do so.

One of the primary concerns identified by the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse was the lack of accountability and the staggering incidence of cover-ups of abuse of children and young people by organisations and institutions, often those whose very mandate was to protect and promote their wellbeing and welfare.

Any person who took note at all of the royal commission’s inquiry could not fail to note the disturbingly prevalent incidence of religious institutions, and the hierarchy within them, abusing their power over our most vulnerable citizens: children and young people. As I have said previously, abuse does not stem inherently from religion. Child abuse is ultimately an abuse of trust and power. Similarly, the inherent status of children and young people obligates us, as a community, as a society and as a parliament, to protect them.

As part of the royal commission’s investigations of some 7,000 survivors who described the types of institutions where they were abused, more than half—that is,

58.6 per cent—said that they were sexually abused in an institution managed by a religious organisation. While the original legislation would certainly cover those instances where the abuse was perpetrated by teachers and those in a school setting, people in religious ministries were equally implicated in the proceedings. It was a gross oversight not to include them in the first place. I commend the government for rectifying this gap.

I would like to address an aspect of the legislation that causes some concern in the community. There was an article about it in today's *Canberra Times*. This is the step towards the inclusion of religious confession. I commend the government for taking this step. The royal commission clearly states:

Laws concerning mandatory reporting to child protection authorities should not exempt persons in religious ministry from being required to report knowledge or suspicions formed, in whole or in part, on the basis of information disclosed in or in connection with a religious confession.

The royal commission goes further in recommending that representations be made to the Pope to amend canon law to exclude child sex abuse allegations from confessional privilege. I would like to say very clearly on the record that there is no room in our multi-faith and secular society for exempting the practices of one particular religious organisation from the obligation to report and respond to child sex abuse allegations. Preventing the ability to cover up such abuses of trust and power is not a matter of religious freedom, faith or beliefs. It is about protecting children.

On balance, the government has taken a measured approach in allowing a nine-month transitional period to do the work to address any legal or legislative uncertainty. As I have clearly said, I endorse the inclusion of religious institutions as a designated entity in the legislation. However, it is important to note that it does not, by itself, address some of the other gaps that currently exist. There is a lack of protection for vulnerable adults.

We already know that people with disabilities suffer sexual assault at disproportionately higher rates, as high as 90 per cent for some groups. As I called for last year, if the reportable conduct scheme cannot be extended to cover these groups, the government needs to examine what other robust protections for these vulnerable adults can be introduced.

Without clear and mandatory reporting, this group will remain reliant on good intentions. As we have clearly seen in the royal commission process, all too often this means they are unprotected. It would be a terrible tragedy to have to wait for the outcomes of another royal commission to prevent further harm for people with disabilities, who we know are at a higher risk of sexual assault than the wider population.

Promoting a child-safe and child-friendly city is about more than the obligation to report child abuse. It is about the ability to respond and provide support that is timely and appropriate when abuse does happen, to hopefully minimise the harm caused and prevent the terrible repercussions of trauma left unacknowledged and untreated.

These repercussions can often lead to self-medication with the abuse of alcohol and/or other drugs, mental health issues, family breakdown, isolation and other self-harming behaviours. Sadly, one of the ways that abuse is most often discovered is when victims are picked up in the child protection system or youth justice system with one or more of these issues.

A clear example of this problem is sexualised behaviours. Yet from the age of 11, young people can be charged with sexual offences, noting, of course, that fortunately this very rarely, if ever, happens in the ACT. Many boys, but not of course all boys, who have been exposed to domestic violence are often found to exhibit problem sexualised behaviour. For girls exhibiting these behaviours, it is more likely to indicate exposure to sexual assault.

The current system does not adequately understand or deal with these behaviours. Experts in this area, such as the Canberra Rape Crisis Centre, have identified that carers and staff in the out of home care system and other first responders, such as the police, need to develop a deeper understanding of these issues to avoid further victimisation and longer term adverse outcomes for these vulnerable young people.

On this note, I was very pleased to see funding for the Canberra Rape Crisis Centre in the budget. I reiterate the importance of appropriate resourcing for the community sector to do their work effectively and to reach out to and respond to children and young people when they need support.

In conclusion, this amendment bill is an important step to bring the ACT's legislation into line with the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. Most importantly, it helps improve our ability to keep children and young people safe from harm in the ACT. The Greens are happy to support the bill.

MR RAMSAY (Ginninderra—Attorney-General, Minister for Regulatory Services, Minister for the Arts and Community Events and Minister for Veterans and Seniors) (11.52): I welcome the opportunity to speak in support of the Ombudsman Amendment Bill 2018. This bill responds to community concern about the safety of children in our organisations by expanding the scope of the reportable conduct scheme to include religious institutions. This expansion was much welcomed by religious organisations themselves, who last year advocated for the expansion

By way of introduction, as a person of Christian faith, I am very aware that I have an obligation to be mindful of my own potential biases. I have a responsibility to clearly separate those beliefs from my role as a minister of government and as an elected member of the Assembly. I am aware that I have to be very careful not to advocate for a public policy on the basis of the tenets of my own personal faith. So as I and this government consider this bill, we do so aware of religious practices and the balancing that is required under the Human Rights Act. But I am also aware that I cannot bring a particular bias in relation to any single expression of faith.

We can take heart from the encouraging words of Canberra's religious leaders as they signal their organisational aspirations to move to a position of social change that affords children and young people a much higher status.

Child abuse is unacceptable. It is shocking. All children have a fundamental right to be safe and to be protected in their community, and to have a say in the decisions that affect them. The ACT is a human rights jurisdiction, committed to protecting the rights of children and young people, including their right to special protection because of their vulnerability to exploitation and abuse.

I would like to acknowledge today the incredibly important work that the royal commission has done in raising to unprecedented levels community awareness of the vulnerability of children and the community's responsibility to children. After five years of emotionally exhausting and confronting public hearings, over 400 hearing days and 1,200 witness testimonies, the royal commission handed down 409 recommendations in its final report.

As we have heard, the ACT reportable conduct scheme is on track with the recommendations of the royal commission regarding nationally consistent legislative reportable conduct schemes. National consistency is important, as the safety and wellbeing of children is the responsibility of all levels of government. But governments cannot do this alone: keeping the children in our community safe is a shared responsibility, and one that cannot be done without the wider community.

There are a number of reforms which are common to all systems. They include: that the safety and wellbeing of children is a shared community responsibility; charters of rights for children and young people in care; children and families being empowered to participate in decision-making; and children's commissioner and/or children's guardian positions being created to advocate for children. That is just to name a few.

The ACT continues to participate in work to progress national standards for sectors other than out of home care, and work towards a potential national harmonisation of working with children check schemes, both of which are recommended by this royal commission.

We have already responded directly to the royal commission's recommendations on civil litigation. We passed amendments to remove limitation periods for civil actions on child sexual abuse in all contexts in May 2017. We also introduced legislation that responds to some of the royal commission's criminal justice recommendations by strengthening our criminal laws against ongoing sexual abuse rather than just individual sexual acts; by broadening grooming offences to criminalise any contact with a child that is intended to make a sexual offence more likely and extending grooming offences to the grooming of persons other than the child; and excluding good character from reducing a sentence for a child sex offender when it has been that good character that enabled them to gain access to the victim.

The royal commission makes it clear that there is more work to be done. In March this year I commenced public consultation that addresses the royal commission's

recommendations for criminal justice system legislative reform, inviting key stakeholders and the broader community to provide their views on those proposals.

As the Chief Minister stated in introducing this particular legislation, the difficult question of how to treat religious confession is complex, and it is currently part of a national conversation. The consideration of confession is an important one, and it is a discussion which must be had with community and with religious leaders.

Today's debate, and the anticipated passing of this legislation, which it is important to do in this time frame, does not foreclose engagement with the archbishop or any other members of the Catholic Church, or with other religious bodies. I will be meeting with Archbishop Prowse to hear his views on this legislation's treatment of religious confession as well as the broader implications of the royal commission recommendations. Those views will inform the government's work on reportable conduct between now and March next year.

The revelations aired in the royal commission's public hearing were shocking. Our community now expects religious organisations to prioritise children's safety. They are trusted and respected institutions, and they have a key role, along with all of us, in protecting children.

Recognising the ACT's leading role in reportable conduct as one of only three jurisdictions to have implemented the scheme, we also strongly support work that is occurring across jurisdictions to develop a nationally consistent approach to the question of how to treat religious confession. That is why we are actively engaged at a national level in addressing the issue of confessional privilege. That is why the provisions relating to the confessional will not commence at this stage. I will be heading from the chamber to the airport later today to fly to Perth for the next meeting of the Council of Attorneys-General. I look forward to speaking with other attorneys-general tomorrow about this and other national legal issues.

Reportable conduct is an important part of the government's response to the royal commission, but it is not the only part relevant to religious institutions. We will keep working with this community to ensure that our children are safe and that the lessons of the royal commission are implemented.

In summary, this bill, which expands the scope of the reportable conduct scheme to include religious institutions, builds on the sound legislative foundation that protects the rights of the children and reflects this government's, and this community's, commitment to keeping children safe. Now is the right time. I commend the bill to the Assembly

MR STEEL: (Murrumbidgee) (12.00): I welcome the opportunity to speak on the Ombudsman Amendment Bill 2018, which expands the reportable conduct scheme to include religious organisations, in line with recommendations from the royal commission into child abuse in institutions. As has previously been stated, the work of the royal commission has been incredibly important and well respected, and the community has our assurance that the ACT government is committed to learning from

the experiences of those survivors who came forward as well as acting upon the commission's final recommendations.

There is no higher priority for government than ensuring children's safety. It is at the heart of what we do. We recognise the rights of children and young people to grow in safe and stable environments and the responsibility of our community to contribute to their safety, protection and wellbeing. The reportable conduct scheme is an important part of the broader ACT safety net that protects children. It helps organisations to respond correctly and appropriately to allegations of employee misconduct involving children, through external, independent oversight of their practices and procedures.

The importance of keeping children and young people safe and protecting them from harm cannot be overstated. We know that when children experience sexual and other abuse, the exposure to toxic stress quite literally poisons the brain, with disruption of the development of brain architecture that lasts well into adulthood. It affects psychological and social functioning, self-esteem, mental health, personality, sleep, health risk behaviours including substance abuse, self-harm, and life expectancy.

We must focus on early intervention and prevention to support better outcomes for children, young people and the wider community. That is why reporting conduct that causes this harm is so important. We expect it of teachers. We expect it of health professionals. And today, with this bill, we expect it of religious bodies, including ministers of religion and religious leaders.

I note that the Catholic Church has raised some concerns with these changes, specifically the changes regarding the confessional. The ACT government has been reasonable on this matter, allowing for a nine-month lead-in time to March 2019. The argument of the Catholic Church, that it will be breaking the seal of sacrament surrounding the confessional booths if we go ahead with these changes, shows how out of touch the Catholic Church is with the community, with victims, and with their responsibility to ensure that they are a child-safe organisation, which, I remind Archbishop Prowse, starts at the very top of organisations. We cannot allow children to suffer from institutionalised sexual abuse, and we will not allow children to suffer because of the silence of the church or any religious body.

That is why our government will provide safeguards to protect every child through greater reporting. Today we take the side of children over the church. It is our obligation to do so, because the rights of the child are paramount. Our government's priority is protecting children, protecting vulnerable people. Our priority is not about upsetting the sensitivities of religious bodies that we know, through the royal commission, have a history of abuse of children in communities across Australia, and in my community at Marist College.

Archbishop Christopher Prowse wrote in the *Canberra Times* today:

... what sexual abuser would confess to a priest if they thought they would be reported?

I ask: what supposed pillar of moral authority thinks that they should be exempt from reporting on the most serious crimes against children?

Keeping children and young people safe and protecting them from harm is everyone's responsibility, including the church, including every religious body. Child protection is a core responsibility of every state and territory government. We will continue to work together with the community to support children and young people, building on significant previous work that the government has undertaken in child protection.

Our priorities are reflected in the ACT children and young people's commitment for 2015-25. The commitment is an important high-level strategic policy that sets the vision for a whole-of-community approach to promoting the rights of children and young people in the ACT. The ACT also has a strong system of oversight for children in out of home care, supported by a set of national standards, the Public Advocate, the ACT Children and Young People Commissioner, the official visitors scheme, the ACT Ombudsman, the Human Services Regulator and the Human Services Registrar.

In summary, the reportable conduct scheme aims to prevent, disrupt and respond to child abuse in organisations. This bill introduces changes that expand the scope of the scheme to include religious institutions acting on the recommendations of the royal commission and honouring the courage, the experiences and the trauma of the victims. I want to say to victims of institutional child sexual abuse that in this bill and those that follow enacting the recommendations of the royal commission, we have heard you. I commend this bill to the Assembly.

MR WALL (Brindabella) (12.05): It is clear that the bill before us is here because of the unconscionable actions of some within religious movements in our country. The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse shone a light on the sickening actions and abuses of trust that have occurred, resulting in immense and immeasurable damage to many victims and their families.

As a student of Marist College Canberra for nine years of my education, I know that there was always an undertone of perhaps rumour and innuendo about some of the things that might happen if you were left alone with one of the brothers. However, it was, largely, absolutely unimaginable that these schoolyard urban legends or humour were built on fact. This continues to sicken me to my core.

It is fair to say that the social licence and the trust that religious orders have operated under have been violated and that there needs to be greater transparency in the conduct and operation of religious orders in Australia moving forward. The broadening of a reportable conduct scheme to some religious entities, in my opinion, is overdue. To that end I am supportive of this scheme. I do, however, feel I need to put some personal reservations and serious concerns that I hold on the record around the inclusion of religious confession as part of the scheme and the lack of genuine consultation that has occurred with the relevant religious orders as part of the preparation and introduction of this bill.

A wide range of citizens practise private confession, particularly amongst Christians. This includes western Catholics, eastern Catholics, Orthodox Christians, Mormons, Anglicans, Lutherans and Methodists. Common to all of these faiths is that the priest, minister or clergyman hearing the confession is forbidden to repeat what has been heard to anyone. Catholics and Orthodox Christians call this the seal of confession.

In my personal view, the breaking of this seal fundamentally changes sacramental practice and significantly impinges on an individual's freedom of association, freedom of expression and freedom of religion rights, which are conveyed both by the Constitution and by human rights legislation. The ease with which changes are made in terms of infringement of freedom raises the serious question of why we bother enshrining rights in legislation in the first place when they are repeatedly impinged on when it seems practically and politically expedient to do so.

It was made clear to the opposition during our briefing on this legislation that the government had not fully resolved how religious confession would be handled in the long term and that significant work was being undertaken at a COAG level amongst attorneys-general. This is in contrast to the government's response to the scrutiny committee which was circulated in previous days, which highlighted that the government's clear intent is to include and capture religious confession.

The briefing also highlighted disingenuous consultation, at best, with affected religious groups within the ACT. When the Catholic archbishop was approached, the recommendations of the royal commission were the basis of the discussion, in broad terms, with no specific mention of the inclusion of religious confession, which the government's legislation is seeking to do. This is backed up by the archbishop's editorial in today's *Canberra Times*.

It is my personal preference to see religious confession remain, as a minimum, as a privileged encounter and that the transitional exemption relating to religious confession remain in place until the full impact of this change can be understood, both within our religious communities and amongst our senior lawmakers. To this end my view differs from that of most of my colleagues. I am grateful to them for the latitude that has been extended to allow for my view to be expressed. This is a long-held freedom that the Liberal Party has had, where a member may feel strongly enough to voice their opinion contrary to party policy. For that, I am thankful.

MRS DUNNE (Ginninderra) (12.10): I want to speak in support of the reportable conduct scheme and its extension to religious organisations. This is important work. Child protection is a priority for governments and the communities we serve. There is no doubt that religious institutions need to reform their practices and their culture so that there is continuing focus on the safety of children, and churches as key institutions need to be part of that.

