



DEBATES
OF THE
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
FOR THE
AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

DAILY HANSARD

Edited proof transcript

19 September 2019

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 **Friday, 27 September 2019**. Answers to questions on notice will appear in the *Weekly Hansard*.

Thursday, 19 September 2019

Petition: Wanniasa bus routes—petition 27-19	3603
Motion to take note of petition.....	3603
Scar trees (Ministerial statement)	3606
Elder abuse (Ministerial statement)	3610
Building regulatory reforms—update (Ministerial statement)	3616
Electricity Feed-in (Large-scale Renewable Energy Generation) Amendment Bill 2019	3620
Statute Law Amendment Bill 2019.....	3622
Sentencing (Parole Time Credit) Legislation Amendment Bill 2019.....	3624
Workers Compensation Amendment Bill 2019.....	3628
Education, Employment and Youth Affairs—Standing Committee.....	3629
Planning and Urban Renewal—Standing Committee.....	3633
Questions without notice:	
Labor Party—staff behaviour	3636
Planning—environment and planning forum	3637
Hospitals—aged-care transition	3638
Hospitals—aged care beds.....	3639
Canberra—events	3640
Transport Canberra—school student patronage	3641
Transport—park-and-ride bike facilities	3642
Floriade—city-wide events.....	3643
Transport Canberra—network 19 complaints	3645
Light rail—stage 1 construction issues.....	3646
Schools—energy efficient infrastructure.....	3646
Transport Canberra—network 19 complaints	3648
Transport Canberra—weekend bus service.....	3648
Health—infrastructure investments.....	3649
Supplementary answer to question without notice:	
Planning—environment and planning forum	3651
Leave of absence.....	3652
Papers.....	3652
ACT and Region Catchment Management Coordination Group—annual report ...	3652
Health, Ageing and Community Services—Standing Committee.....	3654
Renewable energy (Matter of public importance)	3655
Executive business—precedence	3666
Energy Efficiency (Cost of Living) Improvement Amendment Bill 2019	3667
Adjournment:	
Jeannie (Fay) Skyring OAM—tribute	3675
Kashmir	3676
Kurrajong electorate—Dickson.....	3677
Schedule of amendments:	
Schedule 1: Energy Efficiency (Cost of Living) Improvement Amendment Bill 2019.....	3680

Thursday, 19 September 2019

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.

Petition

The following petition was lodged for presentation:

Wanniassa bus routes—petition 27-19

By Ms Lawder, from 644 residents:

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

This petition of residents of the Australian Capital Territory draws to the attention of the Assembly the neglect, disregard and dismay of Wanniassa residents who have been disadvantaged by the recent bus network changes and closure of bus stops in the suburb of Wanniassa. This affects residents including school children, the elderly, workers, people with mobility impairments, mothers, fathers and carers, grandparents, in fact all residents.

Your petitioners therefore call on the Assembly to:

Call on the ACT Government to reinstate some if not all Wanniassa bus routes and bus stops to enable social inclusion, ease of transport, and accessibility for Wanniassa residents.

The Clerk having announced that the terms of the petition would be recorded in Hansard and a copy referred to the appropriate minister for response pursuant to standing order 100, the petition was received.

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

Motion to take note of petition

MADAM SPEAKER: Pursuant to standing order 98A, I propose the question:

That the petition so lodged be noted.

MS LAWDER (Brindabella) (10.01): I would like to make a few comments about the Wanniassa bus petition. I pass on my thanks to the residents of Wanniassa, Kambah and Tuggeranong more generally, and some from further afield in Canberra. I would especially like to thank a local resident, a woman from Wanniassa, who has gone above and beyond in putting forward this petition, in putting copies of the petition in

local shops, and in even doorknocking houses in her suburb, so incensed was she by the removal of buses in her suburb. She has passed on to me not just the petition which has been lodged today but a number of comments from residents of Wanniasa that she collected during her walking around the streets and doorknocking. Let me quote:

For the past six weeks I have been speaking with many residents of Wanniasa and beyond affected by the cancellation of bus services in the suburb. These discussions have taken place at shopping centres, bus stops and in general walking the streets—

and doorknocking—

These cancellations have had a huge impact on people living in the Wanniasa Hills and Wanniasa area.

The distance to a bus stops now for a large number of households is over a kilometre and in some instances further. Much of the area is steep and uphill all the way. For others it is walking through an underpass and they don't feel safe. Some don't feel safe coming home from work in the dark and walking that distance—

which is much further—

Canberra is freezing in winter and hot in summer. Can you imagine what it is like for people with health issues walking over a kilometre up steep hills. Try walking in heels and carrying groceries. In summer people are going to be heat affected. In winter and wet weather and burn offs asthmatics are going to be put at risk.

There are many health issues, Madam Speaker. She goes on to say:

We don't want to hear from the government ... to stay indoors and out of the heat. That is a ridiculous statement when people have to rely on a bus service for all sorts of things.

She goes on:

For a month I walked the streets in the area that was serviced by the two bus routes that used to run along Longmore Cres and spoke with as many residents as possible to see what affect those cancellations had on them.

She continues:

... when I started looking into this I had no idea what an impact it had on people and how it had dramatically changed their lives and made their lives extremely difficult. In some instances it has totally robbed people of their independence and their social inclusion of day to day living.

I came across households where there was a sole resident. They were able to maintain their home and their garden but no longer had a car. The bus route was their life line to their independence. They could go to the shops, the bank, the

Doctor, the hospital and visit friends. In some instances they just caught the bus to talk to others and have an outing. To be able to go to the shops, buy a coffee and talk to the person at the next table. This has been taken away from them and they feel totally excluded from life so much so that some begged me to stay and have a cup of tea with them because they were just so lonely. They were relying on the generosity of their neighbours to pick up a few groceries for them. They are relying on their children or grandchildren to take them to appointments or to drive them around for other needs. People just don't have the money to catch a taxi everywhere.

There are many other examples, Madam Speaker, from older people, from younger people with families who are suffering from the cancellation of school buses and from people who have their grandchildren for a day or longer during the week and would have used the bus to take them out on outings. We have already heard that since the cancellation of these businesses Tuggeranong has seen a decrease in patronage of buses. The person who did the petition says:

Some residents have said it is taking them 90 minutes to get from their homes in Wanniasa Hills to the Hyperdome—

South.Point—

by bus. That is absolutely ridiculous. The trip by car takes 10 minutes.

They could have taken the bus on Longmore Crescent, which is no longer possible for them.

The person who did the petition goes on to say:

We see on our rates notice we are paying 5% for Public transport. What public transport? It has gone? You have taken away our bus services. The residents believe they are entitled to a 5% refund or the bus services back? We don't mind paying for education and health because everyone benefits from that but why should we pay for a bus service that has been cancelled ...

There is now a bus service that everyone does not benefit from. She continues:

... give us back the bus service we had.

Thank you for taking the time to read a few comments Nicole and hear how the cancellation of these bus services has affected people.

MR PARTON (Brindabella) (10.06): Like my colleague Ms Lawder, and also Mr Wall, I spend a lot of time talking to people in Wanniasa at the moment. They are absolutely dismayed. They are really angry. I have to say, Madam Speaker, that there are a number of conversations that I am not able to fully quote in this chamber because the language that is used by these people is not parliamentary. I can forgive them for using such language because they are so upset.

In this chamber, I have already mentioned Mary, who is 76 years of age and who has been a regular user of the buses for decades—for decades. Now she says that it is not

possible for her to catch the bus into Tuggeranong town centre. We delved into that further. I said, "Come on, Mary. It is possible." We worked out where the stop was. She said that she means that she has to do so much walking to catch the bus that she may as well just walk to Tuggeranong town centre. And that is what she does most days of the week. She is 76 years of age. She is walking into Tuggeranong town centre while she can. Madam Speaker, we are all getting older, and we know that at some point she will not be able to walk that far. I am assuming that at that point she will just stay in her home.

These people are angry. They say to me, "Mark, what can you do about it? What can we do about it?" I have to tell them that in the short term there is not a great deal that they can do. I have urged them to sign petitions like the one that Ms Lawder has facilitated coming to the chamber. Ms Lawder, Mr Wall and I have been involved in media appearances; we have had kitchen table discussions. I know that at a couple of those they said, "It would be wonderful if Mr Steel could join us at one of these kitchen table discussions." I am not sure that that is really likely.

Many of these people are on our side of 50, Madam Speaker. I tell them, "I am sorry to say this, but the Labor-Greens government is not likely to listen to you." They say, "Why?" I say, "Because according to Mr Barr you are too old and you are too far south." Too old and too far south! People over 50 do not matter. Tuggeranong does not matter. It is really important for us to put a flag in the sand and for us on this side of the chamber to say that you do matter to us: we will listen to you and we do listen to you.

I have a number of emails and letters here. I want to briefly mention Nicholas from Duffus Place, who is moving, partly because of the bus network. He is going to Woden. We are listening to you, and we will listen to you. Mrs Roy from Langridge Street, we will definitely listen to you. Peter from Wheeler Crescent was just ropeable; we are certainly listening to you. There is Dean from Balfour Crescent, and Frank and Paula from Balfour Crescent. There is Robert from Longmore and Sylvia from Sainsbury. There is Monica and her three girls from Gaunson. There is Felipe from Brooke Place, Patience from Holden Crescent and Arancha from Carr Crescent. We feel your pain and we will continue to trumpet this injustice extremely widely.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Scar trees

Ministerial statement

MR GENTLEMAN (Brindabella—Manager of Government Business, Minister for Advanced Technology and Space Industries, Minister for the Environment and Heritage, Minister for Planning and Land Management and Minister for Police and Emergency Services) (10.10): I rise to update the Assembly on proposed reforms and other work to improve heritage compliance resulting from the investigations of the unauthorised removal of two Aboriginal scar trees in recent years. I committed to giving this statement through this year's estimates process, and I am pleased to provide this update to the Assembly.

Firstly, I would like to state that I recognise the importance of Aboriginal scar trees to our region's heritage and I share the significant disappointment in the loss of these two important trees. People are often surprised to learn that the ACT is rich in natural and cultural heritage. There is a perception that we are a relatively young city and do not have many heritage places or objects. This is far from the case.

Aboriginal occupation of the area has left a rich legacy spanning more than 20,000 years. There are many signs of this occupation throughout the natural and built environment, including scar trees, rock shelters and artefact scatters. Aboriginal scar or culturally modified trees are what is left behind in the skilful process of harvesting bark from a tree. The bark has many uses, such as coolamons, transporting food, water and even babies as well as shields for protection against attack.

Scar trees provide valuable clues about Aboriginal people's use of perishable materials. They tell us where Aboriginal people lived and help us find other nearby types of archaeological sites, such as scatters of stone tools. They provide Aboriginal people with an important connection to their culture and past.

The ACT government takes the destruction of heritage places and objects very seriously, and when these two issues were reported immediate site visits were conducted and investigations ensued. However, it is important to note that major damage or total destruction of heritage places and objects is rare in the ACT and is usually the result of unexpected events such as fire. We all remember, of course, the 2003 bushfires where we lost many of our early stockman huts as well as the devastating fire at the Canberra Services Club in 2011. Nonetheless, destruction of any heritage place or object is a live risk whether these are natural, built, or Aboriginal.

The government takes several measures to minimise the risk of destruction to our heritage places and objects. These include: making information publicly available on the ACT Heritage Register; heritage interpretation such as the Canberra Tracks signage; and, most importantly, having statutory planning approval processes in force under a range of legislation.

Where new developments are proposed information on Aboriginal scar trees is available and accessed across government, contractors, developers and the broader community. However, there are rare occasions where even these mitigation measures are not enough, such as in the case of natural disasters or general reckless or negligent conduct. The recent incidents of the unauthorised removal of two Aboriginal scar trees have highlighted the need to strengthen heritage compliance tools. This work is currently being progressed and I will provide further detail when I have provided an overview of the investigations into the removal of the two Aboriginal scar trees.

I note that in accordance with provisions of the Information Privacy Act 2014 the ACT government is not able to disclose detailed information on individual compliance matters. However, I can speak broadly to the matters.

The removal of MSYB1 at a school in Wanniasa was reported in April 2017 and investigated by Access Canberra. The investigation concluded that a genuine mistake

was made as part of confirming the area to be cleared and the tree was mistakenly felled as part of a larger program of tree removal. The contractor undertaking the clearance had sought advice from the Conservator of Flora and Fauna in line with statutory process prior to removing any trees and it was identified by the conservator as a tree not to be removed. Unfortunately, an administrative error by the contractor saw the tree wrongly removed during clearance.

Once the error was realised the contractor notified the ACT government straight away and expressed their regret. The investigation concluded that it was not malicious activity that resulted in the removal of the tree but, rather, a genuine and unintentional administration error. There was no evidence of a fault element under the Criminal Code 2002, and it was the investigator's opinion that there was insufficient evidence for the matter to be prosecuted.

A recommendation resulting from the investigation was that the government consider expanding the range of heritage enforcement tools currently available. This work is being progressed. Additionally, the Education Directorate is currently exploring a range of additional protection measures including developing a heritage identification database for contractors to ensure and enhance the protection of heritage assets on school sites. The Education Directorate is also exploring in consultation with representative aboriginal organisations, or RAOs, appropriate and respectful remediation for the site.

The removal of MST4 was reported in July 2018 by a member of the community. An immediate site inspection confirmed that the tree had been cut down and the trunk containing the cultural scar remained on the ground adjacent to the stump. An initial review of aerial photography indicated that the tree was cut down between December 2016 and March 2017. An ACT government investigation was unable to identify a responsible party or the circumstances of removal. No further compliance action can therefore be taken.

The trunk of MST4 has been temporarily relocated to a safe place to ensure no further damage occurs to the cultural scar. Its relocation and temporary placement was undertaken with the assistance of a qualified materials conservator and in consultation with the RAOs. Final arrangements on the long-term conservation measures for the remaining trunk and interpretation of the location are still ongoing between the land manager for Transport Canberra and City Services in consultation with representative aboriginal organisations.

These recent heritage compliance matters highlighted that the current deterrence system for heritage offences is not as effective as it could be. I have asked the Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate to explore the introduction of an on-the-spot fine scheme and repair orders. Under new legislation anticipated to be introduced later this year I propose to give the Heritage Council the power to use repair damage directions for people to repair damage they have done to heritage places and objects such as heritage houses and Aboriginal cultural sites.

The government will also introduce an infringement notice system where compliance officers can issue an immediate \$1,000 fine to an individual or a \$5,000 fine to a corporation for damage to a heritage place regardless of whether it can be repaired.

Knowing our region's history and the role it has played in shaping our present community makes it important to preserve heritage places and objects for current and future generations. The Canberra community recognises this and is passionate about our shared heritage. We have answered their call for more effective ways to deal with breaches of the Heritage Act and damage to heritage places and objects. In the past people have got away with damage because we have only had the big stick of prosecution, which, as we have seen, is not effective when damage is accidental. Limitations in the legislation have meant the Heritage Council has not been able to insist on repairs.

These amendments will let us take immediate action where a heritage place or object is damaged, and because we can deal with matters quickly and issue on-the-spot fines they should discourage people from committing an offence in the first place. The amendments will also give the Heritage Council the authority to issue a direction where there is an imminent threat to the heritage significance of a place or object. Heritage directions may include orders to carry out essential maintenance on a place, avoid adverse effects on a significant feature of a heritage place, and not undertake a development affecting the heritage significance of a place.

A new compliance policy will be released once the amended legislation has passed to guide the Heritage Council and compliance officers when to use which compliance tools, such as a direction, an infringement notice or prosecution. They will be able to both fine offenders and issue them with a direction to repair. Current options for prosecution will remain for serious damage.

The new processes will cut red tape and give the Heritage Council more flexibility in dealing with problems, allowing quicker, more appropriate outcomes. They will also bring the ACT into line with other jurisdictions. Given the shared disappointment expressed by my fellow MLAs at the recent budget estimate hearings, I look forward to their support when the proposed amendments are tabled and debated.

These changes will lead to positive heritage outcomes and have no significant financial impact to the territory. They are in direct response to concerns raised by you, Madam Speaker, and the community.

I present a copy of the statement:

Scar trees—Ministerial statement, 19 September 2019.

I move:

That the Assembly take note of the paper.

MS LE COUTEUR (Murrumbidgee) (10.20): I thank the minister for his update. As he noted, this is a result of discussion in the recent estimates process. It is a pity it has taken so long and that it took estimates to get the government to publicly comment on this and take it seriously. While trees can be a renewable resource, given current society and lifestyles in Canberra, scar trees are not a renewable resource. They are

part of our heritage that we need to conserve. We need to take it seriously because we cannot easily replace them, if at all.

I understand the Education Directorate is exploring additional protection measures to avoid this happening again. Despite this dreadful situation I am pleased that it is likely to lead to some strengthening of and improvement in our heritage laws. That is good. We will obviously look at the amendments when presented to the Assembly, but I anticipate that the Greens will support them.

The other thing I really would like to hear about and which was not part of the minister's statement was how the government, possibly the Education Directorate, is talking to the Aboriginal people affected by this. I have spoken to some of them, and the word ropeable comes to mind. They were not impressed, and it is very important that the government talks to the affected Aboriginal people and organisations about reparations and what we should do about this.

For anyone in the Assembly who is not aware of this, there is a picture of some scar trees on the external wall of Minister Berry's office on the second floor. If anybody wants to know what we are talking about they should have a look at the picture. Some of that is part of our heritage, which unfortunately is now gone.

Thank you, minister, for this update. I look forward to the amendments and I look forward to the ACT government talking to the affected Aboriginal organisations about reparations.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Elder abuse Ministerial statement

MR RAMSAY (Ginninderra—Attorney-General, Minister for the Arts, Creative Industries and Cultural Events, Minister for Building Quality Improvement, Minister for Business and Regulatory Services and Minister for Seniors and Veterans) (10.23): The abuse of older people in the Canberra community is something that certainly concerns us all. We all have older people in our lives, whether they are grandparents, parents, relatives, friends or neighbours, whom we care about, and we want to keep them safe from harm and exploitation. Older Canberrans have contributed so much during their lives and they continue to enrich our community. They deserve to be treated with dignity and respect in their senior years. It is important for all of us that we have robust protections in place to prevent and address elder abuse, including physical abuse, neglect and financial abuse, to ensure the wellbeing of all Canberrans at all stages of life.