The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse has revealed horrendous cases of sexual abuse of children and we must take action to ensure that this does not happen again. As a Catholic, I have watched in horror the unfolding story of abuse and predation by people in positions of authority and power in the Catholic Church and elsewhere. Like my fellow members of the faith community, I have been appalled by the ham-fisted handling of these serious issues by the hierarchy. Whether through ignorance or a misguided attempt to limit damage, some church leaders have been spectacularly adept at making things worse. It now falls to the current generation of church leaders to rebuild the people, the trust, and overcome the reputational damage that has been caused.

I know that churches have been doing a lot of work to safeguard children, and the government needs to be talking to them about that work. I also know that the Catholic Archdiocese here in Canberra was perplexed that it was not included in the original reportable conduct scheme and has been working for some time for this day to come about.

But that having been said, we need to take a bit of a breath, from my point of view, and I, like Mr Wall, would like to acknowledge the latitude that has been granted to me by my party room to express a personal view in relation to the seal of the confessional. I do not believe that the government has been up-front enough in consulting the Catholic Church, the Catholic archbishop and other groups in the community for whom the seal of the confessional is of particular importance.

I understand that the government is keen to implement the recommendations of the royal commission with regard to confession but I do not believe this is the best way to do that. The royal commission recommended that territories have a consistent reportable conduct scheme based on the New South Wales approach. That is in recommendation 7.9. The New South Wales approach, recommended by the commission, does not currently include religious confession. New South Wales Premier Gladys Berejiklian said in April that the seal of the confessional should be assessed by the Council of Australian Governments. Ms Berejiklian said:

Our response to that recommendation is to take it through the COAG process, we believe that is the best way to deal with it ... They're complex issues that need to be balanced with what people believe to be religious freedoms.

I believe the government should have taken the same approach as New South Wales and taken this matter up through COAG before dealing with the issue of religious confession, as it has done in this bill.

It is important that we respect the values of communities. The Catholic Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn was instrumental in ensuring that the ACT government included religious institutions in its reportable conduct scheme. In the Catholic Church confession is sacred, sacramental and sacrosanct. And we need to stop and think twice before we pass legislation that requires Catholic priests to break the seal of the confessional. This is for two important reasons. Within the Catholic community, approximately 25 per cent of the Australian population, there is a clear understanding that a priest will never reveal what has been spoken about in the sacrament of confession. This would be to break the seal of the confession and he would incur automatic excommunication.

This is why so many priests have spoken out about this issue and why for instance Father Frank Brennan SJ has said that he would break the law rather than the seal of the confessional. It is important to understand that this is the clear understanding of both the one who comes to the sacrament of confession and the priest who hears the confession. In other words legislation would contravene the legitimate rights of the Catholic community.

The proposed legislation is also impractical and thus would have no effect. Because a priest is bound by a sacred oath never to reveal what has been spoken about in the sacrament of confession, he would never be able to defend himself should he be accused of not complying with the law. It would be his silence against the word of another. There would be no witnesses.

To this day many confessions that are heard in Catholic communities are anonymous—that is, the priest hears the confession without seeing the one confessing and does not know the identity of the person. It would be impossible for a priest to report any matter and thus comply with the law.

For these two reasons, a law which requires priests to break the seal of the confession would be unworkable and ineffective. And worse, the practical effect of that would be to reduce the trust of the faithful in the sacrament of confession. Priests, like other professionals, are bound to report child abuse when the matter is raised outside the confessional and this is the normal course of events, given the heightened awareness of child abuse in communities through educational initiatives.

For this reason, my belief is that the government should be engaging with the faith communities about how to best ensure reportable conduct in all avenues rather than concentrating on an aspect which will be, at best, almost impossible to implement and, worse, will undermine faith in the religious communities who hold so much store in a sacramental element of their faith which has a millennia of history behind it and hundreds of years of common law practice behind it.

I just want to reinforce my appreciation to my colleagues for allowing the latitude to speak on this personal issue in relation to this bill and to reinforce that I am wholly in support of the reportable conduct scheme, as shown by my vote in the past. And I am wholly in support of its extension to religious organisations.

MR BARR (Kurrajong—Chief Minister, Treasurer, Minister for Economic Development and Minister for Tourism and Major Events) (12.17), in reply: I would like to thank members for their contributions and indeed for their support of this bill. I take the opportunity today to commend the religious organisations and other key stakeholders for contributing to the development of this bill.

Members would be aware that the ACT reportable conduct scheme started on 1 July 2017 after receiving unanimous support in this place. The scheme allows for scrutiny of the way employers respond to misconduct involving children and also ensures the ACT Ombudsman is aware of every allegation of certain types of employee misconduct involving children.

The government is committed to continuously improving and strengthening this scheme, which is why we committed to expanding the scope of the scheme to cover religious institutions. We recognised this need prior to the Royal Commission into the Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse handing down its final report.

I would remind members, of course, that the ACT was the first jurisdiction in Australia to enact a human rights act which provides an explicit statutory basis for respecting, protecting and promoting civil and political rights. The rights of children, including protecting and safeguarding children, are fundamental to the territory's human rights approach.

Again the ACT was the first jurisdiction to push at the COAG level for the national harmonisation of reportable conduct schemes. We did that some 18 months prior to the royal commission making its recommendations. We committed to responding to the royal commission six months after the final report in December 2017. And we are on track to provide a comprehensive response which I will release shortly.

Recommendation 7.9 of the final report recommended state and territory governments establish nationally consistent legislative schemes based on the approach adopted in New South Wales. These schemes would oblige heads of institutions to notify an oversight body of any reportable allegation, conduct or conviction involving any of the institutions' employees. As one of the three schemes in place across Australia, the ACT is on track with that recommendation.

Recommendation 7.10 goes to the functions, powers and responsibilities provided for by reportable conduct schemes, and the ACT is also on track with that recommendation.

I want to stress that the government's work on the royal commission's recommendations does not begin or end with this bill. Some recommendations have already been implemented, whilst the implementation of many others is underway. Some recommendations are consistent with the ACT government's existing ACT children and young people's commitment 2015-25, while some others clearly require further planning, further consultation and tailoring to be effective in the ACT context.

A few recommendations will take the ACT and other jurisdictions into areas that will require significant work and coordination to implement, in particular those that recommend governments amend laws concerning mandatory reporting to include people in the religious ministry and that those laws do not exempt persons in the religious ministry from being required to report information disclosed in the course of religious confession. Here the government notes the differences between reportable conduct and mandatory reporting by mandated reporters. This is also the case for people who are presently covered by the scheme.

Reportable conduct covers a broad range of conduct compared to abuse and neglect or the risk of abuse and neglect which must be reported to child and youth protection services. This means employers may become aware of an allegation or conviction that is reportable to the Ombudsman but is not conduct that would be reported to child and youth protection services.

The royal commission in its criminal justice report also made recommendations around introducing legislation to create a criminal offence of a failure to report,

targeted at child sexual abuse in an institutional context. It further recommended that the criminal offence of failure to report should apply in relation to knowledge gained or suspicions formed on the basis of information disclosed in or in connection with a religious confession.

It is important that we have a discussion with Canberrans to develop the most appropriate response and subsequent evaluation of its effectiveness, and the Attorney-General has already begun this in relation to our criminal laws through the your say website and the sexual assault reform program working group. This is even more important when dealing with complex problems and fundamental religious beliefs. The ACT is the first jurisdiction to open up the inclusion of religious confession in the scope of the scheme to rigorous public and professional debate.

There is, of course, much important work to be done before we can make a definitive decision regarding the treatment of religious confession in the reportable conduct scheme. That is why this bill excludes information disclosed in the course of religious confession until 31 March 2019, to give the public and key stakeholders time to inform this crucially important debate. As I have stated before, we need to have these local and national discussions. But the government was not prepared to delay expanding the scheme to religious organisations whilst this one issue is resolved.

As a government, we are strongly committed to protecting vulnerable Canberrans and to make the ACT the safest place to live, to work and to raise a family, and this commitment was demonstrated in this week's budget with the allocation of \$1.1 million over the next two years with a provision for future years to support and resource the ACT Ombudsman to undertake additional investigations and to further support the introduction of religious organisations into the scheme from 1 July 2018.

Furthermore, as part of the commonwealth redress scheme, the ACT government has allocated nearly \$14 million to support eligible survivors of abuse in government institutions through a redress payment, counselling and psychological care, and a direct personal response. This bill takes the next step in keeping our children protected, and I commend it to the Assembly.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Bill agreed to in principle.

Leave granted to dispense with the detail stage.

Bill agreed to.

Medicines, Poisons and Therapeutic Goods Amendment Bill 2018

Debate resumed from 10 May 2018, on motion by **Ms Fitzharris**:

That this bill be agreed to in principle.

MRS DUNNE (Ginninderra) (12.26): The opposition will support this bill. I thank the minister for arranging a briefing for me, which took place earlier this week. I also appreciate the quick response from the minister's office to questions I raised during the briefing.

In short, this bill extends the application of ACT Health's existing drugs and poisons information system, known as DAPIS. It is mandatory already for pharmacists to upload to DAPIS information about dispensed schedule 8 drugs. Schedule 8 drugs—so-called controlled medicines—are those that carry an increased risk of dependency, abuse, misuse or diversion; that is, supply to a third party.

This bill will enable an add-on to DAPIS, known as DORA, or the drugs and poisons information system online remote access. Ultimately, DORA will enable real-time monitoring of the prescribing and dispensing of schedule 8 drugs. Any properly authorised health practitioner will have access to this database.

Thus, a doctor authorised to prescribe schedule 8 drugs will be able to see a patient's record as to their use of schedule 8 drugs before writing a script. This, for example, will counter any practice of doctor-shopping. A pharmacy dispensing a schedule 8 drug will be able to see the patient's record, to monitor, for example, when the script was last filled, and whether a suitable time frame has elapsed between then and the present. The ultimate aim of this system is that it be used nationally.

This bill contemplates information sharing across jurisdictions. Right now, only Tasmania has a drug monitoring system in place, but Victoria and Western Australia are working on it. Hopefully, other jurisdictions will follow. Obviously, take-up in New South Wales will complement the ACT system. The objective is one of harm minimisation and prevention of misuse of schedule 8 drugs.

I note this bill implements the recommendations of the coroner, given in 2016, arising from the inquest into the death of Mr Paul Fennessy. Even though we have waited for more than eight years since his death in 2010 to introduce this system, I hope that this will bring comfort and closure to Mr Fennessy's family and that it will help reduce future incidents of prescription drug overdoses.

I hope this bill will also strengthen the effect of the now finally adopted national guidelines for medication-assisted treatment of opioid dependence, which the commonwealth released in 2014. There is some way to go before DORA is fully operational and links with other jurisdictions can be established. However, this bill is a very important step for the ACT and I applaud its introduction.

MS LE COUTEUR (Murrumbidgee) (12.29): Prescription pharmaceutical drugs are readily available in our community. They play an important role in preventing, treating and curing disease. At the same time we cannot ignore the harms that these substances can cause if they are misused, and particularly if they lead to dependence. The effects of this kind of non-medical use of pharmaceuticals are wide-ranging and include physical, mental and social harms. Often these harms can be equivalent to, or in fact worse than, those caused by the use of illicit substances.

Unfortunately, to date, our prescribing and dispensing systems have not been sophisticated enough to prevent this type of misuse. We have heard from some of the families in our community whose lives have been affected as a result. This is why this bill is so important. The Greens are pleased to support it today.

The bill before us provides a way forward to help improve the situation. The bill will establish a regulatory framework to allow authorised people to remotely access, use and disclose information on the ACT's monitored medicines database as a public health and clinical support tool. The establishment of a legislated prescription monitoring database is an important starting point, but it is not the whole solution. It is a practical step that the ACT can and should take, but we must acknowledge that to properly respond to this problem we require a national solution.

This is an issue that has been looked at through COAG processes for many years and the recommendations for a national scheme are clear. The national pharmaceutical drug misuse framework for action outlines the need for a multipronged approach to this issue.

Alongside the need for community and medical professional education, the framework calls for the implementation of a nationally based and jurisdictionally consistent electronic recording and reporting of controlled drugs system. This system would enable prescribers, dispensers and regulators to have real-time, online access to information concerning patients' access to prescription opioids and other schedule 8 medicines.

A national scheme is so important because this issue crosses borders, and requires a consistent and comprehensive approach. I understand that work on a national scheme is continuing, but these processes can be frustratingly slow and complex. That is why it is pleasing the ACT is not standing still in the meantime. While a local database may not provide a complete solution, it is an important start. The model proposed in this bill will enable the ACT to enter into arrangements with other jurisdictions to facilitate the sharing of database information and it will support cross-jurisdictional public health initiatives.

Establishing an ACT database is also in line with recommendations we have seen here in the territory. I acknowledge that Coroner Hunter recommended the implementation of a system for real-time monitoring of prescription medications, known as DORA, so that prescribers can prevent patients from inappropriately accessing harmful and substantial quantities of medicines.

This was a recommendation from the inquest into the death of Paul Fennessy. The Greens acknowledge the work that Paul's mother, Ann Finlay, has done as a tireless advocate for reform in this area. Cases like Paul Fennessy's are a tragic reminder of how much work we still have to do.

The Greens are acutely aware of the interaction between mental health issues and drug and alcohol misuse, including the non-medical use of prescription drugs. We know that people who use pharmaceuticals for non-medical purposes are more likely to

experience mental illness, chronic pain and high levels of psychosocial distress. Rates of pharmaceutical misuse are also higher in disadvantaged areas. This is another important aspect of this issue, and recognition that this important measure will help protect some of the more vulnerable members of our community.

While the ACT is being proactive on this issue, we are not the first jurisdiction. Tasmania is currently the only Australian jurisdiction to have implemented a real-time prescription monitoring framework, and the early results are encouraging. Since its implementation opioid-related deaths in Tasmania have reportedly decreased from 32 in 2007 to less than 20 in 2013-14. While of course this is only one measure of the benefits of a scheme like this, it does show that there can be significant positive impacts.

I also briefly note that the bill does include important protections for individual privacy, including an offence provision where the information is inappropriately shared. This is an important measure that balances the right to privacy with the obvious health and social benefits that can come from a prescription monitoring scheme.

The Greens wish to thank Minister Fitzharris for her work in developing this bill. We think it will be an important addition to the tools that we currently have to respond to the misuse of prescription drugs. The Greens also, of course, look forward to seeing our system becoming more sophisticated once a national scheme has been developed and implemented. We are pleased to support this bill. We hope that it helps to reduce harm from drug use in our community.

MS FITZHARRIS (Yerrabi—Minister for Health and Wellbeing, Minister for Transport and City Services and Minister for Higher Education, Training and Research) (12.34), in reply: As Minister for Health and Wellbeing, I am pleased that the Assembly is today debating this important bill, which amends the Medicines, Poisons and Therapeutic Goods Act 2008 and the Medicines, Poisons and Therapeutic Goods Regulation 2008 to allow a monitored medicines database to be established in the ACT.

Medicines are essential to help people manage the symptoms of their illness and, in many cases, enable them to participate in everyday life. However, their misuse and abuse in Australia has significant adverse health, social and economic consequences for patients and their families as well as the wider community.

The misuse of pharmaceuticals has risen dramatically in recent years, with recent data indicating nearly five per cent of people have misused a medicine in the last 12 months. Some higher risk medicines, known as controlled medicines, can cause serious harm if they are misused or abused. All states and territories place additional controls on the access and supply of controlled medicines to minimise their potential harm.

These medicines include substances such as morphine and oxycodone, which are important to control severe pain, and dexamphetamine. This legislation is designed to

assist our health professional workforce by further reducing the impacts of controlled medicine abuse and misuse, and protecting our community.