For those who have been following the government's work on addressing elder abuse, they will know that the safety and wellbeing of older Canberrans are matters that are very close to my heart. Like family violence, elder abuse happens behind closed doors, perpetrated in secret against vulnerable victims. But, unlike family violence, which has been brought out into the light of public awareness and which is the subject of

significant research and analysis, the abuse of older people in Australia is still largely hidden, and its nature and prevalence are not well understood.

We know it is happening. We have probably all heard about shocking individual incidents, but there need to be more accurate ways to understand, identify and measure elder abuse. We also need to help the community to recognise the signs of elder abuse and to know how to report it and seek assistance for older people affected by these shameful behaviours.

That is why all Australian governments have agreed to focus on building an understanding of elder abuse and raising community awareness as the first two priority areas in the national plan to respond to the abuse of older Australians 2019-2023. The national plan was launched on 19 March 2019 and will serve as a compass to ensure that all jurisdictions progress in the same direction, and that we coordinate our efforts and share our learnings with each other for the benefit of older Canberrans.

During the process of developing the national plan we consulted widely. The national plan reflects the input of the ACT Ministerial Advisory Council on Ageing, COTA ACT, Legal Aid ACT, the ACT Law Society, ACT Disability, Aged and Carer Advocacy Service, and the Public Trustee and Guardian.

In addition to focusing on raising awareness, the national plan reflects other key priorities to address and prevent elder abuse which were drawn from consultation with stakeholders. These are strengthening front-line responses for older people experiencing abuse, working to harmonise enduring power of attorney legislation across Australia and setting up a national register of enduring powers of attorney, and identifying gaps in legislation for safeguarding vulnerable older people.

The national plan is supported by an implementation plan, endorsed by all attorneys-general in June this year, which sets out actions to be taken under each priority. The current implementation plan captures actions up to 2022. It is a living document that will be updated to reflect emerging initiatives, and it will be monitored by a national implementation executive group which includes two ACT senior officials.

The ACT government has already commenced a number of initiatives to safeguard the rights of older Canberrans, and we have more than 20 initiatives included in the implementation plan.

A part of our commitment to implement the national plan responding to the abuse of older Australians is to identify gaps in legislation that would safeguard the most vulnerable older people in our community. Given this commitment, I have instructed my directorate to commence work on a proposed specific criminal offence relating to elder abuse in the ACT, as I announced on 31 August. I will take this proposal to the community for their views later this year.

As part of our plan to develop Canberra into an age-friendly city, the government recognises that there is more work to be done to protect our older Canberrans from

abuse as they enter the more vulnerable stages of life. The protection of older people from any form of abuse is an absolute priority, and these protections are fundamental to the human rights of older Canberrans, who should be able to live free from abuse, violence and exploitation.

We know that the royal commission into aged care has already revealed some horrible circumstances where the abuse of older people has occurred both at home and in aged-care institutions. It is clear that we need stronger laws to protect older Canberrans from both physical and financial abuse. The creation of a specific elder abuse offence holds abusers to account and plays a significant part in keeping our older Canberrans safe in later life.

Our local framework document in the ACT is *Age-friendly Canberra: A vision for our city*, which I tabled in the Legislative Assembly on 21 February this year. An age-friendly city plan is currently being developed which will include targeted actions to ensure that older people are safe, secure and free from abuse and discrimination.

On 12 September 2019 I hosted a dedicated consultation forum on this topic. Older people and those who support them from across the community joined in discussions on how we can best tackle the issues of elder abuse and age discrimination in our community. A key initiative in the ACT is the establishment of the Older Persons ACT Legal Service, also known as OPALS. OPALS was a commitment in the 2018-19 budget. The government provided \$640,000 to establish a seniors rights service within Legal Aid ACT. OPALS commenced operation in July 2018 and was formally launched last November.

OPALS provides a broad range of free and flexible legal assistance to older people in Canberra, including help with elder abuse, enduring powers of attorney, guardianship and financial arrangements with family members. It also makes referrals to other services if needed. The OPALS solicitor travels to meet clients if needed, bringing services to the people who need them, rather than expecting vulnerable older people to come to them.

The demand for OPALS services demonstrates the community confidence in the help we are providing to older Canberrans. In the first financial year, OPALS provided legal advice and assistance on 98 occasions. In the last quarter alone, the figure was 58 occasions of advice and assistance, showing a twofold increase on the previous quarter.

Since July last year, OPALS has also taken over the older persons abuse prevention referral information line, known as APRIL, a phone line that was previously managed by the Community Services Directorate. Placing this service with OPALS has clear synergies in providing a single point of contact for assistance with elder abuse. OPALS received a total of 553 telephone calls last financial year, with nearly half of the calls received during the last quarter. This also reflects the ACT's participation in the single elder abuse national phone line: 1800 ELDERHelp, or 1800 353 374.

Since March this year, a telephone call made to 1800 ELDERHelp has been automatically redirected to the elder abuse phone line service of the jurisdiction in

which the caller is located. In the ACT the call is redirected to OPALS. The data collected by OPALS is de-identified and provided to the commonwealth, along with data from all jurisdictions, to help in the effort to develop a national picture of elder abuse. This national data picture will greatly contribute to our understanding of the nature and pattern of elder abuse and help to shape effective responses to it.

Early data and recent studies have indicated that financial abuse may be the most common form of abuse experienced by elderly people. This abuse is often perpetrated by family members or others that an older person knows and trusts. This trust can be abused to take control of their financial affairs.

The Australian Law Reform Commission has recommended consistent national reforms of enduring powers of attorney legislation to provide greater protections for people granting a power of attorney and a national register for all powers of attorney documents. This was adopted in the national plan's fourth priority area. To progress this recommendation, the Council of Attorneys-General established the enduring power of attorney working group to consider harmonisation of enduring powers of attorney laws and develop a proof of concept register for enduring powers of attorney documents.

Within the working group, the Justice and Community Safety Directorate is working very closely with our jurisdictional counterparts to examine and resolve complexities around the differing power of attorney legislation in each state and territory and what would be included in a register. It is certainly not an easy exercise, but we are working hard to get there.

I mentioned earlier that building community awareness is essential in driving a cultural change to stop elder abuse. We have funded a number of initiatives to build awareness across government services and in the community. ACT domestic and family violence front-line worker training is being rolled out to equip ACT government workers with the ability to recognise and respond to domestic and family violence and to refer on to relevant supports.

Foundation training will be rolled out for all ACT public servants. This training includes content on elder abuse and how ACT employees can respond and refer to appropriate support services. It will also help workers to understand the barriers that might inhibit older people from disclosing elder abuse. A second tier of more detailed training for key services will include a module on elder abuse for occupational groups that work with older people on a regular basis.

Our grants funding program is another key mechanism for addressing elder abuse. A total of \$80,000 in grant funding is provided annually through the ACT seniors grants program, which funds community organisations to complete projects in priority areas which include addressing elder abuse and promoting supported decision-making for older people.

The first round of the 2019-20 ACT seniors grants program closed on 2 September, and I look forward to announcing the projects which will be funded through this grant round. The 2018-19 grant round provided funding for a number of projects related to

elder abuse prevention, including \$6,000 for Legal Aid ACT to consult Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members about elder abuse and to develop resources and proposals for dealing with the issue, and \$10,000 for ADACAS to counter elder abuse through individual advocacy and community education at aged-care facilities and organisations that provide services to seniors.

The 2017-18 grant round provided \$13,000 for Legal Aid ACT and Care Inc to work in partnership to produce a guide and deliver community and professional education for older people who are thinking about decisions such as selling their home and giving the money to someone who has agreed to care for them, having a relative move in with them, and/or giving or lending money to someone, and \$10,000 for the Conflict Resolution Service to develop resources that will empower individuals and families to resolve disputes themselves and to understand when and how to access specialised conflict resolution support services for seniors.

Madam Speaker, we have many initiatives in place and many more planned to address elder abuse within our community. I can assure you that the government will continue to take every opportunity to improve protections for older Canberrans, and we remain committed to ensuring that no-one in Canberra is left behind or overlooked. We are honoured to have older Canberrans who are here to share with us their invaluable experience and wisdom, and they certainly deserve all protections that we can provide.

I present a copy of the statement:

Protecting older Canberrans from abuse—Ministerial statement, 19 September 2019.

I move:

That the Assembly take note of the paper.

MS LE COUTEUR (Murrumbidgee) (10.37): I thank the Minister for Seniors and Veterans for his work in this area. It is obviously an area I am very concerned with, particularly given my status as the oldest member of the Assembly. I am encouraged to hear that the ACT is participating in the progression and implementation of the national plan, although I am concerned that the development of the national register for enduring powers of attorney is likely to be some considerable time away. I understand only feasibility is being explored at present, and I urge the minister to do whatever he can to encourage this to happen more quickly.

This has been touched upon in many forums, and many people I have spoken to feel that this is a substantial issue. Possibly it could be approached from a banking point of view. We have had some discussions with people who have had issues with powers of attorney and how they are used by banks.

Apart from the need for a national register of enduring powers of attorney, there is a need for education, and I am pleased that the minister referred to that. We have specific need for the education of potential attorneys and of the legal profession who are often called upon to write enduring powers of attorney. Based on personal

experience they do not seem to have a particularly good understanding of what a power of attorney is and under what circumstances it can be brought into operation.

I urge the minister to look at education, which I understand could be done in the ACT before the rest of Australia worked out the need for it. On that note, Victoria has an online enduring power of attorney form which has an awful lot more information than some people receive in the ACT when they fill in a power of attorney.

The education focus must not rely on the current frontline domestic and family violence training. I understand that there are some current challenges in the rolling out of that training and that it is only touching the tip of the iceberg in relation to elder abuse and truly understanding the issues of how to respond when somebody tells you what is happening to them. We need much better education for the potential attorneys, the person planning to enter into an enduring power of attorney and their advisers, be that the legal profession, JPs, or whoever.

Another theme that came through over and over again is that of isolation and loneliness. People perpetrating elder abuse tend to be the people older people have social contact with. The fear and reality of being left alone and isolated plays a significant role in how older people respond to elder abuse, be it financial or otherwise.

I constantly hear from people about situations where the older person knew that what was happening to them was not right but they did not wish to do anything about it because they valued the relationship more. Often those relationships are with their family—their adult children—and you can understand why they may not wish to alienate their only supports, especially in later years.

We also hear about the issue where it is the other way around where an older parent, often now only the mother, has been the carer for many years of an adult child—it seems to be normally the son—with a disability. They have been able to do that in their younger years but with declining health their child's issues are more than they can really deal with. That is elder abuse, but they put up with it because they believe that there is no alternative for their child. This is really sad stuff.

The other sad stuff about this was talked about at great length by Ms Lawder and Mr Parton earlier today that is, issues with our transport system. Our public transport system is such that some people are becoming socially isolated because it is not possible for them to get out of their homes.

While I appreciate that the primary aim of our bus system is to get lots of people from one place to another—that is good and that is what it should be—it also needs to ensure that everyone in Canberra is able to leave their homes in a reasonable fashion and is not stuck at home with no possibility of contact with other people. That results in the one or two people they do have contact with being incredibly powerful, and that can lead to abuse. In other jurisdictions a carer cannot become an attorney simply because of that problem. These are some of the saddest cases where the very limited social support older people have is abused and they basically have nowhere to go.

I thank the minister for seniors for his statement. We need a broad, society-wide response to this. A lot of this is the responsibility of the federal government, but there are things we can do. I look forward to this being an issue that we all take note of in the Assembly.

MS LAWDER (Brindabella) (10.44): I also thank the Minister for Seniors and Veterans for this ministerial statement about the need to protect older Canberrans from abuse. Indeed, back in June on World Elder Abuse Awareness Day I called on the minister and the government to take more action to combat the abuse of older Canberrans. There is tripartisan support for this in our Assembly. We all recognise that older Canberrans deserve our support, respect, and protection from abuse.

In many cases older people may not even categorise the circumstances in which they find themselves as abuse, so the educative process is very important. Providing a number of different pathways for people to seek assistance in various ways from various agencies and organisations is also really important. I know from my discussions with the minister that he is deeply committed to this as well.

This is such an important area. These are people who have contributed to our society over decades and decades and they deserve to spend their later years with dignity and respect free from financial, emotional or physical abuse. Elder abuse takes many different forms and the fact that it is often at the hands of people they know is something many of us find deeply distressing. I know we will do all we can to do more to address the issue of elder abuse.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Building regulatory reforms—update Ministerial statement

MR RAMSAY (Ginninderra—Attorney-General, Minister for the Arts, Creative Industries and Cultural Events, Minister for Building Quality Improvement, Minister for Business and Regulatory Services and Minister for Seniors and Veterans) (10.46): I am very pleased to update the Assembly on the building regulatory reforms and other work to improve the practices in the building industry and compliance with the building standards. As we promised, we completed a further 15 reforms by the end of last financial year, and these reforms include a new minimum documentation and information guideline for building approval applications for new and substantially altered apartment and commercial buildings. The guideline applies to all new applications for a building approval that are made after 1 September this year.

The new code of practice for building surveyors also started on 1 September 2019. These two documents work together. They outline the obligations of applicants and people designing buildings to provide sufficient information and they also detail the obligations of building certifiers to make sure that all the required technical information is provided to assess whether the building can comply with building standards. The code of practice also clarifies the expectations for minimum standards of practice for licensable work, including the general obligation to act in the public interest and specific requirements in relation to stage inspections. These are

nation-leading reforms and other jurisdictions have asked to come here to look at their implementation so that they can implement similar systems in their state.

To further strengthen the system and to help make sure that only people with the skills and the knowledge to be licensees are given a licence, I have declared new qualification requirements for new building surveyor licence applicants. These include that, from 1 November this year, they will need to complete an assessment relating to their role as well as the existing technical and experience requirements. This complements the building licence exams that were introduced earlier this year for classes A, B and C builder licence applicants.

The builders exam also applies to existing licence holders at the time of licence renewal, with the construction occupations registrar now having the power to select individuals to sit the exam. This includes people who have an identified poor compliance history, as well as people who have not done any recent work under their licence. The exam questions cover the licensees' obligations relevant to their licence class. It assesses interpretation of technical codes, standards, plans, drawings and other technical documentation and applying relevant information to building processes. This nation-leading reform was discussed at the recent building ministers forum and it will lead to further work to ensure our education system for builders is fit for purpose.

Since April 2019, 58 individuals across the three classes have sat an exam—30 in class C, 16 in class B and 12 in class A. Fifteen of these were new applicants, 26 had expired licences and 17 were renewals. Seventeen individuals did not pass their first attempt—10 class C builders, two class B builders and five class A builders. Those who did not pass their first attempt were invited to make a second attempt. Five people who sat an exam did not pass. Three of those were class C builders, one was a class B builder and one was a class A builder. These people will now be excluded from applying for a licence for six months.

The reforms include rolling out changes to licensing processes such as increased criminal history checks for building and building surveyors licences. The new guide for nominees of corporate and partnership licences also helps them to better understand their role and their obligations as well as the responsibilities of corporation or partnership.

A new regulation also requires that from 1 October 2019 any agreement for a builder to act as the landowner's agent to appoint the building certifier and apply for approvals for certain residential building work must be separate from a building contract. This helps landowners understand that they have the right to choose the building certifier and to make a more informed decision if they want to assign that right to someone else.

We have reviewed responses to the federal inquiry on insolvency and the result of other trials of various payment protection models. Further to these reforms, we have also developed a new online course on the ACT's building regulatory system for people intending to operate as building surveyors in the ACT or work in the ACT building industry.

Successfully completing the course is now compulsory for people applying who have not previously held a building surveyors licence. Releasing the course completed a further reform, taking the total to 29 of the 43 reforms now completed. We will be promoting the course to licensees, industry members and associations to help people better understand the building regulatory system.

The construction occupations registrar and Access Canberra continue to increase regulatory and enforcement action. Additional funding announced in this year's budget will add to the number of building inspectors available to inspect and audit building approvals and building work and support further compliance work.

Over the past 12 months Access Canberra has issued 10 notices directing building work to be undertaken to address non-compliant buildings, three rectification orders and 197 demerit points to construction licensees for issues including failing to comply with the Building Code. In the 2018-19 financial year building inspectors issued 29 stop notices to builders for building work that was contrary to building standards and would have potentially led to ongoing problems for the eventual owners and occupiers.

I am pleased to report that the rapid regulatory response team is continuing, following the success of the initial pilot. The team has resolved 224 cases by engagement, education and negotiation, without the need to undertake formal enforcement action. This gets outcomes for building owners more quickly and cheaply for minor matters and avoids the need for formal action which can be time consuming and expensive. If the team considers that the information that they have gathered shows that the matter requires further investigation or more serious action, it is escalated to the building investigations team. Another important reason for the success of this approach is the team taking the time to talk and listen to all parties so that they can determine what the real cause of the issue may be.

As well as regulation, we have a strong focus on education for both the community and the industry. In June I launched the build, buy or renovate web portal, which makes it easier for owners to navigate the building, buying or renovating process in the ACT. It also provides a centralised portal for easier access to information for the building industry on regulations, codes and standards.

I am pleased to advise that in the two months since the website launched there have been over 75,000 page views. The most viewed pages include pages for builder and electrician licensing, building approvals and development applications. We have also had over 1,000 views each on a range of pages that inform owners and purchasers about the building process and what they need to consider before they build, buy or renovate.

The better building quality information program, which will start next week, is designed to make people aware of their rights and their responsibilities when buying, building or renovating and where to seek help if something goes wrong. It also informs industry about the ACT government's building reforms and where they can go for information about industry requirements in the ACT construction sector. The

campaign includes a series of short videos that feature people who are illustrating buying an apartment, renovating, buying off the plan and building a new home. They highlight some of the issues that people need to be aware of and they direct people to the website for more information.