This bill will enable doctors and pharmacists to access and use information in ACT Health's existing drugs and poisons information system, otherwise known as DAPIS, to inform and support better patient care. DAPIS has been in use in the ACT since 2014 and stores information about controlled medicines, prescribing approvals and dispensing records. Pharmacists are mandated to report the supply to DAPIS at least weekly.

The coronial inquiry into the death of Mr Paul Fennessy recommended that a real-time monitoring system be implemented in the ACT. This bill establishes the legislative framework for such a system to be implemented. Early next year the first steps towards a real-time system will be available to clinicians to assist in their decision-making for patient care.

Under these amendments, health professionals will be able to access limited information about their patient in DAPIS. This DAPIS online remote access portal, known as DORA, will enable prescribers and dispensers to view the most up-to-date information about monitored medicines that have been supplied to their patients from any pharmacy within the ACT.

The ACT aims to mirror the success of Tasmania, having had DORA in place since 2011. The system there is voluntary but highly regarded by health professionals. In Tasmania the use of DORA has been linked to a reduction in opioid-related deaths, from 33 in 2007 to 15 in 2013.

Having access to this information will help health professionals to identify potential abuse and misuse of medicines that can place patients or the broader community at risk of harm, with the aim of reducing deaths to zero. This will enable health professionals to take early action to refer at-risk patients for appropriate treatment. It will also reduce the risk of harm to the broader community by preventing diversion of medicines following doctor-shopping activities.

At this stage the use of DORA by health practitioners will be voluntary. We have planned an extensive engagement and education campaign, based on advice from an existing stakeholder engagement group, to encourage uptake of the system by health professionals in general practice and pharmacies.

It is already mandatory for prescribers to seek approval to prescribe controlled medicines in certain circumstances and for pharmacies to report dispensing records to ACT Health each week. ACT Health will also be adding a new declaration to its approval application form, requiring prescribers to declare whether they have checked DORA prior to seeking approval to prescribe a controlled medicine for their patient.

I am aware that the Canberra community take their privacy and access to their health records seriously. In developing this bill, the privacy of patients being prescribed or supplied these monitored medicines has been very carefully considered. To help ensure patient privacy and integrity of the DORA system, additional protections have

been put in place to guard against unlawful or inappropriate access or use of information from the database.

These protections limit the use of DORA only to health practitioners that are involved in prescribing and supply of monitored medicines such as doctors, pharmacists and some nurse practitioners. Health professionals will be notified of their obligations and ACT Health staff will closely monitor the access and use of the database and take action against any person found to be using patient information unlawfully.

Any misuse of DORA may result in the ACT government taking action to initiate prosecution, limit a person's access to DORA or limit a health professional's authority to practise or deal with medicines.

Tasmania is currently the only jurisdiction to have an operational prescription monitoring scheme that health professionals may access, and the ACT plans to follow suit by March next year. ACT pharmacists are currently required to report controlled medicine supply information at least every seven days to ACT Health. This reporting frequency provides valuable and timely information for public health monitoring purposes.

However, I would like to improve the information supply further. To achieve this, a regulatory amendment will be prepared to mandate daily reporting by pharmacists. ACT Health will work closely with pharmacy stakeholders to progress this. Their involvement will be important to ensuring a practical and reasonable regulatory amendment is reached, to further improve the frequency and reliability of reporting. I thank in particular the Pharmacy Guild for working with the government on this.

The legislation will also allow the Minister for Health and Wellbeing to declare that information about the supply of other prescription medicines be reported to ACT Health. This option would be used where there is evidence that a medicine is causing harm to the community and where the collection of data could assist in preventing that harm. I am also committed to engage with stakeholders to consult on whether mandatory use of DORA by doctors and pharmacists could be implemented once a nationally compatible scheme is available.

This bill is a significant step forward in protecting the ACT community and supporting our health professionals to access DORA. But this is not the final step. I will continue to advocate for the commonwealth to lead the implementation of a national prescription monitoring scheme as the most effective way to minimise the economic, individual and community consequences of the abuse, misuse and diversion of medicines. The ACT is working towards adopting the national scheme when it is ready to be rolled out, and we look forward to significant progress on this throughout the year.

The bill is an important initiative to help protect our community from medicine misuse, abuse and diversion in line with best practice recommendations of state and territory coroners and the national drug strategy. Tasmania has already seen a reduction in deaths and I hope we can also see a positive change here in the ACT.

The bill will help protect the ACT community from public health harms by supporting its health professional workforce, ensuring patient privacy rights remain protected and, most importantly, protecting our community.

I would like to thank all members for supporting it. I also thank ACT Health staff. I particularly acknowledge the work and the patience of the coronial reform group represented in the chamber here today. 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 12.41 to 2.30 pm.

Questions without notice

Budget—health funding

MR COE: I have a question for the Minister for Health and Wellbeing. Minister, the combined figures for the Health Directorate and the ACT Local Hospital Network in the appropriation bill for 2018-19 compared to the appropriation act for 2017-18 show that the recurrent expenditure appropriations decrease by \$4.8 million. Minister, how will a decreased appropriation fund the expense initiatives for 2018-19?

MS FITZHARRIS: Overall, the investment in ACT Health has gone up this year. I do not have the papers in front of me. I will take the specific question on notice.

MR COE: Minister, in light of this decreased appropriation, where will additional funding be coming from?

MS FITZHARRIS: The ACT budget.

MRS DUNNE: Minister, how will a decreased appropriation provide growing health services for our growing city?

MS FITZHARRIS: The ACT health budget is growing.

Greyhound racing—transition package

MS LE COUTEUR: My question is to the minister for gambling and racing and relates to the greyhound transition scheme. Minister, what is the eligibility for people to be retrained or otherwise assisted under the scheme? How many have been assisted and how much money has been spent on this?

MR RAMSAY: I thank Ms Le Couteur for the question. In relation to the second and third parts of the question, I will take those parts on notice. In terms of the eligibility for the scheme, certainly one of the key things is the ACT government has been very clear from day one that the rehoming of greyhounds is an absolute priority as part of the overall work that we have been doing in this area and, as part of the suite of services available to transition support, Woden Community Service has been providing that level of support.

It is important that the transition support is focused on people who have strong connections to the ACT. An ex-racing greyhound must have been owned by an ACT resident or must have been surrendered on or after 23 June. That was the date that the government confirmed its intention to end the industry.

The amount of support that is available for each ex-racing greyhound is assessed according to need but is capped at \$2,000 per hound unless there are exceptional circumstances. That ensures that the support that is funded by ACT taxpayers is focused here in the ACT.

We do note that there are some exceptional circumstances and we are encouraging people to continue to make contact with local community services who have the ability to assist people in the application process. One example of the exceptional circumstances would be where there is evidence of a significant proportion—and that may be recent racing of around 60 per cent or more—of the activity carried out at the Canberra Greyhound Racing Club.

There is also the capacity to apply for financial assistance that goes beyond the \$2,000 cap, again if there are exceptional circumstances, and that may relate to behavioural issues, dental problems or other ones of the dog itself.

MS LE COUTEUR: Minister, how many dogs have been rehomed under the scheme and how much money has been spent? I am asking that on the assumption that you have given me the full list of exceptional circumstances. If there are any more you would like to elaborate on, I would love to hear them.

MR RAMSAY: In relation to the detail of those two questions, I will take those on notice and provide those.

MS CHEYNE: Minister, noting transition is available for greyhounds, what transitional support is available for people seeking to exit the greyhound industry?

MR RAMSAY: I thank Ms Cheyne for the supplementary question. Certainly, one of the things that we have done right from day one is encourage people who are affected by the end of the racing industry here in Canberra to make contact and to receive the transition support package that is available.

Again I encourage people to do that through Woden Community Service. It provides a range of support: training and reskilling opportunities, short-term financial support, business skills support, specialist advice, guiding and planning about future career

options, financial counselling and planning services, no-interest loans to meet individual needs, and microcredit loans. There is also counselling to provide emotional support for anyone involved and exiting the industry.

Noting that today is the last sitting day before the end of the period available for the applications, I encourage people to disregard what has been said by the members opposite, who have been steering people away from the transition support in disregard of what it is they may have been going through in life. I encourage people to make contact with Woden Community Service and to access the support that the government is providing.

Budget—employment

MS ORR: My question is to the Chief Minister. Chief Minister, what does the 2018 budget show about performance and prospects for the ACT economy?

MR BARR: I thank Ms Orr for the question. The budget this week shows that the ACT economy is amongst the strongest in the nation. We have seen growth of 13.6 per cent over the past three years as we see a continued diversification of the territory's economic base. Our strong economic growth has seen more than 10,000 jobs created in the territory economy, and I am pleased to advise the Assembly that there are over 2,000 more businesses operating in Canberra today than three years ago. Our companies are doing more international business, with the ACT service exports rising by 22 per cent since 2015.

The 2018 budget forecasts continued strong growth in jobs and economic activity in the years ahead. It is really pleasing to see that our international education sector expanded by 24 per cent last year and that prospects for further growth are strong, with providers like UNSW Canberra exploring significant expansion.

As we see more international airlines flying to Canberra and our city being recognised internationally as one of *Lonely Planet's* top cities to visit, the outlook for our tourism sector is also very positive. We expect to see more jobs created in a range of knowledge-based industries. It is again very pleasing to see that the city's professional, scientific and technical services sector grew by almost 36 per cent last year, showing that Canberra's local innovation companies are also thriving. The budget shows that our economy is growing, and the future for Canberra is very bright.

MS ORR: Chief Minister, how is the ACT government investing in stronger public sector agencies and job creation through the 2018-19 budget?

MR BARR: This year's budget does deliver a significant expansion of public services for Canberrans, particularly in our hospitals and schools, public services associated with local government responsibilities to improve the look and feel of our suburbs, investments in emergency services and, importantly also, our community services providers.

As a result, the ACT government's own workforce is expected to grow by over 300 full-time equivalent staff in 2018-19. This will include significant recruitment in

health, in education and in the community services directorates, as well as within Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development. We are also providing more resources to help take pressure off staff working in high demand areas of service delivery, including through Access Canberra and the working with vulnerable people scheme.

On this side of the chamber we understand that having a professional, skilled and secure workforce is critical to delivering high quality services in our community, which is why we are growing our investment in staff across the ACT public service.

MS CODY: Chief Minister, how will the 2018 budget back local businesses and private sector job creation?

MR BARR: I thank Ms Cody for the supplementary. The 2018 budget invests very heavily in health, education, transport and housing infrastructure. This is infrastructure that a growing city will need in the years ahead. It means we are also continuing to support strong private sector job growth creation. The budget delivers more funding to progress the planning and approval of stage 2 of the light rail project, as well as the commencement of design on a series of enabling infrastructure works in and around the Woden town centre. We have also set aside almost \$600 million over the forward estimates—

Ms Orr: A point of order, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: Chief Minister, can you resume your seat. Ms Orr.

Ms Orr: Members opposite have been having discussions throughout the whole answer. While not very loud, it has made it very difficult to hear the Chief Minister.

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms Orr. I remind members that I cannot stop you having private conversations, but can you keep it down so other people can hear.

MR BARR: As I was saying, we have set aside almost \$600 million over coming years to build new hospital infrastructure, including the SPIRE centre and an expanded Centenary Hospital for Women and Children. There is a brand-new primary school being built for Molonglo. There are additional places for students at four local schools in Gungahlin as well as the next phase of development of a new school to address Gungahlin's ongoing population growth.

The 2018 land release program sets out a plan to deliver 17,000 new dwelling sites across our city over the next four years, and this represents a clear pipeline of both infill and new suburban estate development. In combination, all of these initiatives generate further opportunities for local businesses and support the creation of more good, long-term, secure jobs as we continue to invest in Canberra's future.

Land—sales

MS LEE: My question is to the Minister for Planning and Land Management. Minister, CRS has applied to the ACT government to purchase block 11 section 8, a

strip of land adjacent to the old Shell refinery site on block 9 and the freight rail line at Fyshwick. Minister, has this block been valued, offered for sale or sold and, if so, at what price?

MR GENTLEMAN: I understand the process is in train at the moment—pardon the pun. Those matters have not been concluded at this stage but I am happy to get more details and come back to the chamber on it.

MS LEE: Minister, was the block offered for sale publicly? If not, why not? If so, when and by what method?

MR GENTLEMAN: My understanding is that the block was not offered publicly for sale. In relation to the directorate's work on the sale of that block, again I will take the details on notice and come back to the chamber.

MR PARTON: Minister, at this stage how many valuations have been undertaken, and when the process is finalised, will you be able to table that information in this place?

MR GENTLEMAN: Yes. I will obtain as much information as I can from the directorate, and I am happy to table it in the chamber.

Women—government support

MS CODY: My question is to the Minister for Women. Minister, the ACT women's plan and its first action plan provide two years worth of actions to deliver real change in our community on gender equality. Can you update the Assembly on some of the first-year achievements and how these actions are contributing to better outcomes for women and girls in the ACT?

MS BERRY: I thank Ms Cody for the question. Soon the government will be releasing a detailed report to let the community know what we have achieved in the first year of the women's plan. As members will know, these actions, which sit under the ACT women's plan, are focused on getting better health and wellbeing outcomes for women and girls in the ACT community. Importantly, these actions are the responsibility of the whole ACT government. The office for women and the Ministerial Advisory Council on Women are working closely with directorates to ensure that they remain focused on delivering their actions.

I am glad to say that in the first year there has already been a great deal of action. We have held two great forums to engage with women, community organisations and business representatives. They provided an opportunity for leaders across government and the community to work together to identify the barriers and opportunities for future progress.

In sport, the government is actively promoting and encouraging more women to get involved through a range of actions. These include the HerCanberra active portal launched in October last year and the development of female-friendly infrastructure

guidelines to support the development of new facilities, and the modification of existing facilities, to be more accessible for female participants.

The women sport and recreation participation and leadership program was introduced this year. It provides \$100,000 each year for four years to provide assistance to eligible parties to support greater participation opportunities for women and girls, and for women to take on leadership roles in the sector.

There is also new investment in this year's budget specifically focused on delivering key actions in the women's plan to see stronger promotion and realisation of gender equality. The additional investment provides \$696,000 and will support and bolster the work of the office for women and the delivery of the women's action plan right across the ACT government.

MS CODY: Minister, how will this additional funding assist with driving gender equality in the ACT?

MS BERRY: I thank Ms Cody for the supplementary. The additional funding will assist the ACT government to continue its strong focus on building an even more inclusive and equitable community that ensures all Canberrans have equal opportunities to participate actively in the things they want. We know our community wants desperately to see greater equality—in fact, more than any other jurisdiction in the country, when you consider the recent vote on marriage equality.

The additional funding will specifically assist with: support for the office for women to undertake more and better community engagement activities to promote gender equality; improving the evidence base relating to gender equality, noting that we are doing a great deal of research, story and data gathering right now as we progress to the full suite of actions under the women's plan while not losing sight of this evidence and ensuring it is widely accessible into the future; training to reduce and eliminate unconscious bias across government; promoting diversity on boards through the diversity register which was launched just last week—and I encourage members in this place to share it with their networks to get more people registered; and delivering a board traineeship program for women.

Importantly, it ensures that the office for women is better resourced and given greater ability to work across government with each and every government directorate to drive and deliver the commitments we have made around this issue. This investment will also assist the broader community, including businesses and community not-for-profit organisations, by providing additional tools to better address gender inequality in our spheres of influence.

MS CHEYNE: Minister, what is the next step for the delivery of the remainder of the actions in the women's action plan?

MS BERRY: I thank Ms Cheyne for her question. As I said we will be releasing in coming weeks more details around our delivery of actions already. You will be able to see what we have underway and what actions are coming up. The additional investment made through the 2018-19 budget will allow the office to get stuck into

this work and have an opportunity to drill down on delivering these actions more closely with all of the responsible directorates.

Included in the plan going forward are a range of actions around procurement, gender perceptions in schools, and how we can make transport and planning decisions more inclusive of women's views, to name just a few. Investigation of contemporary procurement practices is underway, as we look at how we can promote gender equity through procurement. Preliminary analysis has already begun about possible reform and the two-year action plan will see how we can progress this work.

Action is underway to look at gender perceptions in schools and how this may impact on the wellbeing of female students. This work is also underway with the establishment of the gender equity and education advisory committee as well as some preliminary research. This early work will be used to develop new, or adapt existing, policies, practices, training and resources to promote gender equity in schools.

Action to look at how we can improve processes for women's perspectives to be better incorporated into master plans, territory plan reviews and urban design processes is also underway. I look forward to hearing more about this. There are too many actions to list here today. But, as I mentioned, over coming weeks I will be releasing a more concise report outlining what is next for gender equality in the ACT.

ACT Health—workplace culture

MRS DUNNE: My question is to the Minister for Health and Wellbeing. I refer to notes from a staff meeting at the Canberra Hospital that was called to explain the staff restructure in the week following the announcement of the restructure. These notes state that staff raised questions about “significant dysfunction and poor culture” in the Health Directorate and asked whether a restructure would change things for the better. Minister, why is there significant dysfunction and a poor culture in the Health Directorate?

MS FITZHARRIS: I am not familiar with that particular note, but if that is something that has been expressed by a member of staff, I would refer all members to my previous statements around the significant decisions I have recommended and taken regarding the future of ACT Health and my significant and extensive statements talking about ongoing consultation, particularly with staff of ACT Health, as we look towards the separation of ACT Health into two new organisations, in both of which it is one of my key priorities, as it is of the leadership team at ACT Health, to make sure that there is a positive and healthy culture in ACT Health.

MRS DUNNE: Minister, how will a restructure address the reported significant dysfunction and poor culture in the Health Directorate?

MS FITZHARRIS: I again refer Mrs Dunne to my extensive previous statements that there are clearly governance challenges in ACT Health and I am taking very significant actions to improve those. I refer you to my previous answers.

MR WALL: Minister, what responsibility do you take, as the minister responsible for the Health Directorate, for the significant dysfunction and the poor culture that is present?

MS FITZHARRIS: I refer members to my previous statements extensively made about the responsibility I am taking to make sure that ACT Health has a sustainable and successful future and consults and engages with its staff in particular over the coming months, looking forward to two new organisations later this year.

MADAM SPEAKER: A question without notice, Ms Cheyne.

MS CHEYNE: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Ms Lawder: On a point of order, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: Sorry, Ms Lawder; I thought you were standing to ask a question.

Ms Lawder: I was, but I would like to point out that the standing orders allow for people who have difficulty standing. I must say I am quite slow standing at the moment, with my foot in a moon boot. I think it was a little unfair to be penalised for that.

MADAM SPEAKER: I am not penalising you, Ms Lawder. Ms Cheyne has the call. We have limited time and I am trying to be fair, going across the chamber. Mrs Dunne had the last call. I am giving the call to this side.

Ms Lawder: I am not sure that this is fair when we have more people to ask questions.

MADAM SPEAKER: Ms Cheyne, you have the call.

Budget—infrastructure

MS CHEYNE: My question is to the Minister for Transport and City Services. How will the 2018-19 budget deliver more essential city services and local community infrastructure for our growing city?

MS FITZHARRIS: I thank Ms Cheyne very much for the question. Through this year's ACT budget we are delivering even more high quality city services and amenities in our established suburbs and in new or expanded neighbourhoods, including those with recent greenfield and brownfield residential development. For example, the annual mowing program will have increased capacity to manage accelerated grass growth, particularly following wet periods across our city. There will be more weed control, including hand weeding of suburban shrub beds, and chemical control of weeds in kerbs, gutters and around roadway barriers. This will improve the look of our city and will particularly focus on major entry roads to the ACT, including around Canberra airport. This work will also assist in preventing unnecessary damage to existing infrastructure.

In the last 15 years there has been a significant increase in the number of suburban lakes and ponds across Canberra. The budget allows for an increase in lake and pond cleaning to improve the health and amenity of our waterways and encourage more recreation around our lakes and ponds.

The budget also delivers on our election commitment to plant additional trees over the next four years in the urban environment and deliver an adopt-a-park program. The 1,330 additional tree plantings will improve Canberra's overall unique green canopy cover and help to cool our suburbs. The adopt-a-park program will provide small grants for local volunteer groups to achieve cleaner, greener local parks and open spaces.

A comprehensive program will also improve the cleanliness of bus shelters, continue the graffiti management program which assists in reducing illegal graffiti across Canberra and increase responsiveness to tree-related public inquiries.

MS CHEYNE: Minister, how will Canberrans have a say on how and where this local community infrastructure is allocated?

MS FITZHARRIS: We had a discussion yesterday, and I am pleased to also note that the better suburbs program will set the vision and priorities for improved city services over the next four years and beyond in the form of a community-authored better suburbs statement.

The first stage of consultation last year highlighted services and features most important to our community. The next stage of consultations is through "kitchen table conversations", which will be encouraged amongst families, friends, communities and neighbourhood stakeholder groups to gain a deeper understanding of community need. Hosting kits will be available to download or pick up in hard copy later on this month.

A representative citizens forum panel consisting of 40 community members and 25 senior representatives of community stakeholder groups, government and industry will identify and plan for the right mix of city services. Four thousand Canberrans have already received invitations to participate in the panel, and we look forward to those discussions getting underway later this year.

The feedback from both consultation activities, the initial survey last year and the kitchen table discussions, will be shared with the panel members at upcoming citizens forums in late July and August of this year.

I will also be asking the better suburbs citizens forum to directly allocate \$1.9 million set aside in this year's budget for playgrounds and local community improvement projects. This will be the first trial of real-life participatory budgeting. Work will start on those projects after the better suburbs statement is released in September of this year, with further improvements to be based on the community-identified vision and priorities for the next four years and beyond.

MS LAWDER: Minister, what percentage of the total number of street trees would an additional 1,330 trees be?

MS FITZHARRIS: I will take that question on notice.

ACT Health—proposed organisational changes

MS LAWDER: My question is to the Minister for Health. Had ACT Health already made a budget cabinet submission as part of the 2018-19 budget process when the Chief Minister decided to restructure ACT Health?

MS FITZHARRIS: The budget process starts, as members know, early in the year, including the Treasurer calling for submissions from community organisations. Yes, a number of submissions had been made by ACT Health into that process from late last year.

MS LAWDER: Minister, why didn't you wait for the 2019-20 budget to restructure ACT Health?

MS FITZHARRIS: Because I announced the decision in March.

MRS DUNNE: Minister, did any of the budget submissions from ACT Health include suggestions for new agencies within Health or splitting the agencies?

MS FITZHARRIS: Not to my direct knowledge. But a number of submissions did note—and in a number of my discussions, particularly with community stakeholder groups, and health representative organisations spoke to me at length—the overall stewardship of the ACT health system in addition to performance issues, particularly at the hospital. It was very clear to me that there were calls for improved stewardship of the ACT health system. That is exactly what the restructure of ACT Health will deliver.

Hospitals—bullying

MR HANSON: My question is to the Minister for Health and Wellbeing. On 15 April this year the media reported on bullying at Calvary Public Hospital. They cited cases of bullying in the emergency department, in the wards, security, administration and human resources. On 16 April the AMA called for an investigation into bullying. Minister, for how long have you known about bullying in the ACT public health sector and what have you done about it?

MS FITZHARRIS: Mr Hanson is running the line that I know he ran for many years regarding the ACT health workforce, whether that is in ACT Health or within Calvary. Certainly, with regard to the reporting in the *Canberra Times* and the AMA's calls for Calvary to investigate that issue, I also wrote to the CEO of the Little Company of Mary following that—

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

Appropriation Bill 2018-2019

[Cognate bill:

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

Debate resumed from 5 June 2018, on motion by **Mr Barr**:

That this bill be agreed to in principle.

MR COE (Yerrabi—Leader of the Opposition) (3.01): Canberra is a great city. The Canberra Liberals believe that the future of our city is bright. This is a city that we all love. This is a city that I am honoured to serve and it is a community that is strong.

Madam Speaker, I have said it before and I will say it again: nobody gets into politics to be in opposition. It is rubbish. It is like being in the cockpit of the plane, but you cannot touch the controls. We see the disappointment and lost opportunities of a government that has lost its way.

But from opposition there are limits to what we can do. We can raise issues, ask questions, expose scandals and present ideas. But we cannot enact them from this side of the chamber. At every stage we have fought for a better deal for taxpayers. We have fought for clarity in the planning system. We have fought for integrity in land deals, for empowerment in education, for lower taxes, for employment growth, for a focus on actual healthcare delivery, for genuine reconciliation, for suburban transport links and for community services providers.

From opposition, we have it tough but we have still got runs on the board. Nicole Lawder has continued the work of the late Steve Doszpot on dangerous dogs, while working collaboratively with Jeremy Hanson on the development of revenge porn legislation.

Andrew Wall has consistently advocated for small businesses and, in particular, for a better deal for procurement practices in government. Giulia Jones continues to advocate for the front line of our emergency services—the police, ambos, firefighters, SES and other personnel that put so much on the line for others. We should be returning that trust.

Twelve months ago, when the government was happy to see SHOUT go under, it was Elizabeth Lee who stood up and called this government to account. SHOUT now goes from strength to strength and Elizabeth has much to be proud of.

Elizabeth Kikkert has been instrumental in calling out this government's mismanagement of Bimberi, and she is the champion of so many local issues. James Milligan has been working closely with members of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community to address the significant hurdles they face and to ensure better outcomes for future generations.

The mismanagement of the health system has been exposed by Vicki Dune over the past year. We have seen Vicki consistently advocate for better and more effective

health services, rather than the government's current approach, which has been to throw money at the problem and hope it goes away.

The newest member of the Canberra Liberals team, Candice Burch, has shown herself to be a vocal and effective advocate for public transport. She is fighting for a government that delivers what taxpayers are actually paying for.

Mark Parton has tirelessly gone into bat for people who simply enjoy greyhound racing. The fact that Mark has had to fight so hard for them demonstrates just how far this Labor Party has drifted from its base. In the same week that the government banned greyhound racing, it encouraged young people to take illicit party pills. Jeremy Hanson has been resolute in his advocacy for the safety and wellbeing of young Canberrans.

Madam Speaker, we will keep standing up for Canberrans—Canberrans that are paying more and getting less. This government is bringing in record revenue. For the first time, this year's budget shows that revenue will reach \$7 billion. For all the talk of a surplus, the borrowings in the territory's operating statement will be \$224 million next year and a staggering \$680 million the following year.

That is why our net debt grows to \$2.9 billion in 2021. In fact, over the next four years, taxpayers will fork out \$1 billion in interest. If we were really in surplus, debt and interest payments would not be growing. In this budget, stamp duty brings in more per year than it did when the abolition was announced. In reality, house prices are increasing faster than stamp duty is decreasing.

For example, a house in Ashkanasy Crescent in Evatt was sold in 2012 with a stamp duty bill of \$15,342. That same house sold a few months ago with a stamp duty bill of \$16,385. So for that same house the actual stamp duty has increased. This story is replicated thousands of times across Canberra. In addition to the stamp duty, the rates for that house in Evatt have increased by \$1,000 per year. This government is gouging them when they buy and then penalising them for living in Canberra.

In 2012 Andrew Barr said that rates would not triple and stamp duty would be abolished. He was wrong on both counts. The Labor Party have betrayed Canberrans. They have let down our city. This Labor-Greens government cannot be trusted.

The personal cost of Labor's rates hike is just too high. For an average house in Palmerston, rates bills are now \$2,300; in Wanniasa, the bill is \$2,400; in Rivett, \$2,500; in Florey, \$2,400. This is extraordinary. When those opposite say, "It is not that much money," it demonstrates just how out of touch they are.

The fear that so many households get when they receive a \$600 quarterly bill should not be underestimated. For thousands of households in Canberra, to receive a \$600 bill is just too much. We need to stop these rates increases. Rates in Canberra must be capped. Be it residential or commercial, the rates increases are having a devastating impact.

Of course, this government is spending more than ever before. Despite the record revenue, the government cannot manage its expenses. They cannot stick to a budget and, above all, they do not respect the people that are actually paying the bills. Rather than support nurses, doctors, teachers and other public servants, this government makes it harder for them to do their jobs. And when the heat on ministers becomes too great, they hide behind public servants. These ministers are experts at sending out public servants for the bad news whilst stealing the limelight for the good news. They disrespect our public service.

A couple of years ago I spoke of Canberra becoming a two-paced society. This risk is real and must be addressed. We must not be a city that only caters for the wealthy. We must not be a city that prices families out of the market. Perhaps this government's most stark failure is in the area of Aboriginal policy. By almost every indicator, we are further from reconciliation today than we were 10 years ago. Despite making up less than two per cent of the ACT's population, Indigenous Canberrans make up over 20 per cent of the ACT prison population.

Fewer than three per cent of children in Canberra are Indigenous but they make up about a quarter of kids in the child protection system. Canberra's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students face a two-year NAPLAN gap behind their non-Indigenous peers. These shortcomings, and many others, are appalling.

This government is failing on Indigenous policy and so many other social policy areas. It is because this Labor Party has changed. The Labor Party used to represent the working poor. They do not anymore. This is a party that is crushing hopes. They are only interested in the elite. In contrast, I want to live in a city where those who grew up here can afford to stay here.

In 2011 a 425-square metre block of land in Casey would sell for \$210,000. After just six years of Andrew Barr, a 425-square metre block in Throsby was \$400,000, double the price. This gouging strategy serves two purposes for this greedy Labor government. Firstly, they get more revenue up-front and, secondly, they drive up the unimproved land values so that they can collect more in rates, year on year.

This sinister move prices people out of the Canberra market. People in Canberra are finding it tougher to live with this government's policy. Take a real example: Isabelle in Palmerston, who said:

To afford to buy my townhouse—I worked 3 jobs to save the deposit and study and I managed to get enough together. Now I struggle to afford to even eat properly and live in my own little place ... As the years have gone on, the costs have gone up and my salary is not high.

When they have morning tea at work I do not participate because I cannot afford to. I make up an excuse saying that I have several allergies ... Even with a second cleaning job, it is impossible to stay ahead.

I simply cannot pay my rates bill this time. And if I can't pay, I am charged interest.

I am tired and exhausted and others are tired, and I am not the only one in this situation.

This government is brutal. This policy of theirs is having a real impact. I will give another example, Shirley. Her words are:

The excessive increase to strata rates has impacted severely on my quality of life. I am existing on the war widow's pension at the advanced age of 91, and coming to Canberra in the 1930s I did not expect that at the end of my life, living in this city would be so difficult. Because of the increases I am forced to cut back on the other expenses such as heating, cooling and food.

This government has let down Shirley, Isabelle and thousands of others. This government is heartless, arrogant, irresponsible and quite possibly corrupt. At the same time that they sting war widows, single mothers and others, they give the CFMEU and the Tradies the use of a building at \$1 per year. That is after giving them more than top dollar to buy their building for \$3.9 million in a secret deal.

They also do not apply lease variation charges to their own developments with the Labor Club, but they do for everybody else. This government's priorities are wrong, they are dishonest and they are hurting the people they are meant to represent. This Labor Party is driving people out of this city.

The government is quick to legislate but slow to enforce. This means that the good guys comply while the bad guys get away with it. This is so clear in building quality. We have thousands of pages of the Territory Plan, a huge building code and a lengthy Planning and Development Act. The rules are there but they are not enforced. This means that the good builders get overwhelmed by complying with the regulations while the cowboys continue to ignore them.

The response of government has been to put in more rules and more regulations, but this has not fixed the problem. Does anybody think that after all these years of Labor and their ridiculous planning rules, planning and building quality is better today than it was 10 or 20 years ago?