We are not stopping there. The remainder of the reforms will be completed over this coming year. The first modules of the new building auditing tool are being rolled out in the field, helping building inspectors to identify and record Building Code compliance issues. Consultation on the draft code of practice for builders closes on 20 September, and we will be starting consultation on alternative dispute resolution models for disputes about residential building work shortly. Over this next year we will also consult further on licensing and accountability measures for people designing and building, as well as for people contracting for off-the-plan sales. Consultation will also seek views on insurance and other protections for clients and building owners, as well as security of payments issues. The government will also continue with legislative reforms to make sure that we have a responsive and effective building regulatory framework.

As I have mentioned before in this place, while the government has a role to play, compliance and quality are not only the government's responsibility. I welcome recent statements and correspondence that I have had from industry and community bodies about taking their own actions to help lift standards in the industry and support the work that we are doing. We are happy to work with industry and community members to make sure that we have safe, healthy, sustainable and livable buildings in the territory.

I also mentioned that building issues are national. We will continue to participate in work under the building ministers forum on reforms and collaborate to be consistent with other jurisdictions, where appropriate. But each jurisdiction is at a different stage of reform. Our program is well advanced. The reforms in the ACT program have been chosen after a comprehensive review of the ACT system and consideration of what could be genuinely effective in improving practices and competency across the industry. We will continue to implement the remainder of the reforms over the next year until the end of the term of government.

I make no apology for pushing ahead to achieve better quality buildings for all Canberrans. There are specific pieces of work that are happening nationally which the building ministers forum have agreed to fund but they are not intended to delay state and territory reforms.

This is not the ACT acting in isolation or operating differently from other jurisdictions. No state or territory has committed to delay the implementation of necessary reforms in their jurisdictions while we wait for the commonwealth. State and territory building ministers have been clear about this: states and territories needed to continue with reforms and not slow down to allow national work to catch up. The reforms in the ACT also relate to the whole building system and include aspects such as contracting, education, dispute resolution and interventions for specific issues such as documentation that are not being considered nationally but are important to lasting reform.

I am proud to say that the work that we are doing in the ACT and the types of reforms that we are implementing have attracted the attention of other jurisdictions. I know that we are on the right track and we will keep going to implement reforms to benefit the community and strengthen the integrity of the building industry. I look forward to updating the Assembly again at a later date.

I present the following paper:

Building regulatory reforms—Ministerial statement, 19 September 2019.

I move:

That the Assembly take note of the paper.

MS LE COUTEUR (Murrumbidgee) (10.59): I thank the minister for that update about building regulation reforms. For a very large number of residents of Canberra, building reforms are an issue where we clearly have had a problem with lack of enforcement with the law to date, and I am very, very pleased to see that this is changing to some extent. I have repeatedly been told by people that there actually have to be real consequences for those people in the building profession who do not do the right thing and who actively break the law, which leads to very substandard buildings.

One issue I think would be interesting or desirable—more than interesting—for the minister to look at is the issue of building cladding, particularly on private buildings. I have been told by some people in the industry that in the ACT there are in fact a lot of buildings which have flammable cladding and which are in private ownership. I do not know if that is true or not, but that is something that potentially is a considerable worry to anyone who is in a building which may be in that circumstance.

Basically, I thank the minister for his work on this. I thank the government for putting some effort into compliance. I look forward to more happening in this unfortunate space.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Electricity Feed-in (Large-scale Renewable Energy Generation) Amendment Bill 2019

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 Corrections and Justice Health, Minister for Justice, Consumer Affairs and Road Safety and Minister for Mental Health) (11.02): I move:

That this bill be agreed to in principle.

I am pleased to present this bill today. The ACT government is on track to deliver the legislated 100 per cent renewable electricity target in 2020, with the majority of renewable electricity delivered through deeds of entitlement with 10 renewable electricity generators which provide the ACT with the renewable electricity certificates produced on 20-year terms.

The Assembly recently passed the Climate Change and Greenhouse Gas Reduction (Renewable Electricity Target) Amendment Bill 2019, which legislated an ongoing 100 per cent renewable electricity target post 2020, ensuring that the ACT will maintain delivery of 100 per cent renewable electricity in perpetuity.

Additionally, the renewable electricity delivered under these deeds is critical for the ACT's greenhouse gas emissions reduction target of net zero emissions by 2045, as well as the interim targets for 2020 and onwards. Once the ACT reaches 100 per cent renewable electricity, our future greenhouse gas reduction targets will require a decarbonisation of natural gas and transport fuel consumption.

The ACT government is preparing for forecasts that a significant portion of this decarbonisation effort will take place through change to electric alternatives, such as reverse-cycle heaters, electric vehicles and electric or induction cooktops, which will lead to increases in electricity demand. The ACT's population also continues to grow quickly.

In order to deliver on the ongoing renewable electricity target and maintain zero emissions for electricity, the ACT government has announced a new renewable electricity auction to procure more renewable electricity supply as required to deliver on the legislated targets.

It is important to note that this bill, and any instrument increasing the limit on capacity, will have no direct impact on electricity bills. The ACT continues to have among the cheapest electricity prices in Australia while leading the world in climate change response. I expect that, even with the extra renewable electricity it intends to purchase to maintain the 100 per cent target on an ongoing basis, this will still cost less than \$4.90 per household per week, coming in cheaper than initially forecast.

The Electricity Feed-in (Large-scale Renewable Energy Generation) Act 2011 currently imposes a 650-megawatt limit on the capacity of generating systems in relation to which feed-in tariff entitlements may be held. This capacity limit has allowed the ACT government to sign deeds of entitlement to deliver on the target of 100 per cent electricity by 2020 but provides a roadblock to procuring more capacity, which will be required to support the recently announced auction. The ongoing target may require a series of auctions in future years and decades, if electricity consumption continues to grow.

The bill will provide a long-term solution to a long-term problem. By legislating to allow increases to the maximum capacity via disallowable instrument, the bill will allow the ACT government to deliver 100 per cent renewable electricity in perpetuity, in line with the target legislated by the Assembly.

By setting the limit via a disallowable instrument, the Assembly will continue to have an appropriate level of oversight and control over the limit on capacity. Upon passage of the bill, I intend to immediately publish a limit on capacity, to ensure that a limit remains in place after the 650-megawatt limit specified in the act is removed. I intend to set the limit on capacity to 900 megawatts, which is sufficient to cover forecasts for electricity consumption into the next decade.

In summary, this bill will enable the legislated 100 per cent renewable electricity target to be met in perpetuity through additional renewable electricity auctions as required, reducing the need for the Legislative Assembly to pass further minor legislative changes to the maximum limit on capacity. I commend the bill to the Assembly.

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

Statute Law Amendment Bill 2019

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

Title read by Clerk.

MR RAMSAY (Ginninderra—Attorney-General, Minister for the Arts, Creative Industries and Cultural Events, Minister for Building Quality Improvement, Minister for Business and Regulatory Services and Minister for Seniors and Veterans) (11.07): I move:

That this bill be agreed to in principle.

The Statute Law Amendment Bill 2019 makes statute law revision amendments to ACT legislation under guidelines for the technical amendments program approved by the government in 2002. The program provides for amendments that are minor or technical and non-controversial. They are generally insufficiently significant to justify the presentation of separate legislation in each case, and are inappropriate to make as editorial amendments in the process of republishing legislation under the Legislation Act 2001.

Statute law amendment bills serve the important purpose of improving the overall quality of the ACT statute book so that our laws are kept up to date and are easier to find, read and understand. A well-maintained statute book greatly enhances access to ACT legislation. It is also a very practical measure to give effect to the principle that members of the community have the right to know the laws that affect them.

The bill contains a number of minor amendments with detailed explanatory notes, so it is not useful for me to speak about each of them individually. However, I would like to take the opportunity briefly to mention a few matters.

Schedule 1 of the bill amends the Cemeteries and Crematoria Act 2003 to clarify the regulation-making power and the functions of the authority in relation to opening, developing and building a cemetery or crematorium. The bill amends the regulation-making power to include express provision about opening a cemetery or crematorium. The bill also amends section 28A of the act to clarify that the functions of the cemeteries authority include developing and building a cemetery or crematorium.

Schedule 1 of the bill will make a number of amendments to the Financial Management Act 1996, the Lifetime Care and Support (Catastrophic Injuries) Act 2014, the Public Sector Workers Compensation Fund Act 2018 and the Territory Superannuation Provision Protection Act 2000 to ensure that financial investment provisions are drafted consistently across these acts and accurately reflect the territory's financial administrative processes.

Section 37 of the Financial Management Act is amended to clarify that transfers between the territory banking account and certain directorate banking accounts to facilitate investment may be made without further appropriation.

Section 38 is updated to reflect current administrative practice that an investment of public money may be made or managed for the territory by any entity, including a directorate, or an entity other than a directorate, such as an external fund manager. Amendments to section 38 also clarify that fees and expenses reasonably incurred for making or managing an investment may be deducted from the investment as a whole, not just from any interest received for the investment. The bill also removes subsections (9) and (10) of section 38 to correct an anomaly and to clarify the original intention that section 38 of the Financial Management Act applies to directorate banking accounts.

Finally in this section, a new definition of "returns" is inserted into each of the acts to replace the term "interest" in relation to investments. The acts currently refer to "interest" received from investments of public money. The dictionaries in the Financial Management Act and the Territory Superannuation Provision Protection Act define "interest" as including "a dividend and any other financial return on a deposit, loan or other investment". However, the ordinary meaning of "interest" would not usually include returns on investments such as dividends, capital gains or distributions. The new definition of "returns" includes interest, dividends, capital gains, distributions and any other financial return on an investment.

Schedule 1 of the bill amends sections 96 and 97 of the Motor Accident Injuries Act 2019, which set out formulas for working out an injured person's entitlement to income replacement benefits. The act currently includes superannuation in gross income when a worker's pre-injury income is less than \$800. This is problematic, as a worker's pre-injury income cannot be worked out until their gross income is known. During the debate on the Motor Accident Injuries Bill 2019 in the May sittings, the government flagged that there were technical issues with the approach and that this would need to be addressed.

The bill will correct these issues by instead including an extra superannuation amount for eligible low income workers when income replacement payments are calculated. The extra amount will be based on the superannuation guarantee charge percentage. An eligible worker will need to have a pre-injury income of less than \$800 per week but more than \$100 per week. The \$100 aligns with the weekly equivalent of the minimum earnings threshold for the superannuation guarantee.

An amendment is also made to the definition of “private medical examiner” in section 145 of the Motor Accident Injuries Act 2019 to require a private medical examiner to have both qualifications and experience, rather than qualifications or experience, that are relevant to the nature of an injured person’s injuries.

Section 138(2)(c) of the Public Health Act 1997 is omitted in schedule 1 of the bill. Under that section the executive may make regulations in relation to “cervical cytology”. Section 138(2)(c) is omitted because cervical cytology is now a commonwealth responsibility under the National Cancer Screening Register Act 2016.

Finally, schedule 3 includes amendments of acts and regulations that have been reviewed as part of an ongoing program of updating and improving the language and form of legislation. These amendments are explained in the explanatory notes and are routine technical matters, such as the correction of minor errors, improving syntax and omitting redundant provisions. Of particular note are the amendments to the Legal Aid Act 1977, which update the act with gender neutral language.

The bill, while minor and technical in nature, is another important building block in the development of a modern and accessible ACT statute book that is at the forefront in Australia. I commend the bill to the Assembly.

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

Sentencing (Parole Time Credit) Legislation Amendment Bill 2019

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 Corrections and Justice Health, Minister for Justice, Consumer Affairs and Road Safety and Minister for Mental Health) (11.15): I move:

That this bill be agreed to in principle.

I am pleased to introduce the Sentencing (Parole Time Credit) Legislation Amendment Bill 2019 into the Assembly. This bill amends the Crimes (Sentence Administration) Act 2005 and the Crimes (Sentencing) Act 2005 to introduce a parole time credit scheme into the ACT’s criminal justice system.

The practical effect of the bill is to ensure that, in general, if an offender's parole order is cancelled more than three months post release from custody but before the parole period has expired, the time the offender spent in the community in compliance with the conditions of their parole order is counted towards the offender's remaining sentence. However, the government has applied careful policy consideration to ensure that community safety and community trust are not eroded.

The bill includes a new part 7.5A in the sentence administration act which introduces a general rule that parole time credit applies to offenders who have their parole order cancelled. It provides exceptions from this rule for serious offenders who commit further serious offences while on parole, family violence offenders who commit further family violence offences while on parole, and offenders who commit any offences within three months of their release on parole. It provides a discretion for the court to apply parole time credit to offenders who fall within those exceptions if special circumstances exist.

It sets out detailed methods for the calculation of parole time credit. It includes provisions addressing how parole time credit will be applied when an offender commits a new offence in another jurisdiction whilst subject to a parole order made or registered in the ACT. It ensures administrative certainty in the application of the scheme by requiring the court and the Sentence Administration Board to state on the warrant, notice or order committing the offender to custody the date at which parole time credits stopped. And it includes transitional provisions which ensure that parole time credit will be available to all offenders who, on or after the commencement date, are on parole or who are in custody awaiting sentence for a new offence committed whilst on parole.

Currently, when a parolee is returned to custody following a breach of parole conditions, they are liable to serve the remainder of the sentence that was outstanding at the time they were released. For example, if a detainee is released on parole with 12 months remaining on the sentence and that person breaches their parole eight months into the parole period, currently they are liable to serve the full 12 months that had been outstanding at the time they were released.

The effect of the ACT's current parole system has been examined in various Australian Law Reform Commission reports, including most recently in *Pathways to justice: inquiry into the incarceration rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples*, which recommended the immediate abolition of parole schemes which require time served on parole to be served again if parole is revoked. Key justice stakeholders across Australia have noted the unnecessarily punitive effect of the current system, which in effect imposes an additional sentence on offenders.

In response to these issues, every other Australian jurisdiction except the Northern Territory has introduced legislative changes to develop schemes which credit time spent on parole. These schemes are known as clean street time or time to count.

Responses to combating crime are often viewed in binary terms as either tough or soft on crime. This simplistic duality has long had political resonance, but in reality the

tough on crime mantra and its impact on the people in the Australian prison system are negative, counterproductive and demonstrably ineffective in actually reducing crime and recidivism. The ACT government is committed to reducing recidivism by 25 per cent by 2025, utilising a justice reinvestment methodology. This is neither tough nor soft on crime; it is a world-recognised, evidence-based response to the drivers of criminal behaviour.

Research by the Australian Institute of Criminology has found that parole supervision reduces the risk of reoffending. While the impacts of parole time credit in the ACT context are hard to predict, evidence from other Australian jurisdictions suggests that introducing parole time credit could likely see a reduction in the number of offenders becoming institutionalised in the AMC, a result of the revolving door, but more importantly see detainees value the privilege of active participation in pro-social rehabilitative programs. And, Madam Assistant Speaker, this bill will continue to see the parole system used as a privilege and marker of good behaviour.

Parole is an important part of our justice system, as it also provides detainees with a structured, supported and supervised transition back into the community after a period of full-time custody. While on parole, the offender remains under sentence and continues to be supported and supervised, to ensure community safety and a positive reintegration back into family life, employment or education and the continuation of programs begun in custody.

Not counting time served in the community in compliance with parole conditions may remove the offender from the community for longer than was intended by the sentencing court, as requiring an offender to serve the period of time spent on parole in custody following a potentially minor or administrative breach has the effect of extending the time served under the sentence.

This operates as a disincentive for offenders to apply for parole, which decreases offender engagement with rehabilitation programs that would have been available to them while on parole and increases the prison population. Further, if offenders do not apply for parole despite being eligible and subsequently complete their whole sentence in custody, when they are eventually released from prison at the conclusion of their sentence they are released without any form of supervision. Important factors that militate against reoffending, such as housing and employment, may be jeopardised by offenders spending lengthier periods in custody and being released without supervision, leading to poorer community safety outcomes.

We have chosen to name the scheme “parole time credit” to reflect the strengths-based nature of the scheme and more accurately describe the benefit to offenders who complete crime-free time in the community. Introducing parole time credit means that most parolees who are returned to custody following cancellation of their parole order will be liable to serve the time remaining on their sentence at the time the parole order was cancelled, not the period that remained to be served when parole was granted. Using the example I referred to earlier, the offender would be liable to serve four months in custody, as the eight months they were in the community living in compliance with their parole conditions would be counted as time served against their sentence.

However, as noted previously, the government has no tolerance for offenders who repeatedly commit the most serious offences. Murder, manslaughter, inflicting grievous bodily harm, threats to kill, torture and kidnapping, along with manufacturing and trafficking controlled drugs, aggravated robbery and sexual offences, are among the offences which, if committed while a person is on parole for serious offending, will exclude the person from receiving the benefit of parole time credit. Reoffending of this type while on parole generates a community expectation around punishment and denunciation of the offender's behaviour. These elements are an essential component of any criminal justice system and are an appropriate moral response to the commission of serious offences which create significant harm for victims and the wider community.

While the bill introduces a presumption against granting parole time credit to offenders who commit these types of serious offences whilst on parole for a serious offence, the court has been provided with discretion to apply parole time credit in appropriate cases where special circumstances exist. Whether special circumstances exist will be a matter for the court. Providing this discretion recognises that there may be cases where the further offending or the subjective circumstances of the offender should not preclude recognition of a period of compliance with parole obligations, for example, where there has been a lengthy period of compliance, the new offending is less serious or of a different type to the original offending, or there are other circumstances that make it appropriate to recognise parole time credit.

For example, it is well known that recovery from drug addiction takes time. If an offender on parole for a serious offence has been engaging with rehabilitation and counselling services and is otherwise compliant with parole but, after a period on parole relapses and this results in the offender facing new serious drug-related charges, for example, the court may determine that the circumstances of the offender's situation may nevertheless merit the application of parole time credit. This approach recognises that in some circumstances it may be appropriate to acknowledge the offender's rehabilitative efforts or other subjective circumstances in determining whether parole time credit should be applied.