Their onerous planning regime has failed. The problem is not those that comply with the rules; it is those who do not. Rather than throw more money at regulations, how about you properly enforce the ones you have got? If the regulations are not working, repeal them. We should only have rules and regulations on the books if they can be enforced and are enforced. If not, they should not be there.

I want to be part of a government that opens doors, a government that gives opportunity. Canberrans deserve better from their government. The Canberra Liberals will empower citizens. We will end Labor's sweetheart deals. We will have one set of rules for everyone. We will give certainty.

Canberrans are enterprising people. We always have been—whether it was Indigenous people surviving and thriving for thousands of years; European pioneers who made a go of it in dry summers and fierce winters; people who relocated here to

forge a new federal city; migrants who came here with skills, who came here with experience and culture; or kids that grew up here and simply know it as home. This is a city of hard work and well-earned recreation.

Canberra is the national capital. But we must always remember that is our local businesses, particularly small businesses, that serve the everyday needs of Canberrans and provide jobs and opportunities. Be it the contractor who delivers the parcel, the barrister making the coffee, the GP treating the patients, the person behind the bar, the cook preparing the meal, the person cleaning the room or the tradie who is building the home, we need to support the businesses that support us.

We believe that businesses are good for our community and we want to make it easier for people to follow their dream and take on the hard work and personal risk of creating something special for our community.

Madam Speaker, an ACT government should want our local businesses to grow and employ more people. That is why, fundamentally, I do not support payroll tax. I think the idea of placing a barrier on employment is wrong. We should not be making it harder to employ Canberrans. Instead, we should be the most attractive place in the country to create jobs.

We should be making Canberra more attractive by encouraging more businesses in the ACT rather than pushing them over the border. To be the best jurisdiction in the country starts with being the best jurisdiction in the region. We must win back the businesses that have moved over the border to New South Wales. We should actively campaign to attract these businesses in Queanbeyan back to the ACT.

This means rather than focusing on gouging home owners and burdening businesses, we need a government that looks at how we can make it a better place for investment. An obvious way to do this is by developing a strategy for the abolition of payroll tax. Yes, it will take time. But the light at the end of that tunnel is very bright. Whilst we may not have economies of scale in Canberra, we do have economies of distance and economies in decision-making. We are a combined council and state government with a single city in a fruitful region.

I want Canberra to be the business capital. I want our city to be the best place in the country to do business, to take risks, to make investments and to employ Canberrans. I want Canberra to be the benchmark of our nation when it comes to doing business. I want the number of private sector jobs in Canberra to grow and grow and grow.

Madam Speaker, the ACT government should be a low tax government. The ACT should be a low tax jurisdiction. Unfortunately, the opposite is true. It is so disappointing when you hear of businesses and families leaving the ACT because they cannot keep up with these taxes, fees, rates and charges. We should be attracting people to Canberra, not repelling them.

If this government is serious about removing dependency on the commonwealth, rather than taxing Canberrans more, let us build the base. Let us encourage business in Canberra. Let us start to abolish payroll tax.

Unlike those opposite, we believe that investment in our city is a good thing. We believe that when people from abroad want to invest in Australia, we should be encouraging them to invest in Canberra. This goes for property as it goes for other industries.

That is why the government's tax on foreign investment is wrong. We voted against it in opposition and we will repeal it in government. In fact, rather than making it hard to supply rental properties in Canberra, we should be doing the opposite. We should be making it easier to supply rental properties in Canberra.

Over the last 10 years the ACT government have received \$1.3 billion—that is \$1,300,000 million—more revenue than they expected in their budgets. Year on year, the ACT government have had record revenue windfalls that have simply been gobbled up by their inability to stick to their own budget.

Imagine if we had this \$1.3 billion invested in a future fund. Imagine if we were building up a fund to assist with economic downturns or major infrastructure needs, rather than squandering the gains as they have done. We need a government that takes only what it needs and makes wise investments for the future.

Madam Speaker, this government leave behind them a trail of people that are worse off from a policy mix that puts itself ahead of the public interest—be it house owners, unit owners, renters, the homeless, Aboriginals, small business people, drivers, nurses, doctors, police, paramedics and so many others.

All these people, all these cohorts, are being let down by this government because this is a government that takes them for granted. Whether it is financial policy, social support, public administration or employment, this government does not back Canberrans. They are more interested in propping up Labor and CFMEU property deal than actually backing the people that pay the bills.

Canberra should be a place where people can start a business with more confidence than anywhere else, where they can buy or rent a house that is actually affordable, where Aboriginal people are not falling behind. Ultimately, we want a government to focus on the core business of government and get out of the way of people wanting to live their own lives.

Canberra must be a place where people can achieve their aspirations rather than have to spend all day jumping through government hoops. Working towards the abolition of payroll tax, capping rates, planning for a future fund and removing the shackles of regulations should be priorities of the national capital.

Madam Speaker, in conclusion, the Canberra I want to see is a city where people can afford to live in the place that they love; a city where people can find jobs that suit them, their skills and their family; a city where local businesses are valued and supported; a city that is safe, where we have safety nets to help people get back on their feet; a city that prioritises service delivery, not regulations; a city that empowers

people to make their own choices; and a local government that does core business properly.

Madam Speaker, I want to make this a reality, and the Canberra Liberals will do just that.

MR RATTENBURY (Kurrajong) (3.24): The Greens welcome this year's budget. From a Greens perspective, this budget takes another step towards making Canberra the most sustainable, fair and progressive place in Australia. Although the Greens are currently few in number, just two MLAs among the 25 members in this place, our goal is to punch above our weight: to work diligently; to consult and fight for progressive issues; and to speak for people, animals and the environment, which is sometimes neglected.

From the ACT Greens perspective, this is a milestone budget. This is the 10th budget since the Greens negotiated a solid and constructive power-sharing arrangement with the Labor Party here in the Assembly. This budget marks a decade of stronger, positive Greens influence in a wide range of the ACT government's functions. Over this time we have helped shape and enhance ACT budgets, policies and initiatives across the policy spectrum.

We are proud of progress towards developing the ACT into the most green and progressive jurisdiction in Australia. When we decided to sign up to this power-sharing arrangement, we committed to making the ACT green and progressive. We have put sustainability and fairness—especially for vulnerable people—first. The ACT Greens have pushed tirelessly for progressive policies, securing better outcomes by protesting against bad policies, putting big issues on the agenda, bringing the community's voices to the Assembly, and introducing legal reforms. Through three successive parliamentary agreements, we feel we have made significant progress.

This year's budget continues to advance Canberra as a fairer and more sustainable city, recognising key parliamentary agreement commitments like sustainable transport, mental health, our local environment and climate change. The Greens' support for the Labor government is contingent on the delivery of these policy achievements.

The last decade has seen big and important long-term policy shifts in the ACT. Slowly but surely, these shifts are shaping Canberra into a sustainable, more compassionate and prosperous city, in line with the Greens principle of the triple bottom line approach to policy: valuing the environmental, the social and the economic dimensions of policies. The Greens are proud of the direction Canberra is going in as a result of this work.

We will reach 100 per cent renewable electricity by 2020, showing Australia and the world how to lead in emissions reduction and renewable energy uptake. We have reached this point because climate change has been front and centre in ACT government policy since the Greens ensured that the fundamental work was done to set a strong legislated emissions reduction target in the 2008 parliamentary agreement with Labor a decade ago.

The first stage of our light rail system, running on 100 per cent renewable electricity, is scheduled to start later this year. The network will eventually service Canberrans right across the city. It is an ambitious transport project, helping shape the city into a sustainable and highly livable place as we grow through Canberra's second century. The protests of the ACT Liberals aside, it is already being widely lauded as a smart and forward-looking project for our growing city. Canberra is now making the lists of the world's most livable cities. And incidentally, almost all of the top 10 cities have light rail systems. Again, this light rail project emerged from the Greens campaigning over many years, with a long-term vision for improved public transport, including light rail, finally secured through our 2012 parliamentary agreement.

The budget funds further planning and design work for stage 2 of light rail, from Civic to Woden, and a range of overdue urban improvements around Woden, which the Greens are keen to see revitalise, with thoughtfully targeted planning and investments. This demonstrates that light rail is not just a transport project; it also facilitates a more sustainable city structure, with more compact development and improved active transport connections, reducing reliance on cars.

A decade ago, the Greens were the only party talking about active transport, now a major focus of this government. A graph showing the history of funding for walking and cycling tells a clear story, spiking noticeably for the years the Greens have had the balance of power. Without the influence of the Greens, without us making election commitments to build a light rail network, without the parliamentary agreement, and without a strong and effective partnership with the Labor Party, you could fairly surmise that the government's approach to sustainable transport, and a myriad of other issues, would be markedly different today.

Opponents of progressive policies, such as the Canberra Liberals, who fail to articulate the vision of a future for this city for themselves, invariably complain that these policies are economically unviable. Think for a moment about the four years of debate about stage 1 of light rail, during the last Assembly. The Liberals claimed that the sky would fall, that it would be an economic catastrophe, that light rail would send us broke, that it was unaffordable and that the economy would collapse. Here we are with the project almost completed, a budget projected to be in surplus for the next four years, and the ACT maintaining its AAA credit rating.

It has been a long road for the ACT government. When the global financial crisis hit, early in the Seventh Assembly, the Greens committed to supporting the plan taking the ACT into budget deficit to get us through the tough times ahead. This was indeed a challenging time, and, of course, some countries around the world have struggled to recover. But the Greens supported Labor governments, federally and here in the ACT, to invest in infrastructure and in our community to stimulate the economy rather than plummet into recession, with a plan to return to surplus in this Ninth Assembly. Furthermore, we tackled the additional substantial financial challenge of addressing the Mr Fluffy housing contamination in the last Assembly. We are pleased to now be climbing back onto the other side of the red line.

The Greens are committed to sustainability, and you must have that in your budget as well. This government, with Greens support, has achieved this while also keeping Canberra focused on sustainability and supporting vulnerable Canberrans. The ACT is showing that it is perfectly capable of pursuing bold policies like major investment in sustainable transport, renewable energy and climate change mitigation, whilst supporting the vulnerable people in our community and still having a strong economy and a balanced budget. Our renewable energy leadership and subsequent considerable industry investment show that these are, in fact, complementary.

In relation to our strong economy today, the Chief Minister has highlighted how well the ACT is doing, which is due to the growth of gross state product, of consumption and thus GST revenue, of construction, and importantly, of significant and higher than expected population growth.

The unforecast population growth has contributed to our economic growth and the budget performance. But the Greens understand that sound economic management should not rely simply on population growth. There are downsides. Higher consumption contributes to higher household debt—Australia has the second highest household debt in the world—and it is also increasing our environmental footprint.

While the ACT government is working hard on sustainability initiatives, it must also manage the increased levels of waste, water and energy use, car use, residential construction and so on. Reducing climate emissions with our ever-increasing population is a growing challenge for the ACT. As we shift towards 100 per cent renewable electricity, we are directly addressing one of our key impacts on climate and our footprint, but there is so much more to do.

The ACT is now forecast to hit a population of 500,000 people in the next decade. According to the ABS population clock, Australia currently has nearly 25 million people, and we are due to click over that 25 million mark sometime in June.

While our human population grows, the number of critically endangered animals is increasing. The IUCN lists 86 critically endangered species for Australia. And, sadly, we are part of the top seven of the world's countries that have contributed to 50 per cent of the world's biodiversity loss in the past decade. We know that the rate of population growth has created massive ecological issues for the megacities of the world. While population growth has brought about a positive outcome for our budget this year, globally and locally it is really time to focus on planning for a more sustainable future.

The Chief Minister has pointed out many other impacts on the ACT of this population growth: increasing school enrolments, increasing hospital presentations and, sadly, increasing inequity and its symptoms such as homelessness numbers. Meanwhile, Newstart, which many vulnerable people rely on, is simply not increasing. It has not increased for two decades.

Our economies cannot be reliant on infinite industrial growth driven by rapid population growth and high consumption. In fact, we believe that this is an

unsustainable recipe for disaster. While Canberra is growing and the economy is strong, we are in an opportune position to determine the kind of future we want for our city. The Greens are convinced that we can grow our city while maintaining the green spaces and trees that make us the bush capital, whilst also delivering housing and access to key services for all Canberrans.

The Greens look at budgets differently. We do not ask what the impact is on ourselves personally. We ask what the impact will be on sustainability; what sort of place we are leaving for future generations; and for fairness for the vulnerable people in the ACT.

I have spoken already about the critical importance of taking action on climate change and the many ways the ACT is already doing this. But I want to especially emphasise, in the context of this budget, the importance of ensuring that climate change initiatives do not impact negatively and disproportionately on the most vulnerable in our community.

The Greens are determined to take action on climate change; we are also determined to protect the most vulnerable in our community. These two policy imperatives go hand in hand; one should not, and need not, come at the expense of the other. Of course, if we do not act on climate change we will all suffer the repercussions: environmental, social and economic. It is the most vulnerable people in our community who will be hit the hardest.

In this context, I want to mention one particular climate initiative I am especially pleased to see funded this year. This budget makes a much-needed investment of \$5.7 million to extend the successful energy efficiency improvement scheme into ACT public housing. Over three years, this program will support significant energy efficiency upgrades, including to space heating in 2,200 public housing dwellings, helping reduce climate emissions as well as heating and cooling bills for some of Canberra's most vulnerable residents, saving on average about \$500 on their energy bills. I am very pleased to have worked with Minister Berry to deliver this proposal.

The Greens have also pushed for more sustainable housing to make our city more compact. Our current housing rules are producing housing that is unaffordable and environmentally unsustainable, so I am pleased to see \$775,000 for the housing choices review of planning rules and towards demonstration housing precincts. The precincts are a result of a motion by Ms Le Couteur last year, and will showcase affordable, high quality and environmentally sustainable housing.

Transport is also key to the Greens' agenda for a more sustainable city. We therefore welcome over \$21 million in additional expenditure in active travel upgrades, including in Woden, Tuggeranong and Belconnen town centres as well as investment in making suburbs more age friendly. This is substantial progress on the additional \$30 million active travel commitment in the agreement.

Canberra's urban trees are critical to ameliorating urban temperatures in summer and reducing the heat island effect. This budget includes some funding for more trees but we would like to see more serious investment in urban trees to ensure we continue to

address climate change impacts and maintain our feel as the bush capital. After many years of pestering, the Greens are extremely pleased to see a four-year program to fund invasive plant and animal management, as well as interim funding to support catchment groups while the federal government gets its act together.

The economy may be performing strongly, but that does not mean that the benefits are being shared equally. The Greens believe that the government needs to do more to close the growing inequity, including addressing housing affordability. Canberra is experiencing an ongoing housing affordability challenge and people moving to the ACT need housing that is affordable and available. Housing-related measures in this year's budget provide cause for both optimism and a place in need of further work.

The government's most welcome announcements are in regard to funding for additional front-line homelessness services and extending the operating hours of OneLink, recognised in the parliamentary agreement. Insufficient funding for these organisations was a key gap in the system that was identified in the lead-up to the last election and has been an ongoing concern.

We are especially pleased to see the strengthening of specialist homelessness and housing support services, including innovation funding to increase the supply of affordable rental housing for people escaping domestic violence, further funding for accommodation for older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, services for older women at risk of homelessness, and specialist disability accommodation.

Thanks to the Greens we have now published targets for the number of public, community and affordable housing dwellings that will be built in greenfield and urban renewal sites. While welcome in terms of transparency, the targets for 2017-18 are disappointing. The budget papers tell us there will be a slight increase in this year's housing targets—up to 552 public, community and affordable dwellings. It is also pleasing to see that these targets will include housing in renewal areas, not just greenfields.

However, the amount of social housing has been going backwards as a proportion of our overall housing stock for two decades. Yesterday we debated a motion noting 4,000 new homes being added to our city annually. To simply maintain the current proportion of social housing, about 284 of these would need to be set aside for people on low incomes or with particular housing requirements. But we are not coming close to this. This budget simply does not adequately address the shortage of affordable housing.

It is clear that the incidence of homelessness is increasing in our city, a predictable problem that goes hand in hand with our population increase. The Greens know the increased financial and social impacts of not providing accommodation for rough sleepers, many of whom have high and complex needs.

We are very supportive of the Common Ground model. The first Common Ground was in the parliamentary agreement last Assembly. This budget funds design for work for Common Ground in Dickson, but at the rate this city is growing we are likely to require both the new Common Ground in Dickon and an expansion of the one in

Gungahlin. Given that the Gungahlin Common Ground site is surrounded by vacant land already owned by the ACT government, we believe it would be more cost effective to expand there first.

Housing is the single biggest expense for low and moderate income households and it is non-discretionary. When it comes to the provision of affordable rental housing, we are also going backwards. Some people are forced to really question how they fund their household budget. However, there is hope. We look forward to seeing the housing strategy, capturing many great ideas from last year's housing summit, being released later this year. We hope it includes innovative measures to truly increase the affordable housing options for people in rental stress. It will also need adequate funding to achieve what will no doubt be ambitious goals compared to the current status quo. We would do well to look at our New Zealand counterparts for examples of decisive action in this space.

For people at the other end of the housing spectrum, we are very supportive of the stamp duty exemptions for first home buyers, in conjunction with removing the first home owners grant, that have been included in this budget.

The ACT government's systems of concessions and rates deferments are also very important for fairness. The mid-year budget review increased the utilities concession available to many low income households. This budget includes further action on concessions and rates deferments. The Greens, along with most economists and business groups, have supported the ACT's tax reform program due to its economic benefits. However, we are also focused on fairness as well as economic efficiency.

This past year we have heard strong voices from unit owners concerned about tax reform. We are pleased that the general rates aged deferral scheme is being expanded to cover many more ratepayers. It was previously only available for older ratepayers whose home was one of the 20 per cent most expensive by land value. This was unfair for those with lower value properties and few, if any, unit owners would have qualified. Now, people over 65 living in units they own will also qualify. The Greens will continue to closely monitor the fairness of tax reform. And for the deferral expansion to be considered successful, the take-up will need to rise substantially from its current very low level.

On other concessions, free off-peak public transport for concession cardholders is an agreement item, and we are pleased to see a 12-month extension of this trial, which has been well received by low income Canberrans.

As the transition to the full NDIS draws closer, we are pleased to see the additional \$1.8 million for the integrated service response program. It is critical that the ACT can provide emergency funding where the first phase of the NDIS has shown up gaps and can provide advocacy for those who need to ensure the scheme delivers on its intentions. One of the main benefits of the scheme, the ability to tailor funding to individual needs, can only work if participants are supported to fully advocate for their needs. The expansion of the disability inclusion grants program extends opportunities for the wider community to back initiatives to shape our city to be accessible and inclusive for people with a disability.

We welcome funding to review the disturbing over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people involved with child and youth protection services, and measures such as family group conferencing for families at risk of ongoing involvement with the child protection system. As I have seen in my own justice portfolio, we must never overlook options for diversion from statutory intervention to avoid cycles of trauma and disadvantage that so often ensue.

We also acknowledge the government's ongoing commitment to addressing domestic and family violence and sexual assault and abuse with the rollout of the family safety hub and much-needed additional funding for front-line services like the Canberra Rape Crisis Centre and DVCS.

The Greens are proud of a decade's work towards improved transparency and integrity, such as new FOI legislation, an integrity commission to start next year, and establishing officers of the Assembly. The ACT has been a leader in this country on progressive issues like hosting the country's first pill-testing trial in April this year; investing in substantial urban wetland projects; and improving animal welfare standards for domestic animals as well as hens and pigs.

This year's budget includes \$3 million to establish the ACT's new independent integrity commission. The Greens have supported this extensively, including at the last election and through the agreement. I believe we will have two sets of legislation to consider on this matter. And I look forward to us passing a model that can give the Canberra community full confidence in ACT government processes and agencies.

The Greens have long called for an investment in our healthcare system to keep people healthy, instead of just treating them when they are sick. The agreement reflects that investing in health is a priority for both Labor and the Greens, and we are pleased to see many key items funded this year.

I particularly note the \$34½ million investment to expand hospital in the home, the extensive funding to build a new health clinic for Winnunga Nimmityjah Aboriginal Health Service, and a further \$2 million to continue work on a new nurse-led walk-in centre for Weston Creek. All these investments are about improving health services for people in the community and will help reduce pressure on the acute system. As a Green and as Minister for Mental Health, I am proud of the significant investment this budget makes in mental health services, particularly supported accommodation for people across the continuum of care, as well as support for young people.

As justice and corrections minister, I have been very focused on the parliamentary agreement goal of reducing recidivism by 25 per cent by 2025. I cannot overemphasise the need for a suite of options for offenders, especially those that significantly reduce the likelihood of reoffending. This budget includes some important examples such as the \$6 million to continue the intensive corrections order scheme to keep some people out of full-time imprisonment, \$1 million to expand the high-density housing community safety program to prevent crime and address offending behaviour and establishing the Warrumbul court in the Children's Court, a circle sentencing court for young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander offenders. We have already seen such success with the Galambany adult circle sentencing court,

which is showing not only a reduction in reoffending but genuine value for money. This budget also funds necessary additional staff resources to support higher detainee numbers at the AMC and the replacement of the mobile duress system.

However, I hope that future budgets will have an even greater focus on justice reinvestment. Significant work is underway in this area and greater investment is needed to ensure that these programs result in reducing recidivism and also reducing offending in the first place. Initiatives that keep people out of jail will be better for everyone in our community, reducing costs and keeping the entire community safer.

Fundamental to the Greens' values of treating all people with respect and value, we welcome funding for the development of a disability justice strategy. We are keen to ensure that we do not treat people with a disability unfairly, whether they are victims of crime or offenders.

Overall, Greens supporters largely want to see a sustainable budget and a fair budget that looks after vulnerable Canberrans, and a progressive budget that trials innovations, that is prepared to take risks, and this budget takes firm steps towards all those. While we congratulate the government for our current ACT budget position, the Greens caution the need for ever-increasing growth for growth's sake. Instead, we urge the government to continue to support policies that facilitate growth in the sustainable industries of renewable energy, energy efficiency and recycling, and focus on a green and fair economy

The Greens are very supportive of this year's budget, but we do urge the government to make further serious investments in housing initiatives to address affordability and sustainability, as well as more action to mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change—both while assessing the impacts of these policies on our most vulnerable people.

I look forward to continuing to work with Ms Le Couteur and my Labor colleagues over this Assembly and thank them for all their efforts towards making the ACT more sustainable, fair and progressive.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Bill agreed to in principle.

Reference to Select Committee on Estimates 2018-2019

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

That the Appropriation Bill 2018-2019 and the Appropriation (Office of the Legislative Assembly) Bill 2018-2019 be referred to the Select Committee on Estimates 2018-2019.

Papers

Madam Speaker presented the following papers:

Budget 2018-2019—Financial Management Act, pursuant to section 20AB—Recommended appropriations—Copy of letter from the Speaker to the Treasurer regarding the—

ACT Audit Office, dated 26 February 2018.

Electoral Commissioner, dated 25 May 2018.

Mr Barr presented the following papers:

Financial Management Act, pursuant to subsection 30F(3)—2017-18 Capital Works Program—Progress report—Year-to-date 31 March 2018.

Territory-owned Corporations Act, pursuant to subsection 19(3)—Statement of Corporate Intent—Icon Water—Business Strategy 2018-19 to 2021-22.

Building regulatory reforms—update Paper and statement by minister

MR GENTLEMAN (Brindabella—Minister for Police and Emergency Services, Minister for the Environment and Heritage, Minister for Planning and Land Management and Minister for Urban Renewal) (3.50): For the information of members, I present the following paper:

Building Regulatory System—Reforms (Improving the ACT Building Regulatory System Review Status Report on actions with forward work plan), pursuant to the resolution of the Assembly of 21 March 2018.

I seek leave to make a statement.

Leave granted.

MR GENTLEMAN: I am pleased to table the response to the Assembly resolution on *Building regulatory system—Reforms (Improving the ACT Building Regulatory System Review Status Report on actions with a forward work plan)*. Further to the summary I provided to the Assembly in March, this report includes the status of each of the reforms and forward timing for the completion of remaining reforms. We are working to complete all of the reforms within the next two years, as anticipated under the budget allocation provided for the program in 2017-18.

As I mentioned in my previous update, some reforms that relate to security of payments were previously postponed after the Australian government announced its own review of security of payment systems across Australia. This includes some reforms on dispute resolution. On 21 May this year, the final report on the national security of payments review was released. It includes 86 recommendations, including detailed recommendations on a potential legislative model for adoption across all states and territories.

It also makes recommendations in relation to payment claims to residential owners from contractors, which are not currently included under the system. This has implications for dispute resolution systems for residential building work that need to be considered further. The ACT's legislation is based on the New South Wales law.

Any changes to that law affect the consistency of the systems between the two jurisdictions. Each jurisdiction is currently considering the report.

The timing for completing related reforms in the ACT program is dependent on any agreements for work at the national level or between jurisdictions. Because of this, the forward work plan does not include timing for the completion of 10 reforms that relate to security of payments and dispute resolution. However, I will update the plan with new timings for these reforms after I have had the chance to discuss the potential reforms with our colleagues in other jurisdictions and at the next building ministers' forum meeting.

While we are participating in a range of national work on building compliance, we are not proposing any further delay in implementing our reform program as a result of this work. As I noted previously, our immediate priorities are: new licence examinations for new class A, B and C builder licence applications; minimum documentation requirements for new building approval applications; codes of practice for builders and building certifiers; continuing work on the new auditing system for building approvals and building work; and training for building surveyors and other people in the building industry. Work in the 2018-19 year will complete another 15 of the reforms.

The government will publish updates on progress in delivering any outstanding actions every six months until the reform program is complete. We will also continue working with industry and community stakeholders to implement the remaining reforms from the improving the ACT building regulatory system review. I thank the Assembly for its support of these reforms.

Papers

Mr Gentleman presented the following papers:

Planning and Development Act, pursuant to subsection 79(1)—Approval of Variation No 358 to the Territory Plan—Changes to Wright precinct map and code—Wright Section 29 Block 3—Restrictions on residential use, dated 29 May 2018, including associated documents.

Director of Public Prosecutions—strategic review Paper and statement by minister

MR RAMSAY (Ginninderra—Attorney-General, Minister for Regulatory Services, Minister for the Arts and Community Events and Minister for Veterans and Seniors) (3.54): For the information of members, I present the following paper:

Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions—Strategic Review, prepared by the Nous Group, dated 9 August 2017.

I seek leave to make a statement.

Leave granted.

MR RAMSAY: I am pleased to table the Nous Group's strategic review of the ACT Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions. The review indicates that the DPP continues to provide a quality service to the ACT community, and it highlights the commitment and the professionalism of its staff in adapting to changing work environments. The government is committed to viewing the justice system holistically and working across the system to ensure that the ACT community has access to a timely, transparent and fair justice system.

Early last year I worked with the Director of Public Prosecutions to engage the Nous Group to undertake an independent review of the office. The purpose of the review was to assess its capacity to deliver services on behalf of the ACT government and broader community into the future. I will briefly outline the government's action in response to the Nous report's findings and recommendations. As the report recommends, that response was to quickly increase resources in the DPP and consider the long-term staffing needs of the office.

Over the past year, our funding decisions have shown a clear commitment to support the DPP to keep delivering strong, high quality services to the community. In February 2019, as part of the budget review, this government announced \$970,000 over two years to support the confiscation of criminal assets work. The need to support this special role was highlighted in the Nous review.

Another key feature of the Nous report is the recommendation that decisions about DPP funding take account of increases in resourcing for the courts and other areas of the justice system. In April 2018 the government announced it would appoint an eighth permanent magistrate. Recognising the need for both Legal Aid and the DPP to deal with the increase in court resources, the government provided \$987,000 over four years from 2018-19 for additional DPP staff to support the increased capacity of the Magistrates Court. Additional funding of \$1.3 million for Legal Aid ACT was also provided as part of the package.

The significant and long-term boost to baseline funding is now part of the 2018-19 budget. The government will provide an additional \$6.922 million over the next four years for additional prosecutorial and paralegal staff. This funding will be progressively provided with an additional six full-time equivalents from 2018-19, increasing by two additional staff each year until there are a total of 12 additional FTEs in 2021-22. This staffing increase will be supplemented by a one-off capital injection of \$350,000 for expanded accommodation, and I am confident that these new resources will deliver sustained improvements in the timeliness and effectiveness of the DPP's prosecution services well into the future.

Another important outcome of the Nous review was a set of recommendations for more efficient management of the DPP's budget resources. Nous consulting put forward that, for reasons of both independence and efficiency, a different model of budgeting should be in place.

The government's approach to date has been to use the administrative resources of the Justice and Community Safety Directorate to offer economies of scale to smaller, independent agencies. Things like human resources and finance services are provided

by a centralised team in JACS to other agencies, including the Human Rights Commission and the Emergency Services Agency. The analysis by Nous consulting provides a basis for considering a different approach. The government is seriously considering this recommendation and will work with the public service and the DPP to ensure that our model of appropriation and funding is as efficient as possible.

The government looks forward to continuing to work with the DPP to support its functions and its operations, through legislation and in consideration of funding, to ensure that it remains a sustainable organisation continuing to provide quality services to the Canberra community.

Access Canberra—review of shopfront services Paper and statement by minister

MR RAMSAY (Ginninderra—Attorney-General, Minister for Regulatory Services, Minister for the Arts and Community Events and Minister for Veterans and Seniors) (3.59): For the information of members, I present the following paper:

Access Canberra—Review of shopfront services, pursuant to the resolution of the Assembly of 1 November 2017.

I seek leave to make a statement.

Leave granted.

MR RAMSAY: I am very pleased to present to the Assembly the response to the resolution of the Assembly on the review of Access Canberra shopfront services, dated 1 November 2017. On that date the Assembly asked the government to undertake an analysis of the various shopfronts to: determine whether the range of services available at the locations provide appropriate choice and availability for all ACT residents and sufficient customer service; review the opening hours and operating procedures at the various shopfronts to determine how waiting times can be reduced; continue to consult with customers to better understand how to deliver improved accessibility, especially for those who work or rely on others to take them to the shopfront to undertake their business transactions; undertake a thorough review of the current range of payment methods to ensure they provide sufficient choice for all ACT residents; and report back to the Assembly by the first sitting in June 2018.

Access Canberra continues to provide a very high level of customer service through its service centres and shopfronts. In 2016-17 it welcomed more than 450,000 customers through its doors. It recorded more than 2.7 million visits to the Access Canberra website, with 1.7 million digital transactions occurring, and it received more than 720,000 phone calls through the contact centre.

The report demonstrates that satisfaction levels with Access Canberra's customer service channels remain extremely high. Customer satisfaction levels have continued to increase over the last three years. Opening hours between the seven Access Canberra service centre and shopfront locations vary, providing a range of options for accessing face-to-face services.

Gungahlin, Tuggeranong and Civic drivers licence services provide extended business hours. However the review found that only five per cent of customers attend outside of business hours. Based on the low proportion of customer attendances outside core business hours, the increasing availability and take-up of digital transactions and the continuing high rate of satisfaction expressed by customers, Access Canberra will not further adjust the operating hours of the service centres at this time. Access Canberra will continue to monitor the customer demand into the future.

For context, it is important to note that to effectively run the service centres out of hours we still need representatives from most other business areas to be on deck to ensure that customers can be served at those times. Thus, extending service centre business hours has a large impact on the working hours of a large part of the rest of the organisation.