The bill provides for a delayed commencement date to better support the courts, justice agencies and services, and the legal fraternity to put in place the necessary administrative arrangements to support the scheme. This includes development of the requisite systems to calculate combined sentences. The government firmly believes that these systems, which are currently operating across much of Australia, will be securely in place in the coming months.

The bill balances the introduction of a much-needed scheme to credit offenders who live in the community in compliance with their parole conditions with the need to ensure community safety and maintain the basis of the principles of sentencing, including punishment and deterrence. The bill brings the territory's sentencing framework into line with other Australian jurisdictions and responds to the Australian Law Reform Commission recommendation in the *Pathways to justice* report in a timely yet considered and localised fashion. I commend the bill to the Assembly.

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

Workers Compensation Amendment Bill 2019

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

Title read by Clerk.

MS ORR (Yerrabi—Minister for Community Services and Facilities, Minister for Disability, Minister for Employment and Workplace Safety and Minister for Government Services and Procurement) (11.27): I move:

That this bill be agreed to in principle.

Today I am pleased to present the Workers Compensation Amendment Bill 2019, which makes amendments to the Workers Compensation Act 1951. Access to workers compensation is a fundamental workplace right. All workers should be able to engage in their employment confident in the knowledge that support services will be provided if they are injured or become ill because of their work.

For the more than 140,000 private sector workers in the ACT the Workers Compensation Act establishes a framework for the delivery of medical, allied health, rehabilitation and income support in the event of work injury. The changes in this bill will ensure that the act continues to cover all workers by aligning important definitions with contemporary work arrangements. It also makes a number of technical amendments to assist administrative clarity and transparency.

One of these changes is to clarify matters in relation to the default insurance fund. The fund provides safety net services for workers who would otherwise be unable to access workers compensation following injury. This might occur if a worker's employer failed to hold a valid workers compensation policy or if an insurer has been wound up. As currently drafted the act makes a principal contractor responsible for providing workers compensation to the employees of any subcontractor they engage if the subcontractor fails to hold a valid workers compensation policy. If in the rare instance that a subcontractor and the principal of an injured worker are both uninsured this bill will ensure the default insurance fund is able to step in and support the injured worker.

The government wants to support injured workers and believes no-one in the territory should be financially disadvantaged by an employer's failure to hold compulsory insurance. The proposed amendment will clarify that workers are covered for workers compensation claims where both the contractor and principal are uninsured—in other words, it is not just limited to where the contractor is uninsured. The bill also makes a minor technical amendment to clarify how the levy on workers compensation insurers that funds the safety net insurer's operations must be calculated.

The bill also addresses the application of the act to family day care and in-home care workers. We know many working parents in the ACT rely on childcare services. This includes more than 1,000 families who choose family day care and in-home care over

centre-based day care arrangements. These workers are among the most vulnerable in the territory, which is why in 2006 the ACT government legislated to make it clear that they should have access to workers compensation.

To identify the workers that would be covered, the 2006 amendments referenced definitions established in commonwealth legislation. That legislation was subsequently changed. Unfortunately, this has resulted in some confusion about the continued application of the Workers Compensation Act to family day care and in-home care workers.

Clarification was initially provided by a declaration made under section 16A of the Workers Compensation Act. This was necessary to address the immediate risk to those works in relation to their coverage under the workers compensation legislation. However, the act still uses terms that are out of date, and the amendments in this bill will update the act to use more contemporary definitions for these workers.

Essentially the bill will declare people working in an approved family day care service under the Education and Care Services National Law (ACT) Act 2011 as workers for the purposes of the Workers Compensation Act. This amended definition will capture both family day carers and in-home carers, in accordance with the longstanding policy.

This government is committed to ensuring that the ACT workers compensation scheme continues to support timely, safe and durable return to work outcomes through effective injury management and income support for all injured workers. The Workers Compensation Amendment Bill 2019 is a demonstration of that commitment. I commend the bill to the Assembly.

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

Education, Employment and Youth Affairs—Standing Committee Report 6

MR PETTERSSON (Yerrabi) (11.32): I present the following report:

Education, Employment and Youth Affairs—Standing Committee—Report 6—*Management and Minimisation of Bullying and Violence in ACT Schools*, dated 16 September 2019, together with a copy of the extracts of the relevant minutes of proceedings.

I move:

That the report be noted.

On 4 April 2019 the Legislative Assembly referred an inquiry into the management and minimisation of bullying and violence in ACT schools to the education, employment and youth affairs committee. As the committee notes in the report, the referral instructed the committee to take all identifying evidence “in camera and to hold documents on a confidential basis”.

This broad restriction has resulted in the committee arranging hearings, quoting evidence in the final report and not being able to share information with the public as it normally would. However, what we did was to release the submissions, hold hearings, and visit schools both here in the ACT and interstate. What we have not done, however, is to release the transcripts of those hearings and those visits. The committee encourages the Assembly to think carefully regarding referrals like this in the future. They are warranted in certain circumstances, and I firmly believe that this is one of them.

As part of the inquiry, the committee conducted a number of in-camera hearings, speaking to eight organisations and six individuals. The committee also visited nine schools and received 27 submissions. The committee notes that all schoolteachers and school leaders that the committee spoke to are committed to the elimination of bullying and violence in schools.

The committee made 23 recommendations and nine findings in its report. The recommendations focused on developing systems and tools for parents and students to report incidents of bullying and violence, and tools that support all stakeholders understanding what will happen following an incident being reported. The committee also highlights the need for a systematic approach to social and emotional learning programs operating in schools.

The committee would like to acknowledge the significant contributions from those participating in the inquiry, either by writing submissions or by attending as witnesses.

I want to be very clear on one point that I have just mentioned. From the witnesses and the visits that we undertook, it is very clear to me that teachers and principals in our schools care deeply about their students. They are all working hard to ensure that our schools are safe and positive places. I would also like to highlight something for those listening in who have a keen interest in our schools, and this is fleshed out in different aspects throughout the report: ACT schools are safe places. They are amazing places of learning, filled with exciting opportunities. There are instances of bullying and violence in our schools but they are the exception.

In regard to students, every student has the right to an education. That includes students exhibiting problematic behaviour and those who have been victims to bullying and violence. I freely admit that it is challenging to balance the right to education when this conflict arises, but I believe that the system in place now is a good one and I hope that our recommendations will make it an even better one.

There are a couple of recommendations that I would like to highlight. With respect to recommendation 6, for students who are victims of bullying and violence, I think that one of the easiest short circuits to that cycle is to give students the ability to pursue their education at another school. I think we can all agree that, ideally, this would not be needed, but in ensuring that the right to an education for every student is maintained, sometimes this is required.

We currently see this occur with students leaving for private schools from public schools. I am also aware that in certain circumstances this has occurred between public schools. But in regard to public schools, it is under-utilised and not readily available as a choice. I think it would be best if students and their families did not need to leave the public system and that this was better utilised.

With respect to recommendation 9, the work of learning support units is incredible, and I have really enjoyed, over the past couple of months, getting to understand the finer detail of their work. What has become clear to me and to several other committee members is that not all of these learning support units are the same. They are incredibly different between schools, with certain specialisations benefiting certain students more. Allowing students who need certain learning support units to have better access to those units is a good thing. That means giving some flexibility when it comes to priority enrolment areas for those students.

With respect to recommendation 11, the flexible offsite program is a very new initiative and it is not something that I had much detail on before venturing into this inquiry. It stems from some previous programs that existed at schools. It is not located at a single school; it is now on its own standalone site, and it is absolutely incredible. I hope that this program is expanded and that it will open on the north side, sooner rather than later. But I do completely understand that this is a very new program.

Finally, recommendations 18 and 19 relate to self-reporting portals for bullying and violence. A recurring theme that pained me was the communication breakdowns that led to certain incidents being responded to poorly. Allowing direct reporting of these incidents will mean that they are responded to better.

In closing, I would like to thank my fellow committee members, Mr Parton and Mrs Kikkert. They were productive and made it easy to work through a very serious topic. I would also like to thank our committee secretary, Ms Harkins, for her hard work and attention to detail. This committee inquiry was unlike any other that I have been a part of, and she showed great mastery of the Assembly's proceedings to allow us to navigate it. I am very pleased to provide the Assembly with a copy of the report.

MR PARTON (Brindabella) (11.38): This was a tough inquiry, as was highlighted by the chair. I, like you, Madam Assistant Speaker, enjoy most of my work here, but there were large chunks of this inquiry that I did not enjoy because it was harrowing. Those of us who have children know that feeling that you get when your children are hurting, when your children are in pain, but you feel powerless to do anything about it. Particularly when they are younger, your kids look to you in the belief that you can fix it and sometimes you cannot. We heard from so many people who were in that situation, and it certainly tugged at my heartstrings. When you pack your children off to school in the morning, you should do so in the belief that they will be safe. In too many cases, that has not been the case.

Please understand, Madam Assistant Speaker, that I am a temporary member of this committee, standing in for my colleague Elizabeth Lee, so I have not dealt a great deal with the education portfolio in my time here. I must say that, through this inquiry,

I have much greater respect not only for our schoolteachers but for our school principals in particular.

I am sure Mr Pettersson would agree with me on this. During the inquiry we met with school staff at various schools in the ACT and interstate, and I am in awe of the balancing act that they do. My reading of a school principal's job, on the basis of what I have learnt in this inquiry, is that it is comparable to riding a unicycle on a high wire while juggling fire sticks; then your phone rings. It is nearly impossible to pull it all off and to do it correctly, and to do it in a way that all of the stakeholders believe is the right way to do it. I take my hat off to them.

It is a long and relatively complex report. I would urge all of those who have been affected by this to read it in full; I think you need to do so. Among the recommendations are that there should be more access to social workers and youth workers, as well as school psychologists, and access to psychological support services outside school hours.

There are, as Mr Pettersson mentioned, some recommendations around our priority enrolment area policies. I think currently they are a little too inflexible when it comes to families who are affected by bullying and violence. The report also includes a recommendation around personal protection orders, which, for the most part, cannot be effectively enforced in a school situation. Surely, we can find a way to draft those orders in such a way. I understand that this is outside the realm, in a lot of cases, of what the ACT government has control over, but surely we can find a way to put those orders together in such a way that they can be a useful means to de-escalate ugly situations. That is what the orders are supposed to do.

There is also mention in this report of the somewhat restrictive referral conditions of the inquiry. There was an obligation to take all evidence that could identify any person or school associated with bullying in camera. We all understand why this condition was put in place; we all get it. But the reality was that, when you actually got to the nuts and bolts of doing the inquiry, it did make it difficult on a number of levels for us to do our job properly.

I say that with all respect to the minister. We all understand why these conditions were put in place, but it did make it nigh on impossible for members of the public to follow any progression of the inquiry. I think it created a perception that we were doing things secretly because we were fearful of revealing the truth. That is not the case, but it did not inspire faith in this process from those who were waiting patiently on the sidelines.

I want to draw—and I know Mr Pettersson mentioned this, too—particular attention to this paragraph in the “conduct of the inquiry” section:

The Committee note that it has undertaken sensitive inquiries previously and always balanced the need to protect vulnerable witnesses against the need for transparency. The Committee would encourage the Assembly to be conscious of including limiting provisions in future referrals to ensure that the activities of a committee are not impeded.

I thank my colleagues Mr Pettersson and Mrs Kikkert. It was a great pleasure to work with both of you. Thanks to Kate Harkins, who managed to pull so many threads together. There were so many threads and she did a really good job of pulling them together to a workable point so that we could put these recommendations together. I give a big thanks to everyone who gave evidence, and I genuinely hope that we can move forward in this space.

Question resolved in the affirmative

Planning and Urban Renewal—Standing Committee Report 9

MS LE COUTEUR (Murrumbidgee) (11.44): I present the following report:

Planning and Urban Renewal—Standing Committee—Report 9—Draft variation No 360—Molonglo River Reserve: changes to public land reserve overlay boundaries and minor zone adjustment, dated 28 August 2019, together with a copy of the extracts of the relevant minutes of proceedings.

I move:

That the report be noted.

I will start with comments on behalf of the committee in my role as chair of the committee and then move to my personal comments. First of all, of course, I thank my fellow committee members, Mr Parton, Ms Orr until the last deliberation, and Mr Pettersson, who took over at that point.

Today the planning and urban renewal committee is tabling its ninth report, into draft variation 360. The variation covers changes to public land overlay boundaries and minor zone adjustments for the Molonglo River reserve. The Minister for Planning and Land Management referred this variation to the committee on 22 March 2019, pursuant to section 73 of the Planning and Development Act 2007.

The committee received three submissions, held one public hearing and heard from seven witnesses. Evidence to the committee was focused on the future of the part of Coombs known politely as the Coombs peninsula, less politely as the Coombs tip, which is bordered by the Molonglo River reserve on three sides. The committee's four recommendations respond to this evidence and set out a proposed way forward for the future of Coombs peninsula. The committee extends its thanks to everyone who provided information and evidence to this inquiry, including directorate officials, interested organisations and members of the community.

This completes my remarks as the chair of the committee and I will now make some more personal comments.

The Coombs peninsula is currently on the land release program. However, a number of witnesses and I do not believe it should be developed for housing at all. First of all,

it is a small site surrounded by the Molonglo River reserve on all three sides and that is why it is called the tip or the peninsula. If you look at it, that is exactly what it is.

What happens on this site will impact directly on the reserve. For example, many builders do not control their rubbish very well. Any visit to new suburbs will show you building waste blowing all over the place. Rubbish from the peninsula will blow straight down the hill into the reserve and the river.

Second, the Coombs peninsula contains an area of pink-tailed worm-lizard habitat. This lizard is listed as vulnerable both nationally and in the ACT and this habitat should be protected. Third, the peninsula is next to a very narrow part of the reserve. It is less than 200 metres wide at that point. Research shows that narrow reserves like this just do not adequately protect biodiversity. There is too much impact from the surrounding activities and not enough room for fauna to move freely through the corridor.

Fourthly, the site has some beautiful views along the river and I think it would probably be a good spot for recreation. I do not know whether this can be made to work but the government is currently consulting, or arguing, whichever way you want to put it, with a number of local residents about the site for a playground. It is possible that there could be some space on the Coombs peninsula to have some or all of that as a playground without compromising its environmental values. And certainly, any compromise would be vastly less compromising than turning it all into residential, as is planned.

Finally, the number of dwellings which are being planned is very small, only 30. Taking this land off the land release program will make no material difference to the overall rate of land release or to Canberra's housing supply.

In conclusion, for all these reasons, the Coombs peninsula should be set aside for environmental and possibly recreational purposes. As the committee has recommended, it should be rezoned to hills, ridges and buffer zone and be permanently withdrawn from the land release program.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Report 10

MS LE COUTEUR (Murrumbidgee) (11.49): I present:

Planning and Urban Renewal—Standing Committee—Report 10—*Draft variation No 355—Calwell Group Centre: Zone Changes and amendments to the Calwell Precinct Map and Code*, dated 27 August 2019, together with a copy of the extracts of the relevant minutes of proceedings.

I move:

That the report be noted.

It has been an exciting time for the planning and urban renewal committee and I am glad that all members present agree with that. On 2 April this year, pursuant to section 73 of the Planning and Development Act 2007, the Minister for Planning and Land Management, Mr Mick Gentleman, referred draft variation 355, Calwell group centre, zone changes and amendments to the Calwell precinct map and code, to the standing committee for consideration and report to the Legislative Assembly.

On 11 April we advised the minister that we would be conducting an inquiry into the draft variation. The committee held one public hearing and heard from six witnesses, including business owners, town planners and the Minister for Planning and Land Management together with directorate officials. The committee received one submission, which brought a wide range of issues to the committee's attention.

The report has six recommendations, the first being the normal one that, subject to the following recommendations, the draft variation be approved. I thank all the people who provided information and evidence to the inquiry. I particularly thank my fellow members of the committee: Suzanne Orr; Mr Michael Pettersson who replaced Ms Orr; and Mr Mark Parton as the continuing member.

I will make a few comments on the recommendations on my own behalf. Recommendation 3 is a standard recommendation that the ACT government finalises development of master plans in a more timely fashion. We recommend this in all of them because they need to do that.

Recommendations 4 and 5 are the ones that people will find more surprising coming from the planning committee; I think this is the first time in this Assembly that we have recommended more development than the government has. We want to make this variation work for the Calwell shopping centre and, as far as we could see, the government was proposing such a small change that it would be economically impractical. We could see no ill effects from developing a bit more.

Recommendation 4 refers to area A, which is the car wash site. We are proposing that that be amended so residential uses are permitted on the ground floor in areas where there is not a designated primary active frontage. We heard evidence that allowing residential only on higher floors was not economically viable so leaving things as recommended would mean an unviable business continued there.

The more interesting one is recommendation 5, which talks about the parts of the main Calwell shopping centre block, which could have additional storeys. The government proposed only a small bit on the eastern side that was going to look like a tower on one side. Apart from looking silly in my opinion, it did not seem to make an awful lot of sense. The Woolworths underneath that site has recently been revamped so clearly the redevelopment was not going to happen in the next 20 years.

The committee recommended extending the development along the whole back of the shopping centre. That will create the possibility of something happening, as long as rules and criteria are put in to protect solar access and future residents from amenity issues which could arise from any relocation of the loading docks. This does not mean

that there will necessarily be redevelopment at Calwell but it does mean that at least there is a possibility.

It is unbelievable to think that recommendation 6 is necessary, but it is that the ACT government ensure shadow diagrams are provided to the committee and the ACT community for all future variations. It is hard to imagine how the government could think a worthwhile evaluation could be done of a redevelopment without knowing where shadows are cast. I thank committee members for their input and commend our report to the government.

MR PARTON (Brindabella) (11.54): I want to speak briefly to both reports. I was waiting for coffee this morning with my old friend Mr Barr. We were chatting about how willing things have become in the chamber of late but how our committee system is where you are likely to see collegiate bipartisanship. We see it in particular in this planning committee with the three members from the three parties.