Access Canberra prides itself on being an innovative organisation focused on continuous improvement. Feedback, engagement and consultation with the Canberra community continues to inform the design of its transactions and service environments to ensure that its services remain accessible and responsive.

This week the government announced funding as part of the budget to boost Access Canberra's ability to provide exceptional customer service. Part of this funding will go towards providing additional concierges at the service centres, as well as five additional staff on the phones in the contact centre, to continue to meet the needs of all Canberrans. These additional staff will assist in reducing wait times and increasing the already very high customer satisfaction levels.

The number of digital transactions has increased significantly, with approximately 64 per cent of transactions completed through that channel. However, it is important that people who struggle to transact digitally are not left behind. So in 2018-19 Access Canberra will undertake a project to determine its long-term service strategy, including how to provide services for people in the most appropriate and helpful way that will meet the future needs of a growing and changing city.

Finally, the report demonstrates the continued upwards trend of electronic payment methods over cash and cheque. Only two of Access Canberra's service centres have limited payment options to EFTPOS and credit card only. These cashless service centres have open layouts, and they encourage quality interactions between staff and clients. The remaining two service centres and three shopfront locations continue to have cash payments as an option. Many Access Canberra transactions can also be undertaken at Australia Post outlets, which also accept cash.

This is a resounding endorsement for the Assembly that Access Canberra is on the right track to meet the needs of the Canberra community today and into the future. I commend the review of Access Canberra shopfront services report to the Assembly.

Auditor-General's Report No 3 of 2018—government response Paper and statement by minister

MR GENTLEMAN (Brindabella—Minister for Police and Emergency Services, Minister for the Environment and Heritage, Minister for Planning and Land

Management and Minister for Urban Renewal) (4.04): For the information of members, I present the following paper:

Auditor-General Act—Auditor-General’s Report No 3/2018—Tender for the sale of Block 30 (formerly Block 20) Section 34 Dickson—Government response.

I seek leave to make a statement.

Leave granted.

MR GENTLEMAN: I am pleased to table the government response to the Auditor-General’s performance audit report No 3 of 2018 entitled *Tender for the sale of Block 30 (formerly Block 20) Section 34 Dickson*. The report considered specific historical land transactions undertaken by a unit formerly within the Economic Development Directorate and with the supporting services of the former Land Development Agency. The audit report made a number of findings about the achievement of sale objectives for the block and whether the outcome represented value for money.

The audit report concluded broadly that the Economic Development Directorate did not conduct the tender process for block 30 section 34 effectively. It did not achieve the sale objective of pursuing an open, contestable and transparent market process, and there are indications it did not achieve value for money from the sale.

It concluded that significant weaknesses in the Economic Development Directorate’s management of the tender mean there is a high risk it has relinquished considerable financial value to the Canberra Tradesmen’s Union Club Ltd, known as the Tradies. There is a high risk that the Economic Development Directorate sold block 30 section 34 to the Tradies in breach of the Planning and Development Act 2007.

The report concluded that systems need to be implemented to prevent this occurring in the future. Importantly, all staff involved in undertaking land transactions also need to have clarity regarding expected behaviours, through well-articulated values, particularly with respect to managing the integration of probity and commercial considerations.

The government have made significant improvements in the land transactions process as part of establishing the new land entities, and we are confident we are not in the same position as when these specific historical transactions occurred.

On 1 July 2017 the City Renewal Authority and Suburban Land Agency Act 2017 commenced, which abolished the Land Development Agency and established the City Renewal Authority—the authority—and the Suburban Land Agency—the agency. Legislative instruments have been notified to support the work of the new land entities, including declaration of the city renewal precinct, the land acquisition directions, the housing target determination, the statement of expectations and statement of operational intent for the authority. The Minister for Housing and Suburban Development gave her approval for the Suburban Land Agency to exercise specific functions in accordance with the act.

Key elements of the governance framework for both entities include the annual statement of intent, establishing governing boards for the authority and agency, clear and direct accountability of the chair of each governing board to the responsible minister, a board-appointed and accountable chief executive officer, the use of written ministerial directions to the entities and the development of a service level agreement between the Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate and land entities to provide governance support.

A project portfolio governance committee has been established to provide advice on the development of key governance deliverables and dependencies. The committee is focusing on consolidating governance systems and frameworks, adapting project management governance, standardising records management and updating operational policy and procedures.

This committee has agreed to develop a land transactions policy to address the requirement for probity and good process across the directorate, authority and agency with regard to all types of land transactions, such as acquisitions, sales and transfers. Significant consultation has been undertaken on this policy across the portfolio.

A people and transition committee has been established to provide human resource support for the agency. The directorate and agency have conducted staff surveys to inform the development of an action plan which will outline measures to continue to support staff, reinforce organisational values and offer personal development initiatives. Employee induction training is focused on ethics, conflict of interest, integrity and corruption and fraud prevention and is offered to all staff. Training is available on goods and services procurement which includes probity considerations.

Particular initiatives in this area include the preparation of a corporate governance statement for the agency; a policy and standard operating procedure for conflict of interest in the purchase of land by portfolio staff; and the valuations policy, which reinforces the ethical behaviours expected of staff when seeking land valuations.

This government response builds on the work undertaken as part of establishing the new land entities and provides an opportunity to further test, check, enhance and refine the land transactions process and fill any gaps that have emerged. It is critical to public confidence and trust in the work of territory entities that operations are conducted properly and are open to scrutiny. Governance frameworks play a key role in ensuring that the community can be assured that territory entities operate in the public interest and to the highest standards of probity and accountability. The consistent implementation and effective adoption of these frameworks enables and promotes positive organisational culture and integrity.

The government welcomes the recommendations in the Auditor-General's report and the opportunity this provides for continuous improvement to probity and governance practices in land transactions and to reinforce an organisational culture that promotes integrity. The audit report made four recommendations relating to remedying deficiencies in the tender process, strengthening probity, strengthening governance and assurance, and reinforcing organisational values. The government agrees with

each of the four recommendations, and the government response outlines improved processes and procedures to address the recommendations.

Recommendation 1 states that, in order to remedy deficiencies in the tender process, the Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate should brief me, as the minister administering the Planning and Development Act 2007, and the cabinet on the implications of the risk to legislative compliance identified by this report and advise on options for remedying the deficiencies in the tender process.

The directorate is seeking legal advice on legislative compliance issues identified in the report and will prepare a brief on the issues raised. Following receipt of this advice the directorate will develop and implement mechanisms to mitigate potential noncompliance as required.

Recommendations 2 and 3 relate to the strengthening of probity, governance and assurance in procurement processes. The Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate, the City Renewal Authority and the Suburban Land Agency are reviewing, assessing and enhancing the processes, practices, training and culture related to probity and procurement as part of the continuous improvement cycle that underpins the new arrangements.

Recommendation 4 states that the agencies mentioned above should reinforce organisational values by clearly articulating their values and providing guidance to staff on how these are to be implemented, and by implementing procedures that reinforce and infuse the values throughout the organisation. The agencies are continuing to review, assess and enhance processes, practices and culture related to organisational values as part of the continuous improvement cycle that underpins the new arrangements.

The government thanks the Auditor-General for tabling this audit report and will continue to make improvements to land sales processes and procedures.

Gungahlin strategic assessment—audit Paper and statement by minister

MR RATTENBURY (Kurrajong—Minister for Climate Change and Sustainability, Minister for Justice, Consumer Affairs and Road Safety, Minister for Corrections and Minister for Mental Health) (4.13): For the information of members, I present the following paper:

Gungahlin Strategic Assessment Independent Audit—Government response.

MR GENTLEMAN (Brindabella—Minister for Police and Emergency Services, Minister for the Environment and Heritage, Minister for Planning and Land Management and Minister for Urban Renewal) (4.13), by leave: I would like to speak on this report if I could. I thank Minister Rattenbury for tabling the report. As the minister responsible for the implementation of the Gungahlin strategic assessment, I am pleased to provide comment on the government's response to the first independent audit undertaken by the Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment.

The government's response to the audit highlights processes and progress since the audit was completed, including the delivery of five corrective actions, and makes further comments in relation to the recommendations handed down in the audit.

Of the 39 strategic assessment commitments the audit report identified, 19 were compliant, five had observations, 13 were noncompliant, two were undetermined and five were not applicable. The majority of the noncompliant commitments were deemed noncompliant only due to the time frames not being met, even though the commitments have been delivered.

Five corrective active requests were issues in relation to high risk items to ensure that strategic assessment commitments are met. These related to compliance and enforcement for cat containment; a review of the Taylor stage 1 construction and environment management plan; processes for reporting potential breaches of commitments; completion of the fire hazard management strategies; and the provision of educational material for future Throsby residents. I am pleased to advise that all corrective actions were completed as requested.

The audit report also made recommendations relating to improvements in the coordination and administration of the strategic assessment. These included recommendations to ensure time frames are met and to ensure accurate record keeping and publication of reports. The Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate is now overseeing the coordination of the strategic assessment and has been working with other agencies to develop and implement procedures to improve administration processes and deliver commitments on time.

Some of the key projects include implementing a procedure for the review and approval of construction and environmental management plans for greenfield projects in the strategic assessment area, ongoing work reviewing and updating the strategic assessment web page to ensure all research papers and reports are publicly available, and construction of a database to track critical dates and key decision points to ensure that we are on track to meet compliance targets.

In addition, a detailed review of administrative processes will be undertaken as part of the plan review report, which is currently being prepared. The plan review report is one of the ACT government's commitments under the strategic assessment.

The purpose of the plan review report is to look at how the Gungahlin strategic assessment is being implemented, to acknowledge what is working well, to identify lessons learned during the first five years of implementation, and to identify potential challenges for delivering the remaining commitments in the future. The plan review report is due to be finalised in July this year.

The audit report noted that there is a need to consider potential risk to conservation areas in achieving the ecological outcomes of the strategic assessment and to ensure that adaptive management is applied. This is being considered through the plan review report.

I acknowledge that the Gungahlin strategic assessment is a long-term project that will require ongoing coordination and support to ensure commitments are delivered in accordance with the plan. The ACT government has already undertaken a number of steps to implement the findings of the audit, delivering the required corrective actions and establishing new procedures and processes.

Further, actions to deliver the findings of the audit report will be published in the Gungahlin strategic assessment annual reports to ensure ongoing transparency. The government's response to the audit has been a valuable opportunity to provide leadership for the development and delivery of future strategic assessments throughout Australia.

Molonglo Valley strategic assessment—audit Paper and statement by minister

MR RATTENBURY (Kurrajong—Minister for Climate Change and Sustainability, Minister for Justice, Consumer Affairs and Road Safety, Minister for Corrections and Minister for Mental Health) (4.17): For the information of members, I present the following paper:

Molonglo Valley Strategic Assessment—Independent Audit, dated 4 April 2018.

I seek leave to make a statement.

Leave granted.

MR RATTENBURY: I am pleased to table the first independent compliance audit of the *Molonglo Valley Plan for the Protection of Matters of National Environmental Significance*, the NES plan, undertaken by the Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment. The purpose of the audit is to independently verify progress against the strategic assessment commitments agreed between the ACT and commonwealth governments under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999. These commitments formed the conditions of approval for the Molonglo Valley development. Strategic assessment audits are intended to assist us to protect biodiversity in the development of our city.

The commitments relate to the development of suburbs in the Molonglo Valley and the protection of the five matters of national environmental significance in the area: the pink-tailed worm-lizard; white box, yellow box and Blakely's red gum grassy woodland and derived native grassland; the natural temperate grassland; the superb parrot; and the swift parrot.

The commitments are to be delivered over a 30-year period, with an independent audit every five years. In July 2017 I directed the commissioner to undertake this audit, pursuant to sections 12(1)(b) and 21(1)(a) of the Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment Act 1993.

The audit was required by the commonwealth to be completed by 7 May 2018. The timeline was met by the Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment.

I received a copy of this report on 4 May 2018. As the minister responsible for reports undertaken by the commissioner, I am tabling this report within the required six sitting days of receipt of the report. The audit was undertaken in accordance with the Commonwealth's *Independent Audit and Audit Report Guidelines 2015*, which establish strict requirements for compliance audits and the auditors.

The audit concluded that the compliance status of the 60 commitments is as follows—this is outlined on page 62 of the report—16 were compliant, 28 were compliant with an observation, 11 were noncompliant, four were undetermined and one was not applicable. Many of the noncompliant commitments were in relation to the late delivery of reports, especially management plans. The commissioner applied a risk rating to commitments to ensure that effort is placed on the most critical elements. Compliance regarding 13 commitments was assessed as high risk, including finalisation of the Kama nature reserve buffer.

Four corrective action requests were issued to the ACT government: firstly, provision of the final draft Molonglo River Reserve management plan to the minister; secondly, finalisation of the operational plan for patch P to ensure appropriate management is occurring; third, incorporation of actions and monitoring requirements into relevant land management agreements for the protection of the ecological condition of matters of national environmental significance within patches I, L and M; and, fourthly, finalisation of the operational plan for the pink-tailed worm-lizard conservation area in the Molonglo River Reserve.

Relevant agencies are required to undertake action to reduce or eliminate the risks associated with noncompliance of these actions. I am pleased to advise that agencies provided a timely response to the corrective action request due on 30 April 2018. The remaining three corrective action requests are due later this year.

This independent compliance audit was finalised in consultation with the ACT government and coordinated by the impact assessment team in the Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate. The commissioner provided 12 recommendations for government to consider in the ongoing implementation of the Molonglo Valley strategic assessment. These are outlined on page 126.

In summary, the range of projects being undertaken, including habitat restoration and threatened species translocation, is impressive. However, we need to remain constantly vigilant about protecting matters of national environmental significance. Implementation is still in the early stages. These first six years of monitoring are critical for establishing baselines for future management. There is a need to maintain our efforts for the next 24 years and beyond.

The government will respond to the audit findings. This will be led by Minister Gentleman, as these matters fall within his portfolio as Minister for Planning and Land Management. Madam Speaker, I commend the independent audit of the Molonglo Valley strategic assessment to the Assembly.

Papers

Ms Stephen-Smith presented the following paper:

Bimberi Youth Justice Centre—Bimberi Headline Indicators Report March 2018—Revised.

Adjournment

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

That the Assembly do now adjourn.

Reconciliation Week

MS LE COUTEUR (Murrumbidgee) (4.21): Reconciliation Week was held from 27 May to 3 June this year, just last week, and it gave us the opportunity to reflect on our history and engagement with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community. The theme of this year's Reconciliation Week was "Don't keep history a mystery: learn, share, grow." Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have lived in Australia for an estimated 40,000 years, which makes their culture one of the oldest surviving cultures in the world. This week gives us an opportunity to reflect on this and celebrate it.

While most Australians recognise the dark parts of our history, such as government policies that forced Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children to be removed from their homes and families, we also need to recognise that the trauma of that history has ongoing effects for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people today. We need to work together to eliminate stigma and intergenerational trauma, and the struggle to do this continues. Through Reconciliation Week, we are given an opportunity to deepen our understanding of history and the impacts of intergenerational trauma. "Learn, share, grow": that is what we are called upon to learn about our history as a nation and as a community.

One of the really positive ways we can do this is to look at some remarkable individuals. One is Evonne Cawley, a Wiradjuri woman and, incidentally, a tennis star. She was ranked as the world's number one in 1971 and 1976. Out of this, she created a legacy called the Evonne Goolagong Foundation, which uses tennis as a platform for promoting education, health and wellbeing for future generations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people. The foundation aims to give children the opportunity to be the best they can be. The foundation has awarded students with scholarships and produced university scholars, tennis players, coaches and sports administrators, and provided employee placements for many of them.

She has also shared her story with all of us through her bestselling autobiography *Home! The Evonne Goolagong Story*. We should all have an opportunity to share her story. Her success has benefitted so many people, and it should be shared. Evonne has truly changed many young Australians' lives, and she will change and inspire many more.

This week I have taken the time to reflect on stories like Evonne's and others that demonstrate the positive contribution that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are every day making to our community. The quality of the relationship between

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and government bodies has a critical impact on the effectiveness of government policies and programs and the capacity of Indigenous people to achieve social equity and secure self-determination. We need to continue our efforts to put more resources into improving these relationships.

We know that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander members of the community are grossly over-represented in the ACT justice system, child protection system and homelessness sector. This is because of generations of prejudice and disadvantage. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people make up only about three per cent of our population, but they are a staggering 27.3 per cent of people incarcerated in Australia. For women the figure is 34.3 per cent and for juveniles it is an almost unbelievable 48 per cent.

I know that my colleague Mr Rattenbury is trying very hard to combat this through justice reinvestment in his role as Minister for Corrections. Yarrabi Bamirr, which is a Ngunnawal word for “walk tall”, is a family focused program to prevent recidivism, delivered in partnership with Winnunga Nimmityjah. As part of this program, social health team workers from Winnunga work together with families to co-design unique family plans to assist them to become self-managing, healthy and safe. They address goals across health, justice, education and employment. This is one example of the work underway to address this issue.

Overall, Reconciliation Week gives us the opportunity and, even more than that, the incentive, the reminder, to understand the adversity faced by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community and, more joyfully, recognise the valuable contributions members of this community have made and will continue to make. On this note, as we say every morning, I pay my respects to their elders past and present.

Schools—visits

MS LEE (Kurrajong) (4.27): My colleagues may be sick of hearing about my school visits, but I rise to talk about two more. As you may be aware, Madam Speaker, my previous adjournment speeches have been about some of the great independent and Catholic schools that I have been able to visit. Today I have the great pleasure to talk about visits to two wonderful government schools in the ACT.

First, I want to talk about Palmerston District Primary School. The acting principal, Kate Flynn, and the director of school improvement for the north Gungahlin network spoke to me about the challenges and opportunities that the school has adapted to, in particular with the new suburb of Crace, which provided a healthy boost for enrolments and bred new life into the school. I would run out of time if I were to speak about all the great features I saw at the school, from the kindergarten teachers, who have really developed a passion for reading in students and families, to the gifted and talented program and their focus on mentoring graduate teachers. For those who still believe, or ever believed, that our teachers have a pretty easy life, with just a couple of hours in the classroom, short days and long holidays, let me say that the teachers I met at Palmerston and every other school I have visited demonstrate clearly how wrong that is.

Palmerston has a great focus on data collection to inform its teaching. They are passionate about every student reaching their full potential and track a child's progress from kindergarten right through to year 6, accumulating data on each student to share with other teachers on a regular basis. The staff set aside time to review data, which allows the staff to keep a close eye on the performance of the students and to tailor learning to their individual learning needs. For that school, external one-day-a-year testing like NAPLAN is another indicator of progress.

I also had the pleasure of visiting the Southern Cross Early Childhood School, where I was welcomed by the principal, Lyndal Reid, and the acting director of school improvement for the Belconnen network. Principal Reid took me on a walk around the terrific school grounds at Southern Cross and showed me some of the great work that they have been doing.

The school's focus on play-based learning and small class sizes has made it an ideal school for parents of children with a variety of needs. The school has invested in outdoor activity areas, such as the bike riding area painted to look like roads, with speed humps and street signs, so that kids can learn how to ride safely in a road-like environment—an area that is so well regarded in the local community that other schools come to also use it. And there is a balance challenge circuit to allow kids to engage in safe risk-taking and allow for self-assessment of risk. A particularly delightful structure in the previously unused outdoor play area is the school's treehouse. It is enormous. Madam Speaker, if you get a chance, I would suggest you go out there and have a look; it is like something out of *Robinson Crusoe*.

Madam Speaker, I really appreciated my visits to both Palmerston District Primary School and Southern Cross Early Childhood School. I thank the minister's office for facilitating these visits. After the school holidays and the estimates hearings are done, I hope to be able to visit a few more government schools.

All the visits I have had the pleasure to speak about in the chamber have been an extraordinarily eye-opening experience for me in my capacity as shadow minister for education. Undoubtedly, in every school that I have visited to date, whether it is an independent, a Catholic or a government school, I come away knowing exactly why the staff do what they do. The passion they have for education and their students is very clear, and the respect and admiration that their students and families show them leave me in no doubt as to the enormous potential of all our schools.

World Environment Day

MR RATTENBURY (Kurrajong) (4.31): This past Tuesday, 5 June, was World Environment Day. This annual event is a reminder for all of us to reflect on the natural environment that we live in, our place in it as humans and the impact that we have upon it. From the Greens perspective, I want to use this opportunity to acknowledge the incredible natural environment we are fortunate enough to live in and the need to live in harmony with it, to tread lightly, with respect and appreciation.

As we go about our busy everyday lives it is easy to forget that we are living in a sensitive and finally balanced natural ecosystem. All our actions, individually and collectively, inevitably affect it. Unfortunately, our actions are often detrimental to the natural environment. We pollute it, we use its resources and we disrupt its natural balance.

In the broader sense, the impact of humans on the earth's environment has not been positive, particularly since the industrial revolution some 250 years ago. Humankind has had a very rapid and damaging impact on the earth's environment. It is evidenced through all kinds of indicators, from the number of species that have become extinct, to the destruction of natural ecosystems, through to the measurable warming of the planet due to the increased release of greenhouse gases.

We all know about the impacts of human-induced global warming, and there is scientific and on the ground evidence of the dramatic and harmful impacts occurring now on the planet, in our environment and on us as humans. We must do all we can to rise to this challenge to both mitigate and adapt to climate change.

Here in the ACT we have an important role. Not only do we have one of the largest environmental footprints per capita but our per capita contributions to the climate are one of the most significant in the world. We are also one of the best positioned to respond to these challenges. We are one of the most privileged cities in one of the most privileged countries in the world, and we need to respond accordingly.

The Greens and the ACT government are proud that the ACT is at the forefront of climate action in this nation, but there is an enormous amount of work to do. I am pleased that we have set a nation-leading target of zero emissions by 2045. We are on track to achieve the first milestone towards this target, of a 40 per cent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions from 1990 levels by 2020.

Community support for serious climate action is clear, with thousands of people giving some fantastic feedback during recent community consultations. They told us they want the government to take meaningful action on buildings, energy efficiency, green infrastructure and the uptake of electric vehicles.

As transport is expected to make up more than 60 per cent of the ACT's emissions by 2020, largely from the use of private vehicles, it is the next big sector to tackle when it comes to greenhouse gas emissions. Our recently released transition to zero emissions vehicles action plan will support community uptake of zero emission vehicles, including e-bikes, through a wide range of initiatives.

We are progressing ever closer to our goal of 100 per cent renewable electricity by 2020, and with the 28 wind turbines supported by this government at Sapphire Wind Farm starting to power the ACT last month we are a step closer. These turbines are producing enough clean energy to power 48,000 dwellings and have pushed us 12 per cent closer to our renewable electricity target.

As part of celebrating World Environment Day I was pleased to be able to attend the Conservation Council's annual World Environment Day dinner last Saturday, along with Ms Le Couteur. It was held at the Arboretum. I was also able attend the ACT government's expo with bettongs in City Walk yesterday.

In the context of that, I was reminded of the very first World Environment Day event in Garema Place, which was organised by the ANU environment group, of which I was a member, way back in 1992. We organised it as young activists but, after a few years of the Wilderness Society and the Conservation Council organising it, the ACT government then started running it themselves. And I am pleased that it continues to this day as an annual event.

There is still much to do and more investment is needed. But on this World Environment Day we can be proud of the ACT's leadership in tackling climate change and supporting our community to live more sustainably and to reduce the impact on our planet.

I would like to conclude by thanking Jaimie Liebowitz, who is undertaking work experience in my office this week, for her assistance in putting those speaking notes together.

Australian Anglo-Indian Association Ball

MRS KIKKERT (Ginninderra) (4.35): Unlike many other cities in Australia, Canberra enjoys four distinct seasons. Typically from the end of April onwards, the weather first cools down and then turns downright cold. This was definitely the case on the evening of 19 May, with the temperature dropping into the single digits by 6 o'clock that evening. In stark contrast to the bitter weather outside was the warm and happy atmosphere inside Queanbeyan's Bicentennial Hall, venue for the grand Anglo-Indian ball held in honour of the silver anniversary of the Australian Anglo-Indian Association of Canberra.

I wish to express gratitude to the association for all that they do to serve the needs of their members in the ACT and the surrounding region and for the kind invitation to join them at this event, which was also attended by the party leader of the Canberra Liberals, Alistair Coe. I had a fantastic time. The dinner was a sumptuous, Indian-influenced buffet filled with exotic and warming delights. Music was provided by two Anglo-Indian bands, New Renditions and JJ Blue Frost. The music made it easy for many of the more than 200 guests who attended that night to dance the night away and provided the rest with a happy accompaniment to all the talking and laughter that filled the hall.

Many of Canberra's thriving community organisations have forged a strong connection with other community organisations and with peak bodies, and this is certainly true for the Australian Anglo-Indian Association of Canberra. Office holders of the Canberra Multicultural Community Forum and leaders from a number of other ethnic associations were also in attendance at this thoroughly enjoyable event.

I wish to express my thanks to Joe Bailey, the president of the association, and to all the other men and women who serve alongside him. I hope that the next 25 years will bring nothing but success to Canberra's Anglo-Indian community and to all those whom they support and serve.

Winnunga Nimmityjah—30th birthday

MR MILLIGAN (Yerrabi) (4.38): I rise today to praise the efforts of the team at Winnunga Nimmityjah Aboriginal Health Service and to highlight some of their achievements. I was privileged to attend the 30th birthday of Winnunga on 12 May. It was a fantastic celebration and provided lots of good, old-fashioned fun entertainment, including a petting zoo, a giant rock-climbing wall, face painting, fairy floss, fresh food, pizza and, of course, delicious coffee.

There was also an amazing birthday cake, but most of all there was a warm and very positive community spirit. It was truly a celebration of all the forward steps taken and all the efforts put in by members of the Canberra Indigenous community. Since becoming the shadow minister for Indigenous affairs, I have learnt that this community has a big heart. They want to see their people do better and they are willing to put in the hard work to make it happen.

Winnunga is the perfect example of this story of the heart and the hard work that they do. Winnunga was established in 1988 by local Aboriginal people inspired by the national mobilisation of people around the opening of the new Parliament House and a visit by the Queen. The late Olive Brown, an inspirational figure, saw the need to set up a temporary medical service at the tent embassy site in Canberra. This paved the way to the beginnings of Winnunga.

In the beginning, Mrs Brown enlisted the support of a doctor, a registered nurse and a midwife. Soon after that, ACT Health offered Mrs Brown a room in the office behind the Griffin Centre to run a clinic two mornings a week and on Saturdays. Winnunga operated out of this office from 1988 to 1990, during which time the organisation was staffed mostly by volunteers. With just a little bit of funding, by 1991 Winnunga was able to grow and provide a full-time medical practice.

After the sad passing of Mrs Olive Brown in 1993, it was decided to form a health board. From there, the organisation has continued to grow and evolve, despite changing levels of government support, as well as the internal struggles typical of any community-run organisation. The journey from a small medical practice to what Winnunga is able to provide today has not been easy. Perhaps this is what made the 30th birthday celebrations all the more special. It was a recognition of where the community organisation has come from and what it achieves today.

Let us have a look at some of their service outcomes, because I think it is important to highlight the positive stories, to talk about the good work being done and to celebrate the everyday heroes out there doing the hard yards. Winnunga provides essential medical services to clients through GPs, nurses, midwives, dentists, dieticians and many more health professionals. They conduct a wide range of group programs for

Indigenous men, women, families, community elders, mums' groups, and children and young people.

There is also a strong emphasis on preventative health, with social programs around tobacco, healthy lifestyles, and drug and alcohol issues. Whilst it is important to acknowledge that there are still serious health problems facing our Indigenous community, it is vitally important to acknowledge the hard work, dedication and progress being made by front-line community organisations like Winnunga.

Well done, Winnunga, and congratulations. Well done for all the amazing work that they do in the community. Well done for leading the way in providing specialised and culturally appropriate health care for the Canberra Indigenous community. Congratulations on their 30th birthday. I look forward to celebrating many more milestones with them.

Dr John La Salle—tribute
Mr Steve Krikonis—tribute

MS CHEYNE (Ginninderra) (4.42): It is with great sadness that I speak today to honour two extraordinary members of the Ginninderra community who died in May. Dr John La Salle was an entomologist and insect taxonomist. He made an extraordinary contribution to the science community over a long and distinguished career, particularly in his leadership in the collection and classification of data and in making that data available.

Importantly, Dr La Salle played a key role in establishing the Atlas of Living Australia and was later its director. The Atlas of Living Australia is a collaborative national project that aggregates biodiversity data and makes it accessible and usable online for anyone to use. Prior to that, Dr La Salle served as the Director of the Australian National Insect Collection for more than 10 years.

I first met John, as he was known to me, during the 2016 campaign, in the cold outside Jamison. I regularly held evening stalls and John became a feature of them because he would often pop into the plaza, I think on his way home from work. John would always—always—say hello. Sometimes we would have longer conversations; sometimes he would just say a friendly passing hello and sometimes I would be talking with someone else and he would just simply give me a wave.

Madam Speaker, I realise these are only small gestures, but especially in the depths of what could be a very cold and very lonely campaign, those gestures meant so much to me and they continued after the campaign. I think they speak deeply to his character. His contribution to science, not only in Canberra but also in Australia and internationally, was obviously extraordinary and will be missed. I extend my deep and sincere condolences to John's family, friends and colleagues.

Madam Speaker, Steve Krikonis was the man behind Steve's Melba Takeaway & Pizza. Steve came to Canberra in 1966 and had a varied career before settling on takeaway. Steve's takeaway shop has been a Belconnen fixture for 25 years and Steve a Belconnen icon. He was instrumental in saving the Melba shops.

Madam Speaker, the outpouring of love and sadness is testament to how widely Steve's loss is being felt. I draw on some Facebook comments today, which were extraordinary—there were hundreds and hundreds of them—because I want to put on the record permanently and publicly exactly what a contribution he made to our community.

One person said:

This is devastating news. They have owned that shop for my entire lifetime; both Angela, Steve's wife, and Steve were nothing short of beautiful.

Another said:

Steve and all of the staff there were an icon of my childhood and set the standard for takeaways that no one else has been able to live up to.

And another:

Steve always put a smile on my face and was good for a bit of banter. My family have been coming to Steve for years. Best pizza! Such a genuinely lovely guy. When I saw Steve last week, he was helping a guy get his pizza to his car.

Madam Speaker, these short statements underline Steve's character and his impact on our community. Again, I extend my deep and sincere condolences to his family and to his many, many friends and customers.

Finally, I want to draw the Assembly's attention to Miss Burch's actions yesterday. As members are aware, in May Miss Burch successfully brought a motion to this Assembly which asked the minister to report back to the Assembly on 23 August on the government's plans to extend bus services in the evenings, on Sundays and on public holidays. In responding to Miss Burch, the minister said:

... the new Transport Canberra bus network rapids will run to midnight Monday to Saturday, and we are looking to run them to 10.30 pm on Sunday nights.

However, yesterday Miss Burch published a Facebook post intimating that the budget had failed to include the provision of late night services on evenings and Sundays. I obviously found this very interesting, given Miss Burch had only asked for an update by August—not by the June budget date—and given that Minister Fitzharris has made it clear, including directly to Miss Burch, that these services will happen.

I commented on Miss Burch's post, pointing this out. However, she then removed my comments and blocked me from commenting further. I invite Miss Burch to reflect on the Canberra Liberals' own stated value of freedom of speech and that the code of conduct requires members to be honest at all times. She is not exempt from that.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

The Assembly adjourned at 4.47 pm until Tuesday, 31 July 2018 at 10 am.