I do not believe that any of us on this committee sees themselves as a planning guru—although maybe I should not have said that because Suzanne might have seen herself as a planning guru—but there is great benefit in a different set of eyes looking at these scenarios. My genuine belief is that the committee's recommendations on both Calwell and the Molonglo River reserve are extremely well thought out and to a large degree are just commonsense outcomes after dealing with all the evidence.

I thank Ms Le Couteur, Ms Orr and now Mr Pettersson. I also thank Annemieke Jongsma, who is an absolute gem. That is all I have to say; I am not going to go into the detail because Ms Le Couteur covered that exceptionally well in her statements.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Sitting suspended from 11.56 am to 2.00 pm.

Questions without notice **Labor Party—staff behaviour**

MR COE: My question is to the Chief Minister and head of the executive. The New South Wales Labor Party is under intense scrutiny following a major scandal with alleged illegal donations and corruption. Today it is reported that members of the ACT Labor Party and staff of ACT Labor MLAs were seen celebrating this issue. Chief Minister, is this behaviour acceptable and representative of your government, and what responsibility do you take for staff mocking corruption issues?

MR BARR: No, I do not think this behaviour is acceptable. I believe that doing silly things and putting them on the internet is not a good practice for anyone. I am disappointed in what I have seen. I know I speak on behalf of all of my colleagues in expressing that disappointment. I think those young people would, if they had their time again, not have posed for a photograph in that way.

The government is of course conscious of the need to address integrity issues within government. That is why we intend to progress with legislation that will ban property

developers from donating to political parties here in the ACT. That is a concrete step that this place could take to ensure that issues that we have seen in New South Wales, on both side of politics, frankly, are not seen here in the ACT.

MR COE: Chief Minister, how many of your team's staff members were involved in this event, and did they come from the non-executive, the executive or both?

MR BARR: I understand about seven; none from executive staff, all from non-executive.

MS LAWDER: Chief Minister, what action have you taken to investigate this issue?

MR BARR: I have certainly expressed my disappointment in relation to this matter. It is not something that needs to be investigated. I think we know that a silly thing was done and put online. Be very clear that the actions of those individuals are ones that they have expressed regret for and have apologised for.

The business of doing silly things and putting them on the internet is not restricted just to people in Young Labor. I note that there is someone sitting on the other side of the chamber who put something pretty silly on the internet just yesterday, in relation to young people and climate change. That was a quite patronising statement from—

Mr Wall: Well wishes for a sunny day.

MR BARR: Well wishes for a sunny day indeed. It highlighted that doing silly things and putting them on the internet is not restricted to just young people; it also includes former leaders of the opposition.

Members interjecting—

MADAM SPEAKER: Members, come to order, please. Ms Le Couteur, you have the floor.

Planning—environment and planning forum

MS LE COUTEUR: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Members interjecting—

Mr Coe: Did you get an ALDI bag as well?

MADAM SPEAKER: Mr Coe, you are warned.

MS LE COUTEUR: My question is to the minister for planning and relates to the cancellation of the environment and planning forum, which used to be an important consultation forum for community councils, community organisations and industry bodies. Minister, why did you cancel the environment and planning forum?

MR GENTLEMAN: I thank Ms Le Couteur for the question. Of course, the government does believe in having important discussions with the community. In relation to this particular forum, it has been held for quite some time. We do, of course, believe that we should engage in regular consultations with individuals, community groups and industry bodies. The environment and planning forum is one way in which the planning directorate engages with community groups. It is important that we have those engagements.

In relation to this particular forum, the directorate looked for the ability to engage in new ways. I did not make the decision to cancel the forum; it was the Director-General of EPSDD, in looking at new ways that we can communicate with the rest of the ACT in regard to future planning.

MS LE COUTEUR: Minister, the forum was a good opportunity for attendees to hear each other's views plus to get information for the directorate. What new consultation arrangements will there be and how will they deliver the benefits of the previous forum?

MR GENTLEMAN: When Mr Ponton began in the role of chief planner he gave an undertaking that he would look at new and innovative ways to engage with our community to make sure that engagement was as effective as it possibly could be. We want to hear from a range of voices across Canberra on matters important to planning and the environment. Mr Ponton has advised members of the forum that he takes engagement with community and stakeholders very seriously. The cancellation of the forum is to allow a review of its effectiveness; it should not be taken as a move away from his commitment to engaging with the community.

MR PARTON: Minister, why do you continue to trumpet your consultation credentials but then shut down avenues by which members of the community can engage, particularly those members who disagree with your position?

MR GENTLEMAN: I did not shut it down at all.

Ms Lawder: You cancelled it.

MR GENTLEMAN: No, I did not cancel it. The directorate that was engaged in the forum made the cancellation. I support the work that Mr Ponton does. He is looking for new and innovative ways to engage with the community. He advised the forum of this and they are seeking a new opportunity.

Hospitals—aged-care transition

MRS DUNNE: My question is to the Minister for Health. Do ACT Health and Canberra Health Services comply with the federal aged-care policy relating to the maximum number of days a patient spends in hospital after being found to require permanent residential care?

MS STEPHEN-SMITH: I thank Mrs Dunne for the question. It is a challenge across health systems around people being able to be discharged to appropriate residential aged-care facilities. It is a challenge for the hospital that often appropriate residential aged-care facilities are not available when people are ready for discharge. To the greatest extent possible obviously we want to move people out of hospitals into appropriate residential aged-care facilities where a bed is available. In the ACT there is a shortage of residential aged-care facilities and beds and that is the responsibility of the federal government. They are responsible for funding aged care.

We work very closely with all players across the health sector to ensure that people can be discharged from hospital in a timely way but also that they receive health care in residential aged-care facilities to prevent them from coming into hospital when that is not necessary.

MRS DUNNE: Minister, what is the average number of days a patient spends in an ACT hospital before moving to permanent residential care services after they have been assessed?

MS STEPHEN-SMITH: I thank Mrs Dunne for the question. I will take that question on notice and come back to the Assembly with the answer.

MR WALL: Minister, how many residential care beds are currently available to support patients transitioning from hospital in the region, and who determines what is classified as a suitable bed?

MS STEPHEN-SMITH: Again I will take that question on notice, acknowledging that the provision of residential aged care is a commonwealth responsibility. It is something that we are monitoring closely in terms of ensuring that older people in the ACT have an appropriate place to be discharged to.

This is complex. People may also want a residential aged care place that is close to their home, close to their community, close to their family. There is a whole range of details that need to be taken into account in terms of discharging people. I will come back with some further information to the Assembly on notice.

Hospitals—aged care beds

MR WALL: My question is to the Minister for Health. Minister, what is the cost to ACT Health per bed day of keeping a patient in hospital while they seek or wait for a permanent residential aged care space?

MS STEPHEN-SMITH: I will take that question on notice in terms of the detail but I note that the cost of an individual patient is going to vary depending on their individual needs. I am not sure that we will have a figure that is an average cost for that particular group of patients who are in a particular situation requiring transition to residential aged care. If we have that information I will bring it back to the Assembly, noting that people will have different levels of acuity and different levels of support requirements. The average day cost for each of those individuals may differ.

MR WALL: Minister, what funding is provided by the commonwealth per bed day for a patient in hospital while they seek a permanent residential care space?

MS STEPHEN-SMITH: I will take that question on notice and come back to the Assembly with the answer.

MRS DUNNE: Minister, is the government complying with federal guidelines relating to the maximum number of days in hospital? If not, is it doing so because commonwealth funding is more lucrative to the territory than actually discharging people from hospital?

MS STEPHEN-SMITH: Canberra Health Services obviously takes all measures to try to comply with guidelines. I can absolutely assure the Assembly that it would certainly not be the case that any extra length of stay would be because of any difference in cost. We are very keen to get people out of the hospital when it is not appropriate for them to be there. Improving patient flow through Canberra Hospital is a very high priority and a focus of the timely care strategy, which Mrs Dunne will get around to being briefed on in October.

Canberra—events

MR GUPTA: My question is to the Chief Minister. Chief Minister, how do Canberra's major events benefit our local economy?

MR BARR: I thank Mr Gupta for the question. Our major events are, of course, big contributors to the territory economy. For example, Floriade and Enlighten generate around \$45 million in combined economic benefit to the territory each year. These events create jobs, they support local businesses and they help to fill our hotels, restaurants and cafes, generating significant benefits for Canberrans. They play a crucial role in attracting people to visit our city, often for the very first time, and to come back for repeat visits.

We use our major events to showcase the best of our city—our local products, experiences and talent—while also supporting sectors of the local economy. Tourism is now one of the territory's largest private sector employers, providing jobs for over 17,000 Canberrans. Our 2020 tourism strategy supports event growth, to grow our visitor economy and to grow visitor expenditure in the territory to \$2.5 billion by 2020. We are well on our way to achieving this goal off the back of another boom year for tourism in the ACT, with record highs in both domestic and international visitors to Canberra.

MR GUPTA: Chief Minister, how was attendance at this year's Enlighten festival?

MR BARR: I am very pleased to advise the Assembly that this year's Enlighten festival again broke all records, in terms of both attendance and economic benefit. In 2019, the festival achieved a combined attendance of a little over 328,000 people and generated \$5½ million in direct expenditure. This is up from 319,000 and \$4.8 million in direct expenditure in 2018. This is a fantastic outcome for the Enlighten festival.

Some 11.2 per cent of attendees came from interstate or overseas, and around 11,000 of these people came to Canberra just to attend one or more of the Enlighten festival's events. This is testament to the quality of the festival programming.

The 2019 Enlighten festival comprised a suite of feature events, including the illuminations; the Canberra night noodle markets; Lights! Canberra! Action!; Symphony in the Park; Canberra Day activities; the Canberra Balloon Spectacular; and the ever-popular hit 104.7 Skyfire event.

In 2020 the festival will again run for 17 days, from late February till the middle of March. Next year it will coincide with the Australian Tourism Awards, which the ACT is hosting and which will be held at the beginning of March. The awards present an opportunity to showcase Canberra to the Australian tourism industry during the Enlighten festival.

MR PETTERSSON: Chief Minister, what can we expect from this year's Floriade?

Mr Parton: Flowers?

MR BARR: Floriade is Australia's biggest celebration of spring and, yes, there will be flowers—for those very clever interjectors from across the aisle. It will be held in Commonwealth Park, and it is celebrating its 32nd year. This year's theme is "World in bloom" and is inspired by cultures across the globe. It showcases designs across 21 in-ground flowerbeds and 189 raised flower beds and features over one million bulbs and annuals on display.

Using ACT government events to showcase and support Canberra businesses is a key priority for Floriade. This year it has again renewed its partnership with Pialligo Estate to run their Pialligo Urban Cafe. The event will host three pop-up bars this year with Capital Brewing Co, Contentious Character and Underground Sprints all having a presence.

NightFest also returns this year running from 3 to 6 October. It features live music performance and stand-up comedy. This year's Floriade will again feature the very popular Dogs Day Out, Veterans Day and Floriade in the suburbs. I invite all members to enjoy Australia's premier celebration of spring, only a short walk from this building. Get out and enjoy the best celebration of our city's wonderful spring season.

Transport Canberra—school student patronage

MISS C BURCH: My question is to the Minister for Transport. I refer to data from a brief you received as the incoming transport minister that indicated that in comparison to 2018 levels "patronage of the public network on school days by school students has been broadly level". Minister, given that you were aware that more school students are not using the public transport network on school days, despite having had their school bus services cut, why are you continuing to force parents to drive their children to and from school by not providing dedicated school services?

MR STEEL: I thank the member for her question. I note that in the next sitting week I will be tabling some further information related to the petition that she brought to the Assembly in relation to this matter. More school students are in fact using public transport in Canberra than before the introduction of the new public transport network. During term two 2019 the number of journeys made by school students on school days was 0.77 per cent higher than in term two 2018. This equates to around 120 more journeys by school students each school day. On non-school days, including public holidays, we have seen a large increase as well.

MISS C BURCH: Minister, when will you fix Canberra's school bus network?

MR STEEL: I thank the member for her question. It is very positive that we are seeing more students using public transport overall. Before the new network started we saw many students already using the route bus network and not necessarily dedicated school bus services. We have been working very closely with school communities to look at how the new system has been operating. I have met with some of those schools to talk about some of the specific issues and we will continue to do so as the new network continues.

MRS JONES: Minister, why, given the tiny statistical increase caused by bus interchange bus changes, has network 19 failed to get more students using public transport to get to and from school?

MR STEEL: I thank the member for her question but she clearly has not listened to my previous answers. We have more students using the public transport network overall, and that is a very good thing because we want to encourage everyone, particularly from the earlier stages, to use public transport and to see it as a viable alternative. Of course, with the new system, we changed to a hub and spoke model; so we did expect to see a slight increase in the number of boardings per journey made. That is what we have seen, but it has not been too dramatic and we are still seeing large numbers of students using the system.

Transport—park-and-ride bike facilities

MR MILLIGAN: My question is to the Minister for Transport. I refer to information you received in your incoming minister's brief regarding the budget policy "Supporting More Canberrans to Park and Ride". In the briefing it states there has been \$2.5 million allocated for a park-and-ride facility along Well Station Drive but "the current design does not provide for bike facilities". Minister, given the amount of funding for this project, why were bike facilities not considered in the original design of this project?

MR STEEL: I thank the member for his question. Of course we have also funded a park-and-ride strategy which we will be working on over the coming months. This is going to set out a strategic plan for how we deliver park-and-ride facilities across the territory in the right locations and in relation to the facilities that they provide.

I continue to have discussions with Pedal Power who have also put to me that they would like to see more bike-and-ride facilities across Canberra. I will consider those when we get to the procurement stage for the projects that we have got funded.

MR MILLIGAN: Minister, how does this decision to not include bike facilities in the original design at a major park-and-ride facility support the government's integrated active travel strategy?

MR STEEL: Not every park and ride has a bike-and-ride facility at the moment. We are certainly interested in what we can do to encourage people to use their bikes. I am happy to consider the member's suggestion in relation to the specific facility at Well Station Drive once we get to the procurement process, which we have not done at this stage.

MISS C BURCH: Minister, what other transport infrastructure projects currently being undertaken do not include active travel facilities?

MR STEEL: There is a range of transport infrastructure projects around the territory, a massive increase in the investment we are making in roads across the territory. We are investing in the Monaro Highway upgrades. I do not believe that there is specific investment in active travel there, because it is not meant to be a public transport corridor, nor an active travel corridor. We continue to look at how we can do that in relation to projects that we have. Yesterday I announced that we are progressing with procurement in relation to the duplication of William Hovell Drive. We will ensure that an off-road bike path is required along the 4.5 kilometre length of that duplication, as well as on-road facilities.

Floriade—city-wide events

MR PETTERSSON: My question is to the Minister for the Arts, Creative Industries and Cultural Events. Minister, with Floriade now well underway, please can you update the Assembly on some of the other events that are also on in association with Floriade, including taking some events beyond the city centre for the enjoyment of all Canberrans.

MR RAMSAY: I thank Mr Pettersson for his question, noting that last weekend Floriade in the suburbs was out and about in Gungahlin.

I am pleased to advise that this year's Floriade includes a new component, as I mentioned, called Floriade in the suburbs, which is designed to take a taste of Floriade out to the town centres and encourage casual community gatherings in some of our great suburban parks and our town squares. I was inspired by the parties at the shops that were part of the Centenary celebrations in 2013 which created opportunities for the Canberra community to come together for fun, food and activities in their local areas.

Floriade in the suburbs is happening in each of the five major suburban hubs on different weekends throughout Floriade. Those locations are Gungahlin, last weekend;

Belconnen, this coming weekend; and Tuggeranong, Molonglo and Woden. Each will feature free children's activities, live music and multicultural dance featuring local dance troupes, all celebrating the Floriade 2019 theme of "The world in bloom". There will be food and drink vendors at each site but people are encouraged to make it a picnic day as well as enjoy coffee, ice cream, beer and wine from local vendors. Mini-mobile versions of Floriade floral displays have been specifically created for the events and will be accompanied by our specially commissioned giant Floriade gnome known as Floyd.

I encourage all members to get out and about to see the local Floriade in the suburbs event and to celebrate all that is great in the local areas around this great city. Dates, times and locations are available on the VisitCanberra website.

MR PETTERSSON: Minister, can you provide the Assembly with information about the return of the popular Floriade side event, Windows to the World?

MR RAMSAY: I thank Mr Pettersson for the supplementary question. Windows to the World is a fantastic opportunity to celebrate Canberra's multiculturalism, to provide insight into the world of international diplomacy and to generate further awareness of Canberra's role as a global, connected city with strong international relationships.

Windows to the World 2019 is an election commitment from the 2016 election following a popular debut in 2013 as part of Canberra's centenary celebrations and a highly successful follow-up in 2015. It will include open days at various embassies, high commissions and other official residences on the weekends of 12 and 13 October and 19 and 20 October.

At present 45 diplomatic missions are participating in this year's event; 11 with a diplomatic mini expo at Floriade and 37 holding open days across those two weekends. Tours of five embassies have already sold out—those for Belgium, Japan, Mexico, Switzerland and the USA. There are also tours of Parliament House and Government House.

I encourage all those Canberrans with an interest in learning more about Canberra's important role as the diplomatic heart of the nation to book for one of the rare opportunities to get up close to the iconic architecture, the beautiful gardens and the interesting people who make up our diplomatic community. Information is available online at windowstotheworld.com.au.

MS CHEYNE: Minister, can you please provide further information about Floriade Floyd who has quickly become a Canberra Festival season icon?

MR RAMSAY: I thank Ms Cheyne for the supplementary question, noting that Floriade Floyd will be out in Belconnen this weekend. I am pleased to advise that Floriade Floyd is indeed proving to be a smash hit wherever he appears in Canberra and across the region.

To enhance the flowers, to reflect the joyous colours of Floriade and to reference the iconic Rotary gnomes, local Canberra artists, Geoff, Peter and Jenny Filmer were commissioned to make a giant gnome sculpture which would be the centrepiece of the Floriade in the suburbs events. Floyd stands at 2.5 metres tall and he took 500 hours to craft. He has captured people's imaginations and, indeed, has taken off on social media with his own Instagram account.

The competition to choose his name attracted over 750 entries, some of which inevitably suggested the name Gnomey McGnomeface. However, by far the most popular name suggested was Floyd or Pink Floyd or other variations on a rock theme. Other popular suggestions included Gnorman, Gnomeo and Florence as well as Garry, Gazza, Griffin, Jerome and Walter.

I thank all Canberrans for getting on the Floyd bandwagon. He can be seen around the town for the next month, including at Floriade in the suburbs town centre picnics as well as at the National Arboretum, the Canberra Airport, CMAG, the universities, Garema Place and Lanyon Homestead. He has also already made two interstate visits to regional centres at Wollongong and Albury as part of the promotion of Floriade and was extremely well received in those locations as well.

Transport Canberra—network 19 complaints

MR HANSON: My question is to the Minister for Transport. Minister, I refer to data provided in your incoming minister's brief that stated that the Transport Canberra call centre received around 4,900 complaints within the first two months of network 19 commencing. Minister, what impact have the changes to the bus network had on the workload of Transport Canberra call centre staff?

MR STEEL: I can come back with some specific numbers, if you like, Mr Hanson, in relation to the workload of staff during that period. But we did expect, with a very significant change to the transport network—the largest since 1999—that there would be a significant number of people who would need to contact Transport Canberra either for information or to make complaints or indeed to provide bouquets for some of the services that we are providing with the new network, with more frequent services more often. I expect that there would have been quite a workload during the immediate period, but I understand that that has now levelled off, as the new network becomes embedded.

MR HANSON: How many bouquets were received by call centre staff, and what training have staff had for any abuse or other verbally unacceptable behaviour that occurs when they are receiving calls?

MR STEEL: I am happy to come back with those specific details. I believe they were provided, actually. I will have to check and see whether we can provide those numbers again for the opposition if they have not already seen the numbers.

MISS C BURCH: Minister, how many call centre staff have taken stress or personal leave due to the public reaction caused by changes to network 19?

MR STEEL: I will take that question on notice.

Light rail—stage 1 construction issues

MR PARTON: My question is to the Minister for Transport: are you aware of any construction issues with light rail stage 1, specifically issues surrounding stormwater or electrical infrastructure, that were not addressed prior to the project's completion?

MR STEEL: I am aware that the construction work was signed off by the independent certifier. That should give confidence to the whole community that the construction was completed as expected by government.

MR PARTON: Minister, what is the ongoing cost to the Canberra ratepayer for the maintenance and repair of faulty stormwater or electrical infrastructure associated with light rail stage 1?

MR STEEL: As the member is aware, we provide availability payments on an ongoing basis year by year to Canberra Metro under the terms of our contract. We will continue to do that over the life of the contract.

MISS C BURCH: Minister, what will you do personally to ensure that future construction is of the highest building quality?

MR STEEL: I thank the member for her supplementary question. We have just published the lessons learned report for stage 1, where we look forward to making sure that in future extensions of the line we learn from the major infrastructure project that we have already undertaken and we transfer the skills and expertise into future stages of the network. That is why it is so critical that we start on stage 2A of this project as soon as we can so that we can make sure that the skills and expertise that have been built up, that corporate knowledge, continue in the next stage of the project, taking it down to Woden. Of course, it is yet to be seen whether the Liberals actually support that extension.

Schools—energy efficient infrastructure

MS CHEYNE: My question is to the Minister for Education and Early Childhood Development. Minister, can you please provide an update on the school boiler replacements that were announced in this year's budget?

MS BERRY: I thank Ms Cheyne for the question. The ACT government is investing \$15.9 million over four years across nine public schools for an energy efficient heating system renewal program. The schools included are Hawker College, Telopea Park School, Red Hill Primary School, Forrest Primary School, Fadden Primary School, Mount Stromlo High School, Alfred Deakin High School, Wanniasa Hills Primary School and Lyneham Primary School.

In four schools the government is replacing gas-fired boilers with electric heat pumps. In two schools the government is installing hybrid gas-electric systems, and in three

schools new, efficient gas condenser boilers are being installed. As an example, at Hawker College, a hybrid gas-electric system is being installed for the first time. Space-use analysis has been completed and the design of the system is almost complete. The system is scheduled to be installed before winter next year.

The program is expected to save 621 tonnes of carbon dioxide annually once all systems are installed. In addition to this program, the heating system at Melba Copland Secondary School is being upgraded using the same principles.

MS CHEYNE: Minister, what are the benefits to schools and students of these upgrades?

MS BERRY: These upgrades are of course about improving environmental sustainability in schools. But they also improve the learning environment for our students. Class environment is one of the factors that influence student learning. A comfortable, fit-for-purpose learning environment is critical for getting the best out of students. Upgraded heating systems improve the comfort of students and teachers, making sure that they can focus on learning. Creating comfortable environments also supports inclusivity, ensuring that all students feel safe and valued and are able to engage in the learning process.

As every Canberra family knows, heating and cooling are energy-intensive activities. By upgrading heating systems in our schools to make them more efficient, the government is making a significant impact on our energy use. Part of the environmental sustainability benefit is a reduction in utility bills, enabling those resources to be directed to other priorities.

And of course it is hugely important that the government set the best possible example for the ACT's future leaders. Investing in sustainability programs in schools is a critical part of that. I am proud of the contribution that ACT students are currently making to tackling climate change. I hope that the government can continue to encourage their leadership through our own actions.

MS CODY: Minister, how else is the government improving energy efficiency and reducing carbon emissions in ACT schools?

MS BERRY: There are many ways ACT public schools are improving their energy efficiency and reducing carbon emissions. For example, double glazing can make a huge difference to heating efficiency. At Turner Primary School the windows and doors to the hydrotherapy pool have recently been double-glazed. At North Ainslie Primary School the junior school hall and classrooms have been double-glazed. On the south side at Wanniasa Hills Primary School the kindergarten and years 3, 4 and 5 classrooms and staffroom have all been double-glazed. This year we are installing air locks to Gordon Primary School and Melba Copland Secondary School's Melba campus. These projects are due to be completed by the end of the year.

Increasing the number of trees surrounding our buildings also assists with long-term management of heating and cooling and provides students with cool shade in the playground. That is why the government has invested in its tree planting program. The

government has also completed 25 heating, ventilation and air conditioning audits over the past three years, helping to identify future opportunities for improvements. All of this work ensures comfortable learning environments for students and teachers and contributes to the ACT's goal of zero net emissions by 2045.

Transport Canberra—network 19 complaints

MRS JONES: My question is to the Minister for Transport and Minister for City Services. Minister, how many complaints have you received via Transport Canberra's official social media channels about network 19?

MR STEEL: I thank the member for her question. I am happy to come back on notice, given the level of detail that she is after.

MRS JONES: How many of those complaints have been responded to?

MR STEEL: I thank the member for her question. I am happy to come back on notice in relation to that. Obviously, with social media it is often difficult to respond to everyone, and specifically to understand whether they are in fact the person that they purport to be on social media. I am happy to come back to you specifically in relation to the policy of how TCCS responds to people, when they are engaging on a social media platform in particular.

MISS C BURCH: Minister, how many people work in that social media team and have they been provided with training and support to deal with abuse and harassment?

MR STEEL: I thank the member for her question. I am happy to come back on notice in relation to that.

Transport Canberra—weekend bus service

MS LAWDER: My question is to the Minister for Transport. Minister, how many bus drivers are rostered to work on this weekend's bus services?

MR STEEL: I thank the member for her question. As I have explained many times in this place, we continue to make sure that we roster drivers to deliver as many services as we can, right up until the day of the bus service being delivered, because we want to provide as many services as we can to Canberrans on the weekend.

I outlined this week, when I tabled the action plan to improve reliability of weekend services, 10 actions that we will be taking to improve weekend reliability. That will include the use of standby drivers on the weekend particularly to take over shifts where there has been an unexpected loss of one of the drivers so that we cannot deliver that shift. We will be looking at continuous recruitment of bus drivers to deliver more services on the weekend as well as a range of other actions that we will be taking to improve reliability.

MS LAWDER: Minister, how many bus drivers are required to meet this weekend's scheduled services and, as of today, how many bus drivers do you have rostered on?

MR STEEL: I thank the member for her question. I will come back to her with the specific numbers. Last weekend we had around 84 per cent of services delivered. That does not meet the expectations of the community or the government in relation to reliability, and that is why we will be immediately starting a new timetable for weekends, starting on the 28th of this month. We will be looking to have that as an interim timetable before we then increase services over the longer term.

We need to be able to do this to take the time to recruit more drivers to the system. We have had over 250 applicants thus far, as part of our recruitment process, which is very good news. One of the actions under the weekend reliability action plan is that we will be screening the applicants for those who are particularly willing to work on the weekend so that we can deliver reliable services under the network.

MISS C BURCH: Minister, under your action plan as released this week, when will the weekend bus services return to the originally promised schedule and frequency?

MR STEEL: When we can be assured that we can deliver a reliable service. The new system will start on the 28th. Tomorrow the new timetable will be provided to the community to download. People can get hard copies of that timetable from various locations, including at ACT library services, if they wish. Once that timetable comes in, we will be looking at how we can recruit more bus drivers, as we have done on a continuous basis over the past few months. At the point where we think we can deliver more services, we will.

Health—infrastructure investments

MS CODY: My question is to the Minister for Health. Minister, what will the expansion of the emergency department at Calvary mean for the territory?

MS STEPHEN-SMITH: I thank Ms Cody for the question and her interest in the expansion of the emergency department at Calvary Public Hospital, Bruce.

The expansion of Calvary's emergency department will deliver 22 additional treatment spaces, bringing the total to 61. We will see more doctors, nurses, administration and other health professionals joining the ED team over the next two years to staff this additional capacity.

Importantly, the expansion will increase overall treatment spaces in Calvary's ED by more than 50 per cent, a major boost to hospital emergency services on the north side. This will mean an increase in emergency department treatment spaces of almost 20 per cent across the ACT by March next year. Once complete, the expanded Calvary ED will feature a redesigned and larger fast-track stream and an expanded short-stay unit to help with patient flow through the ED. Enhanced waiting areas will make people more comfortable as they wait for treatment. The expansion of ED capacity and staffing at Calvary will assist in lowering waiting times for triage categories where the urgency of time-critical intervention is clear.

This expansion is a \$6.7 million capital works project from the 2018-19 budget, combined with \$22 million in the 2019-20 budget to ensure that the expanded capacity is appropriately staffed. This was part of an additional more than \$40 million in funding to Calvary over the next four years of the 2019-20 budget for increases in both emergency services and elective surgery capacity.

This is just one part of the major infrastructure investment that is being made by the ACT government. The health of Canberrans will always be a priority for the ACT Labor government, and we will continue to invest in ensuring that our community receives high quality health care when and where Canberrans need it.

MS CODY: Minister, could you update the Assembly on the government's broader agenda for health infrastructure in Canberra?

MS STEPHEN-SMITH: I thank Ms Cody for the supplementary. The ACT government has demonstrated record levels of investment in ACT public health services in recent years. The government has invested more than a billion dollars in health infrastructure in the last decade. This has seen investment in the Canberra Hospital, Calvary hospital and in the community and has included new, fit-for-purpose facilities as well as significant upgrades to existing assets.

We have invested in a network of walk-in centres with new centres coming to Weston Creek this year and the inner north next year to join existing centres in Belconnen, Tuggeranong and Gungahlin.

We are delivering on our commitment for a new health facility for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Canberrans with \$12 million in funding being provided to Winnunga Nimmityjah, and it was great to be there at the sod-turning the other week. And of course we have delivered a whole new rehabilitation hospital at the University of Canberra Hospital.

To futureproof our health system we are looking at how we can better deliver health services to Canberrans to ensure that they receive high quality health care when and where they need it through territory-wide health services planning. A key part of this work is Canberra Hospital's master plan which will help to guide future capital investment and decision-making for the renewal of the campus.

This master plan will include our major investment in the SPIRE project to deliver a new, state-of-the-art emergency surgical and critical-care facility for the hospital and provide high quality, person-centred care in an environment that incorporates the latest advances in technology and models of care to improve health outcomes and operational service efficiency for Canberrans into the future. This represents the biggest investment in healthcare infrastructure since self-government.

MR GUPTA: Minister, could you please outline how the future planning of our health infrastructure takes environmental outcomes into consideration?

MS STEPHEN-SMITH: I thank Mr Gupta for the supplementary. Canberra Health Services and the ACT Health Directorate have been working closely with the zero emissions team in the Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate to build a blueprint for zero emissions for the public health sector. Building on the great work done by Canberra Health Services in making their day-to-day operations more sustainable, the zero emissions blueprint will help to guide future investment in our buildings, fleet and operations to facilitate a step change in reducing CHS's carbon footprint.

With the development of a new master plan for the Canberra Hospital campus, we have the opportunity to embed sustainability as a guiding principle for the long-term development of infrastructure at Canberra Hospital, and provide a framework for how we plan for future community health assets and future investment in the Calvary Public Hospital, Bruce.

We also know that a more environmentally sensitive built environment, including improved outdoor green spaces and better urban design, can contribute to better health outcomes and happier staff and visitors. I look forward to ongoing improvement in the sustainable development of our health facilities and hospitals and ensuring that patients and visitors from across the ACT and surrounding region can heal in a space that is not only a great healthcare facility but also a welcoming and healing place to be.

Through master planning and our continuing capital works program, the government is bringing these principles into reality, particularly through the substantial investment in the SPIRE project, which will provide a bigger emergency department and more operating theatres and deliver even better health services for the Canberra community, when and where they need it.

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

Supplementary answer to question without notice Planning—environment and planning forum

MR GENTLEMAN: I have some more information in regard to Mr Parton's question on how EPSDD are engaging. I can advise that Mr Ponton is currently working with the secretariat and his colleagues in other directorates on how we can best engage with members of this forum and the wider group on key policy matters within EPSDD. I understand that this work will be completed in the coming month, and Mr Ponton will be sending information to members advising of a meeting on the future mechanism for engagement this year, with the new process to be formalised in 2020.

In the meantime, they are consulting, through phone, correspondence and the your say portal, on important community engagements, including the ACT planning review, the urban sounds daytime noise levels into the evening, sustainable energy policy, and the draft Territory Plan variation for Common Ground Dickson. Shortly, we will be engaging the community on the Dickson pool forecourt upgrades, the Canberra Nature Park draft management plan, the draft Territory Plan variation for the Gungahlin town centre, and the Red Hill integration plan.

Leave of absence

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

That leave of absence be granted to Mrs Kikkert for today due to her attendance at a funeral.

Papers

Madam Speaker presented the following paper:

Committee Reports—Schedule of Government Responses—Ninth Assembly, as at 16 September 2019.

Mr Gentleman presented the following papers:

Health, Ageing and Community Services—Standing Committee—Report 7—*Inquiry into Drugs of Dependence (Personal Cannabis Use) Amendment Bill 2018*—Government response, dated September 2019.

Water Resources Act, pursuant to subsection 67D(3)—ACT and Region Catchment Management Coordination Group—Annual report 2018-19.

ACT Policing Confiscation of Criminal Assets Reports for the financial years 2003-04 to 2016-17.

ACT and Region Catchment Management Coordination Group—annual report

MR GENTLEMAN (Brindabella—Manager of Government Business, Minister for Advanced Technology and Space Industries, Minister for the Environment and Heritage, Minister for Planning and Land Management and Minister for Police and Emergency Services) (2.49): Pursuant to standing order 211, I move:

That the Assembly take note of the following paper:

Water Resources Act, pursuant to subsection 67D(3)—ACT and Region Catchment Management Coordination Group—Annual report 2018-19.

I am pleased to be able to table the 2018-19 annual report for the ACT and Region Catchment Management Coordination Group. On 4 August 2015, the ACT Legislative Assembly amended the Water Resources Act 2007 and established the coordination group as a statutory body. The coordination group's membership includes the relevant CEOs of the key ACT directorates; Icon Water; the National Capital Authority; and the general managers of South East Local Land Services, Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Council, Snowy Monaro Regional Council and Yass Valley Council respectively. The coordination group is independently chaired by Emeritus Professor Ian Falconer and the community is represented by water expert Dr Fiona Dyer, from the University of Canberra.

I met with Professor Falconer twice during the past financial year and received positive updates on the coordination group's efforts. I want to take this opportunity to commend Professor Falconer for his service to the coordination group. Professor Falconer has completed his role as chair, leaving behind a successful legacy as an influential and passionate advocate for delivering better water resource outcomes for the ACT and surrounding region. He has led the coordination group since its inception and I look forward to welcoming a suitable successor in due course. On behalf of the Assembly, I thank Professor Falconer for his service and dedication.

The catchment strategy seeks to improve resilience and the ability to address change for the ACT and region, particularly in terms of increased potential for temperature rises, rainfall variation, more extreme climate events such as bushfires and flooding, and changing land use, particularly increased development.

The annual report details the major achievements of the coordination group, provides an update on the broader progress on implementation of the catchment strategy and sets out the priorities for 2019-20.

Let me mention some of the notable highlights from the coordination group in 2018-19. Phase 1 of the healthy waterways Lake Tuggeranong water quality research program was completed, with phase 2 now underway. There was the successful continuation of the H2OK stormwater education program, which last year included a water-impacting awareness survey of 330 Canberrans that demonstrated that the program is making a real impact.

Efforts to secure the region's water resources were increased through diligent and thorough investigations into the feasibility of water trading. Multiple water infrastructure projects were constructed, including four rain gardens, eight wetlands, two ponds and two waterway restorations in 14 suburbs across Canberra. Fruitful and positive engagement throughout the year with neighbouring jurisdictions, water resource managers, catchment group leaders and government agencies has helped guide our decision-making for managing the region's water resources and waterways. And there has been the endorsement of an interjurisdictional investment framework so that we can continue supporting water catchment initiatives across the region.

The government supports the proposed activities of the group for 2019-20. Some of the more notable activities that the group will focus on are undertaking distribution of funds through the interjurisdictional investment framework now that this framework has been endorsed; working to improve data monitoring by working more closely with citizen science groups like Frogwatch and Waterwatch; intensifying efforts to investigate the feasibility of water trading as an economically rational and flexible way to manage our precious water resources; distributing the recently produced ACT and region catchment post-emergency recovery plan and establishing a working group to look at how all surrounding jurisdictions can adopt and implement this important initiative; and developing water discharge guidelines for the proposed Queanbeyan water sewage plant to ensure protection for Lake Burley Griffin.

I would like to once again thank Professor Falconer and all members of the coordination group for their time and commitment. The dedication of the group and the professionalism they have demonstrated in achieving great management outcomes are a vital asset for the territory and the surrounding region. I commend the report to the Assembly.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Health, Ageing and Community Services—Standing Committee

MR BARR (Kurrajong—Chief Minister, Treasurer, Minister for Social Inclusion and Equality, Minister for Tertiary Education, Minister for Tourism and Special Events and Minister for Trade, Industry and Investment) (2.54), by leave: Pursuant to standing order 211, I move:

That the Assembly take note of the following paper:

Health, Ageing and Community Services—Standing Committee—Report 7—*Inquiry into Drugs of Dependence (Personal Cannabis Use) Amendment Bill 2018*—Government response.

I am pleased to present the government's response to the standing committee's inquiry into the Drugs of Dependence (Personal Cannabis Use) Amendment Bill 2018, a private member's bill. The government thanks the committee members and the secretariat for the work that has gone into the preparation of the committee's report. We would also like to thank those who took the time to make submissions and to appear at the committee. As this standing committee report has implications for more than one portfolio, I am tabling the response on behalf of the government.

The standing committee made 16 recommendations. Of those, the government has agreed to four, noted eight and not agreed to four. The government is committed to evidence-based and practice-informed responses to drug use that minimise the harm caused by drugs in our community, in line with the ACT drug strategy action plan for 2019-21. It is in this context and through this lens that the government has examined the bill and the committee's report.

The recommendations agreed to by the government include: supporting the private member's bill, which we will do subject to a number of amendments the government will move and has previously outlined; monitoring demand for health services following passage of the bill; and delivering public information campaigns with information about the health implications of using cannabis and what will change when the bill is passed.

Recommendations which the government has noted include those relating to definitions for cannabis in different states; those relating to offences for smoking in public places or near children; the recommendation to develop a new drug driving test; a recommendation to include an express authorisation for the use of cannabis; a recommendation to intervene in prosecutions; and a recommendation to overturn previous convictions for possession or use of cannabis. These recommendations are

not necessarily at odds with the government position and can be addressed in different ways outside of this legislation.

There are, however, a number of recommendations that we have not agreed to at this time. These include permitting a larger number of plants to be grown by individuals and households; allowing artificial cultivation; increasing the amount of cannabis that an individual would be able to possess to 100 grams; and allowing group cultivation or cannabis clubs. In each case, we consider that these recommendations would go beyond the intent of these reforms, which is to minimise the harm from drugs for small individual users, and not to encourage or support sophisticated or larger scale cultivation and consumption of cannabis.

Madam Assistant Speaker, the government has very openly and consistently said that we believe that the private member's bill is not a revolutionary change but, rather, a logical next step of the simple cannabis offence notice, SCON, scheme. In this context, the government is tabling the response to the committee's report and recommendations that reiterates the points that we have made to date, including our submissions to the inquiry. Contained in the government response is an outline of the amendments the government will seek to move when this bill is next called on for debate in the coming sitting week.

I again thank the committee for their work, as well as the many people who appeared or made submissions. I commend the government's response to the Assembly.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Renewable energy

Discussion of matter of public importance

MADAM ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Ms Cody): Madam Speaker has received letters from Mr Coe, Mr Gupta, Mrs Kikkert, Ms Lawder, Ms Le Couteur, Mr Milligan and Mr Parton proposing that matters of public importance be submitted to the Assembly. In accordance with standing order 79, the Speaker has determined that the matter proposed by Mr Gupta be submitted to the Assembly, namely:

The importance of the ACT leading the nation on the transition to 100 per cent renewable energy sources.

MS BERRY (Ginninderra—Deputy Chief Minister, Minister for Education and Early Childhood Development, Minister for Housing and Suburban Development, Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence, Minister for Sport and Recreation and Minister for Women) (3.00): I seek leave to speak on the MPI.

Leave granted.

MS BERRY: I am happy to have the chance to talk to the MPI and I thank members for granting leave to give me that chance. In May this year the ACT Legislative Assembly declared a climate emergency, the first Australian state or territory to do so. This government is nation leading when it comes to taking action on climate change

and the government understands that it is critical to support youth-led action like tomorrow's climate strike because we understand that children and young people will live in the world that we leave behind.

It is clear that strong leadership and immediate action are required to avoid catastrophic climate change. Globally, Australia is already well behind. Young people and students understand this and governments and politicians need to listen. All the students who demonstrated leadership at the school climate strike in March will demonstrate that leadership again tomorrow when they bring the community together again for the climate strike.

Just as I did in March, I am backing students who want to take action on climate change, with the permission of their parents or carers. Participation in activism is a learning experience in itself and I believe that all young people should have the chance to engage in creating change through activism. I am really proud to have supported the students who are committed to take action and I am proud to see that the March climate strike has made waves around Australia as well as around the world. I can feel momentum building and I can see that when people stand together we can create change towards a more equitable and sustainable future.

It is clear that hearing the voices of students matters. When I speak with young people I hear that they want a greater say in what and how they learn. They see themselves as decision makers with their learning environments, and through actions like tomorrow's strike they are showing that they can influence change. That is why student agency has been a key principle of the future of education strategy. A school that listens to its students provides a better education, and a community that listens to its young people has a brighter future. I want to see more students participating in civic engagement, which is why the ACT prioritises sustainability in school curriculums. I want even more students to use their voices to create a more equitable and sustainable future.

Unlike Mr Wall, who has suggested that students should just stay in school, the government understands that learning does not happen just in the classrooms. These students who are striking tomorrow are giving effect to the learning that they have engaged in through the sustainability cross-curriculum priority. ACT students are applying their learning to this life-changing issue and they should be absolutely applauded for it.

Yesterday two strong young women from Lyneham High School came to the Assembly to tell us politicians some home truths. Amelia and Zoe are showing impressive leadership in bringing together their peers, workers and others in the community to take a stand for action on climate change.

I have already spoken in this place about my daughter's blunt honesty with me on this issue and she continues to be direct with her thoughts on the issues of climate change in our world. I encourage her and I encourage all ACT students to participate tomorrow, to have their say and to be heard.

MR GUPTA (Yerrabi) (3.04): I am delighted to stand today to speak on the importance of the ACT leading the nation on the transition to 100 per cent renewable energy sources. Our government is responding to the significant global challenge of climate change. We are leading the nation by demonstrating what is possible and showing that substantive progress can be made with strong leadership, political will and smart policy design and implementation. It has been an exciting week for our jurisdiction in relation to the ACT government's track record on transitioning to renewables.

Yesterday the Australia Institute released a report that the ACT will be the first major jurisdiction outside Europe to reach 100 per cent renewable energy. We are projected to completely transition away from fossil fuel-based energy supply by October.

Chief Minister Andrew Barr joined Ben Oquist from the Australia Institute for a politics in the pub discussion last night focusing on the ACT Labor government's track record when it comes to transitioning to renewable energy. The Australia Institute have noted that the ACT shows how substantive progress can be achieved when the government is willing to exercise leadership, formulate smart policy and communicate it effectively to constituents.

The Australia Institute report follows the unveiling of the ACT climate strategy 2019-2025 last week. The strategy will allow us to reach our target of net zero carbon emission by 2045. The ACT is a small jurisdiction but we are making a big difference.

As we accelerate to 100 per cent renewable energy our government is taking further steps to reduce net emissions, which predominantly emanate from transport and gas from households and buildings. We will achieve this through our considered plan that will take measures such as accelerating the uptake of electric vehicles, planting trees and implementing a just transition away from gas. It is incredibly important that the ACT leads the nation on the transition to renewable energy. The world is rapidly moving toward renewable energy and the market is also relentlessly moving in that direction.

Prime Minister Scott Morrison has snubbed the UN climate summit and the federal government has no real plan to address climate change. It is particularly important that we lead the change as the federal government has lagged on climate change. The states and territories are doers. The state and territory governments provide the majority of services and service implementation. In this capacity, it is important that we are leading our jurisdiction in the right direction and empower other jurisdictions to do the same.

While the federal government drags its feet it is important that we design and implement strong policy and have a political will to do the right thing and lead by example. It is important that we set an example for other jurisdictions that a transition to renewables creates opportunities for technology and development, training and education as well as jobs. The ACT accounts for approximately 1.6 per cent of the population. However, we have 3.3 per cent of renewable energy jobs. The opportunities for research and development, training and business are well

demonstrated in the ACT. These tangible benefits are well documented and are encouraging other jurisdictions to make such transitions.

The threat of climate change is imminent and undeniable. People from around the world are mobilising to send the message that we need to act and we need strong leadership. As many of us in this chamber are aware, the global climate strike is happening tomorrow. It is timed to occur three days before the UN climate crisis summit. People from around the world are striking in order to send a clear message to our world leaders that they must commit to immediate and decisive action on climate change.

Yesterday I had the privilege of meeting young activists who represented the Canberra school strikers for climate action. Whenever I meet young climate activists I am struck by how energised they are to take action on climate change. They understand the problem and they want to work on the solution. There are many wonderful and passionate people who need our government to do the right thing and take strong action on combatting climate change. And I personally will be joining students tomorrow at the climate strike and hope to see many in this chamber there with me.

In conclusion, I am incredibly proud to be part of our ACT Labor government. We are the leaders in taking up technology and innovation and in responding to challenges in an effective and just way, and our successful transition to renewable energy is a perfect example of this. I look forward to continuing to engage with our community and work towards a smarter, healthier, zero net emission future.

MS LAWDER (Brindabella) (3.10): We can all stand up today and agree that 100 per cent renewables are important and that, here in the ACT, we accept the science of climate change. The Canberra Liberals have always had a strong position on the environment. In 1997 the then minister for the environment, Gary Humphries, announced that the ACT government would work towards reducing the territory's greenhouse gas emissions by 20 per cent below 1990 levels by 2018, at that time an ambitious and bold step.

In the last Assembly, I, as shadow minister for the environment, announced that the Canberra Liberals would form part of the tripartisan support for the targets of 100 per cent renewable energy by 2020 and zero net emissions by 2050. Of course, that target has since been moved forward. That commitment has been reaffirmed in this place many times by my colleague Elizabeth Lee during this term, in her role as shadow minister for the environment, and she would do it again today if she were not on leave.

I am proud to state again that the Canberra Liberals are committed to both the achievement and maintenance of the 100 per cent renewables target in the ACT and achieving zero net emissions by 2045. It is important that we lead the way. Due to our size and comparative density, we have a lot of benefits that other jurisdictions simply cannot match in achieving these goals. The people of Canberra have a passion for sustainable practices, and many have the ability to afford to take them up.

We have also benefited from the investment that renewable energy has brought to the Canberra economy: \$500 million of investment has been pumped into the local economy, with jobs in the sector growing at 12 times the rate of anywhere else in Australia. But as with any policy, we are always mindful of the dilemma—in fact the trilemma—of policy initiatives. For example, we always like to consider the affordability, sustainability and reliability of renewables.

The current government have secured renewable energy. They assure us that they can maintain that level into the future, but the affordability has been a long time coming and in summer there are often issues with reliability. We have seen that in some other states. These are the concerns that we keep in mind, because Canberrans complain to us about skyrocketing energy bills and trying to keep up with the ever-moving goalposts of changing policy around wood heaters, gas heaters and electrical heaters, only to be told over and over again that they need to dig deeper and sacrifice more to achieve the goals, leagues ahead of their neighbours across the border.

Notwithstanding our concerns about balancing social, economic and environmental issues, I am proud to reaffirm our commitment to a 100 per cent renewable energy target in the ACT, and zero net emissions by 2045. It is important that we lead the way, and we will continue to do so. That is what Canberrans, in the main, expect us to do.

MR GENTLEMAN (Brindabella—Manager of Government Business, Minister for Advanced Technology and Space Industries, Minister for the Environment and Heritage, Minister for Planning and Land Management and Minister for Police and Emergency Services) (3.14): I have just heard from the Liberals about trilemmas and changing policy. Like the rest of the Canberra community, I am sick of the Canberra Liberals and their utter failure to take climate change seriously.

Rather than working to better our city, those opposite spend their time trying to be more conservative than Mr Scott Morrison's government, and trying to be more right-wing than Mr Tony Abbott. It shows how inexperienced the opposition are. Not only are they refusing to accept that climate change is happening; they are now attacking young Canberrans. They are belittling the very generation that will have to deal with the consequences if we do not meet the Paris commitment to limit global warming by two degrees or less.

In a week when students have been asking for their voices to be heard, in a week when this government has built on its leadership on climate change and renewable energy through a comprehensive new strategy, and at a time when ACT firefighters are helping to fight fires in New South Wales and Queensland caused by unprecedented hot and dry conditions, across the chamber we had Mr Hanson, a former leader of the inexperienced Canberra Liberals, immaturely posting and joking about the weather in relation to tomorrow's climate strike. Madam Assistant Speaker, I will table the tweet that Mr Hanson produced. I present the following paper:

Spring snow and climate strike—Copy of tweet by Mr Hanson, 17 September 2019.

Those opposite should condemn Mr Hanson for this exercise. If the Leader of the Opposition had any gumption or experience, he would have already come in here and publicly reprimanded Mr Hanson. But we know that Mr Coe is far more likely to cheer on this behaviour. We know that, deep down, Mr Coe does not believe in climate change and will do what the federal Liberals have done. The real joke here is that the Canberra Liberals believe they are fit to govern in the ACT.

Ms Lawder: A point of order, Madam Assistant Speaker. Mr Gentleman cannot know what Mr Coe, deep down, thinks. He is casting aspersions upon Mr Coe's character. He cannot say that he knows, deep down, what Mr Coe believes.

Mr Gentleman: There is no point of order.

Ms Lawder: I would ask you to ask him to withdraw.

MADAM ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Ms Cody): There is no point of order.

Ms Lawder: Really?

Mr Hanson: He is a guru. He knows it all; he is all-knowing.

Ms Lawder: He is not the Speaker; you are.

MADAM ASSISTANT SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms Lawder. I do know my position today. I am actually an Assistant Speaker, and I have ruled that there is no point of order.

MR GENTLEMAN: The real joke here is that the Canberra Liberals believe they are fit to govern in the ACT. Mr Coe will unwind this city's action on climate change. We already know that our shadow ministers are recklessly indifferent, and this latest travesty shows that Mr Coe is a leader for reckless indifference.

All of the work that we have done to make Canberra a world leader on climate action would be destroyed by a Canberra Liberals government. They do not support renewable energy. Instead, like Mr Morrison, they love coal. Let us take a look at what the Canberra Liberals did this week. They copied the playbook of their brethren in the Queensland Liberal National Party and chose misinformation. Their mendacity knows no bounds.

Let us be clear, Madam Assistant Speaker: the ACT's climate change strategy will move us to zero net emissions while giving Canberrans the freedom to choose when and what they drive, how they cook and how they heat their homes. If we do not act on climate change, the most disadvantaged Canberrans stand to suffer the most. This government is tackling climate change while helping those in our society that most need our help. We are growing our city, making it more vibrant and protecting our environment. We are making our city more sustainable through our commitment to renewable energy, and we are doing this while growing our economy.

Contrary to conservative thinking, it is possible to do all of these things at once. Our efforts on climate change and our leadership on renewables bring new industry and innovation to our city. An experienced government like us can do all of this. An inexperienced and immature opposition misleads and has no vision. The choice could not be more clear, Madam Assistant Speaker: a Labor government that is leading the way or an inexperienced Liberal government that does not believe in renewable energy and does not listen to experts when it comes to climate change.

MR HANSON (Murrumbidgee) (3.18): Madam Assistant Speaker, I feel compelled to engage in this debate. I would like to echo the sentiments of Ms Lawder. She has outlined the long and distinguished history that we have in this place, in terms of our support for renewables. In fact I would like to note, as the Leader of the Opposition at the last election, that we had tripartisan targets that we took to the election. We have maintained support for those. The Canberra Liberals have a very proud history of supporting measures that are achievable, affordable and responsible.

We support pragmatic measures that achieve outcomes, not alarmism. We are increasingly seeing alarmism in the shifting sands that is the Labor Party position. I note that Bill Shorten, when it came to the climate strike earlier this year, was opposed to students taking action outside school hours. I do admit that that did not end well for him at the federal election, but it seems that the Labor Party's position is ever-shifting as they seek even greater levels of outrage.

We are getting on with the business of actually supporting measures that make sense and that will achieve the outcomes we want. Indeed when the climate emergency was announced in this place by members opposite, it was proposed by the Canberra Liberals that we end or restrict air travel, all of the junkets that members opposite love to take. Mr Rattenbury, Mr Barr and Mr Gentleman swan overseas with their entourage to see what is happening overseas, in various cities in Europe, America, Singapore and elsewhere.

This is a practical measure that could have been taken by this Assembly. There is limited action that we personally can take in this debate. That is one that we could have taken, and the Labor Party and the Greens voted against it. This is the same party that has scrapped a whole bunch of school buses, so that students and their parents have to get into cars. There are many hundreds more vehicle movements throughout the city because they scrapped the school buses.

There is a lot that we can do; there is lots that we should do. We do not agree with turning off people's gas. We do not think we should turn off people's gas that they use to heat their homes and cook their food. But we do support, as I said, those measures that are reasonable, responsible, achievable and affordable.

What I do not support—and this is the same, I think, as Mr Shorten's position earlier this year, the former federal Labor leader; I am not sure what the current leader's position is—is causing alarm, scaring children and using children as part of our own political activism. I fear that is what is happening here, because this student strike is no longer a student strike; it has been taken over by politicians. Mr Gupta wants to go

down there. Other politicians will want to go down there for the photo opportunity. We have heard that; no doubt we will see the Labor Party and the Greens politicians down there, getting their photo op and using children in many ways for their own political objectives and, as we know, in many cases, whipping up fear and concern amongst those children.

In reality, in this jurisdiction, through the combined efforts of both Liberal Party and Labor Party governments, we have the most ambitious targets, both for renewables and for carbon emission reduction, in Australia.

This group opposite are never as happy as when they are outraged. They will take up any level of outrage; they will come in to this place and accuse others, smear, and, as Mr Gentleman did in his speech, and as he regularly does, try to smear the federal government repeatedly and conflate a whole range of issues.

What we are talking about here today, though, is action on renewables. I think that what we have seen is tripartisan support across the Assembly, and I am disappointed that those opposite would seek to change that. It does seem that those opposite are always wanting to create alarmism, dissent and disquiet in the community. But when it comes to actions that they could take individually by restricting their flights, they refuse to do so. When it comes to taking simple actions, like maintaining school buses, we see those opposite cutting them.

I commend Ms Lawder for her position here. I know she is standing in for Ms Lee. I look forward to the continued outrage from those opposite. It does not bother me, but I am sure it does bother a lot of children when this government seeks to, in many ways, hype up concern for what seems to be their own political purposes.

MS ORR (Yerrabi—Minister for Community Services and Facilities, Minister for Disability, Minister for Employment and Workplace Safety and Minister for Government Services and Procurement) (3.24): I am pleased to contribute to today's discussion on the importance of the ACT leading the nation on the transition to 100 per cent renewable energy sources. Members are aware of my strong passion for climate action and I am proud to stand as an elected member of ACT Labor, a party which takes seriously the responsibility of acting on climate change.

We are a small jurisdiction that punches above our weight. We know that it is thanks to all of us Canberrans who acknowledge the climate crisis that we can continue leading the nation in transitioning to a clean future. This government's strong climate agenda is based on evidence and the need for us to do what we can to protect our natural environment and the people who call our beautiful city home.

Next year we will achieve our target of 100 per cent renewable electricity. We should be proud of the fact that from next year our homes, our schools, our hospitals and our community spaces will be powered by clean, renewable electricity. Just this week we have been recognised as the first major city outside Europe that will successfully transition to 100 per cent renewables, and this is no small feat.

As elected representatives it is our sole responsibility to represent the people who put their trust in us and elected us to advocate on their behalf. I know in my electorate of Yerrabi that people want their governments, both locally and federally, to be doing everything within their power to act against the climate crisis. The ACT government has a strong set of plans and initiatives to ensure that we take responsibility for mitigating the effect of climate change and environmental destruction.

This week we have released the ACT climate change strategy that sets out ambitious and important goals for our future. We will support Canberrans to transition from using gas as an energy source to electricity. In the past we have encouraged people to make the switch from gas and heating sources like wood fires, however, it is now time for us to act on the evidence before us and move towards our more renewable energy mix.

We will plant more trees in areas that need help to reduce the urban heat island effect, including in the newer suburbs of Gungahlin, so our homes can be cooler in the summer months and our suburbs can be protected from the increasingly harsh weather conditions. We will support households to improve their energy efficiency and in turn reduce their energy bills. We will reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the ACT with our target of net zero emissions by 2045 still on track.

We will do all of this to ensure that we transition to a cleaner future, making sure that every Canberran is supported to make the change and not just those who can already afford to do so. Our government wants Canberra to remain the nation's climate change capital because it is up to us to lead the way. Unfortunately, as everyone across the ACT knows, the current federal government are doing nothing to combat the climate crisis. They have no vision, they have no climate action agenda, and they have no idea how to fix the mess they have created.

Thankfully younger generations are holding the federal government and us ACT representatives to account. Tomorrow people across the world will take part in the global climate strike. Here in Canberra we are lucky to have passionate activists fighting for real action from governments and industry. Yesterday some of us Labor and Greens members met Zoe and Amelia, two incredible young people organising within their communities to pressure us as elected representatives to make real change.

Zoe and Amelia represented the Canberra school strikers for climate action at the Legislative Assembly and presented their plans for how governments can take real action on the climate crisis. It is thanks to their commitment and passion for our future that thousands of Canberrans will take part in tomorrow's strike.

These girls are strong, they are intelligent and they are fired up because they are sick of the conservatives doing nothing. Despite members opposite believing that they are just kiddies, those of us on this side of the chamber respect them and acknowledge that they are much better leaders than some of the Liberals here and across the country.

Under this government the ACT will continue to lead the nation in transitioning to a cleaner future and will continue to support all Canberrans who want to act against the

climate crisis. I am pleased to contribute to this matter of public importance, and I hope to see all members of this place at tomorrow's strike.

MR RATTENBURY (Kurrajong) (3.29): I am very pleased to speak on Mr Gupta's MPI on the importance of moving to 100 per cent renewable electricity in the ACT. As members have heard me talk about before in this place, this has been a very successful policy for this territory both environmentally and economically. This stems from a decision we took back in 2010 to legislate a 40 per cent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions from the territory. In setting ourselves that ambitious goal we were necessarily forced to think about what policy measures would get us there, and as we come up to 2020 we are right on the doorstep of achieving that 100 per cent renewable electricity target and the 40 per cent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions.

Those environmental benefits have been achieved in a cost-effective way for Canberrans. When the government first modelled this proposal it suggested it would cost ACT households \$5.20 per week. The modelling has come down and our best estimate at the moment is a maximum of \$4.90. I was interested to read in yesterday's *Canberra Times* in an article by Simon Holmes a Court that he thinks the impost currently sits at less than \$1 a week largely because the level of subsidy required for renewables has plummeted in recent years and because of the careful mechanism built into the contracts for difference which means that when electricity prices are high ACT consumers are protected.

A great example of that is during a week of high temperatures in 2017 three of our large-scale solar farms in the ACT returned almost \$1 million to ACT electricity users as an offset against future energy prices. That is an example of how this has made sense environmentally and economically.

When it comes to the economic impact we also know that the contracts will lead to at least \$500 million dollars of economic investment and benefit to the ACT over a 20-year period. If anything, I think that is a conservative estimate. By the ACT becoming recognised as a hub of renewable energy excellence a range of other opportunities are arising. People are coming to work here and are seeking to partner with the ACT because of the recognition of the intellectual capability, research and innovation in the territory.

The 100 per cent target has been a very successful policy both for the ACT and for the environment. I look forward to being able to further report on it as more data becomes available. I would be pleased to provide members with insights as to the various sources of data that tell the story of the impact of the 100 per cent renewable electricity target.

I was pleased to see the report from the Australia Institute yesterday which identified the ACT as the first jurisdiction outside of Europe to achieve this goal. That was a really interesting piece of research that highlighted what can be done when you have the political will to take the bold decisions and go forth and get stuck into it.

What we have seen today during the MPI reminds me of the *Gremlins* movies of the 80s. The gremlins were cute and fluffy until you poured water on them when they frankly turned pretty feral and became very hard to handle. That is what we have just seen from the Liberal Party. The cute and fluffy Liberals have turned up to the Assembly today and have gone, “Oh! Climate change. We’re into that. We’ll take action.” They have obviously dried themselves off because Mr Coe has spent most of the week being the gremlin covered in water.

We have seen an extraordinary reaction from the Canberra Liberal Party to the latest climate action plan for the ACT. The policy the Chief Minister and I announced on Monday sets out a considered plan for the ACT to continue on its pathway to zero net emissions by 2045. We have seen this week the most extraordinary misrepresentation of that policy by the Canberra Liberals.

Mr Hanson has come in here today and said, “We support pragmatic measures, not alarmism.” Well, let’s us look at some of the alarmism that has been peddled by the Canberra Liberals this week, including by Mr Hanson in today’s debate when he said, “We don’t agree with turning off people’s gas.” I would like Mr Hanson to show me where in the strategy it says that people’s gas will be turned off.

The government has made a clear commitment that we need to phase out gas. Natural gas is a fossil fuel that is contributing to global warming. We need to move away from natural gas, but the suggestion from the Canberra Liberals that the government is actually going to turn off people’s gas is outrageous. If you want to talk about creating alarmism, let’s look at what the people across the chamber have been doing all this week, in this city.

We saw a quote from Mr Coe in the *Canberra Times* that the reasonable way to achieve any emissions reduction is not waving a big stick around and banning people from using their cars and heating their homes. Where in the strategy does the government say it is going to ban people from heating their homes? This is outrageous. This is a disgusting raising of fear in our community that has seen people contacting radio stations saying, “What am I going to do when the government comes and removes my gas heater?”

The government is not going to remove anyone’s gas heater. What we are saying to people is, “At the end of the life of your product in 20 to 25 years”—that is what happens with these pieces of machinery; they actually wear out—“make the smart choice and transition to electricity. Remove your connection fees for gas and have one single connection cost.”

We know that the price of gas has skyrocketed. It is no longer, as we have been told for the past couple of decades, a cheap source of energy. Gas is no longer the clean source it used to be. It was clean relative to black coal fired power but compared to 100 per cent renewable electricity, gas is no longer the clean fuel it was once marketed as.

Mr Coe has described the new climate strategy as a gross intervention. What is it for the Liberal Party? Are we going to deal with climate change or is dealing with climate change a gross intervention? In the laissez faire world of the Liberal Party it is a gross intervention to deal with the most significant environmental challenge facing our planet. That is what we have heard Mr Coe say this week.

Mr Coe said in what was a borderline hysterical interview that the ACT government is deliberately driving up the cost of petrol. What evidence has he got for that? This is the fearmongering and disgraceful tactics we have seen from the Canberra Liberals this week. This does not help anybody in our community move through what are challenging issues.

We have had Miss C Burch tweeting that the Chief Minister wants to ban people from using their cars on the weekends. That is not the government policy. That is not in the climate strategy. This is outrageous. It is their own social media echo chamber, and that is probably the saving grace here, but this is not government policy.

I call on the Canberra Liberals to enter into this debate with a degree of integrity. Mr Hanson has said we should not have alarmism. I completely agree with him, but let's look at who is peddling the alarmism in this city.

The climate strikers came yesterday to visit the Assembly. I thank Ms Le Couteur, Mr Gupta, Mr Pettersson, Mr Gentlemen, Ms Orr, Ms Cheyne, Ms Stephen-Smith and Ms Berry for joining me in welcoming them into the Assembly and taking the time to listen to them. There was, of course, a remarkable dearth of members from the other side of the chamber who bothered to come along and listen.

Ms Cheyne: How many?

MR RATTENBURY: I believe Mr Parton walked past—probably on his way out to get lunch—and stopped for a minute or two, so credit for that. But the rest of the Canberra Liberals were so busy apparently that they could not listen to the students who had an important point to make to the members of this Assembly. Mr Hanson was too busy back in his office thinking up mean tweets to direct at the climate strikers. Is that the best thing he has to do with his time? Surely he can find a better use of his time than dreaming up mean tweets directed at students.

We will continue to put in place sensible policies that produce an orderly transition for the ACT to being a clean, green, renewable city of the future with a striving economic sector based on the industries of the future. We will not resort to the alarmism. We will not be cowed by the outrageous tactics of the Canberra Liberals. We will continue to talk to the community about the important steps that need to be taken to address the most serious environmental issue this planet faces.

Discussion concluded.

Executive business—precedence

Ordered that executive business be called on.

Energy Efficiency (Cost of Living) Improvement Amendment Bill 2019

Debate resumed from 15 August 2019, on motion by **Mr Rattenbury**:

That this bill be agreed to in principle.

MR COE (Yerrabi—Leader of the Opposition) (3.39): The opposition will not be supporting the bill that is before us. At a time when many families are struggling, we should not be increasing the cost of electricity, increasing the cost of living in the territory, through such regulation.

The scheme put forward in this legislation effectively increases the electricity bills of every Canberran to provide a rebate to a small number of households to replace systems, appliances, items and now insulation with more energy efficient products. It is worth remembering that the government once had schemes that involved replacing dryers with new dryers, and it was not too long ago that gas was in vogue and electricity was out. This government also had schemes that were all about replacing electric heaters with instantaneous gas heaters. There are all sorts of anomalies with this scheme and with past schemes. We are very concerned about the impact that this is going to have on the cost of living in the ACT.

What is being proposed is not a full rebate; instead, it requires a co-contribution from the participant, which could still be thousands of dollars. The scheme targets priority households who are already under pressure with rates, fees, taxes and charges, all of which have been imposed by this ACT Labor government. Once again, we have a government that is treating the symptoms rather than treating the cause.

Where the scheme is unaffordable, the government will step in, apparently, and give households a loan, a loan that could further trap these households in debt. How responsible is it for us as legislators to be giving out a loan to people who are financially doing it tough? We have to ask these questions, because if we are not careful, we will end up perpetuating that difficult situation that they are in.

In effect, to participate in this scheme, a low income household will be paying thousands of dollars that they probably cannot afford on new appliances to perhaps save a few dollars, perhaps a hundred dollars, on their bills. Meanwhile, every Canberran will be paying more for their electricity. Meanwhile, every single Canberran will feel a further impact on the cost of living in the ACT, including low income earners who are supposedly the target of this scheme.

Those who are doing it toughest will end up paying twice. They will pay through the additional levy, which is embedded in their electricity bills, but they will also have to make a co-contribution, which could be a huge amount of money. Interestingly, the scheme is not for the purchase of essentials like fridges and freezers, but it includes items like televisions. I do not believe it is in line with community expectations that every household in Canberra could be paying for a government scheme to replace TVs.

This bill, by its nature, by its purpose, by its very objective, is intended to increase energy bills in the ACT. It should be called the “Energy Efficiency (Increasing the Cost of Living) Amendment Bill”. Instead, the government is going to try and use this as a way to dish out presents to certain households. In reality, it is going to increase the cost of living for all Canberrans. To that end, the opposition cannot support it.

MS ORR (Yerrabi—Minister for Community Services and Facilities, Minister for Disability, Minister for Employment and Workplace Safety and Minister for Government Services and Procurement) (3.44): I rise to speak in support of the Energy Efficiency (Cost of Living) Improvement Amendment Bill 2019 and highlight the positive impact it will have on our environment and the lives of Canberrans.

Improving the energy efficiency of Canberra homes and buildings is an important part of the ACT’s transition to a cleaner economy and future. I have previously spoken in this place about improving energy efficiency in the ACT. I am pleased that this bill will respond to the calls I have made to ensure that the EEIS improves the lives of all Canberrans.

This bill will extend the operation of the energy efficiency improvement scheme until 2030, which will see additional annual energy efficiency compliance periods conducted across the city. By extending the operation of the EEIS, we can be confident that more Canberra homes will be able to reduce their energy usage and contribute to our efforts in reducing our impact on the environment.

In taking action on climate change and creating a more environmentally sustainable Canberra, we must ensure that the entire community is involved, not just those who can afford to act on their own. I strongly believe that as a government we must advocate for environmentalism for everyone. Through this bill, we are ensuring that low income households across the ACT will benefit from the energy efficiency improvement scheme.

We know that low income households are not easily able to make improvements to their own homes, and rising energy bills only make it harder to get by. By improving energy efficiency—whether it be draught-proofing, replacing old heating and cooling systems or upgrading existing appliances—the household budget will see both short-term and long-term benefits through the reduction of bills and maintenance costs.

This bill will increase the priority household target to 30 per cent, to ensure that households who need support to become more energy efficient receive the resources they need. These priority households will be supported in addition to the government’s investment in improving the energy efficiency of the ACT’s public housing stock.

The government’s ACT housing strategy delivered by Minister Berry clearly outlines our commitment to providing equitable housing options for Canberrans. Objective 1F, which aims to encourage well-designed, environmentally sustainable and accessible housing, will particularly support this government’s cost of living and energy efficiency improvements initiative.

Overall, we are acting to ensure that households across Canberra are more energy efficient and we are supporting our entire community to be involved in our transition to a cleaner future. Passage of this bill will build on top of our government's strong record of taking real action on climate change and supporting Canberrans in reducing cost of living pressures. Canberrans can trust that under our government we will transition to a cleaner future and deliver more equitable outcomes for every single Canberran. I commend the bill to the Assembly.

MR GENTLEMAN (Brindabella—Manager of Government Business, Minister for Advanced Technology and Space Industries, Minister for the Environment and Heritage, Minister for Planning and Land Management and Minister for Police and Emergency Services) (3.47): How disappointing this has been. We saw the crocodile tears from Mr Hanson and Ms Lawder in the MPI debate. Mr Coe had a chance in this debate. He had the chance to speak positively about climate action and to show that he gets it and he listens to the experts. Instead, he proved my remarks in the MPI debate. It is clear from Mr Coe's contribution that he will undo this government's renewable energy and climate change policies.

Mr Coe uses words like "affordability" and "reliability" when talking about renewable energy. We have heard these words before. They are from Mr Tony Abbott's playbook, one that was used to attack renewable energy. Mr Coe had the chance in this bill to undo his alarmist stories about this government's climate change strategy, and he did not. The Canberra Liberals do not accept the science of climate change or the need to act. In this particular bill, we hear from the Canberra Liberals that they will not support needy households that need some assistance.

It is clear that those opposite are inexperienced and unfit to lead. The choice could not be more clear: a Labor government that is leading the way or an inexperienced Liberal government that does not believe in renewable energy and does not listen to experts when it comes to climate science.

MR RATTENBURY (Kurrajong—Minister for Climate Change and Sustainability, Minister for Corrections and Justice Health, Minister for Justice, Consumer Affairs and Road Safety and Minister for Mental Health) (3.49), in reply: I am pleased to be sponsoring this bill through the Assembly because this extension will clearly show the government's commitment and capacity to effectively deliver on the actions included in our new climate strategy to deliver effective policies—policies that have won awards and policies that make a real difference for Canberra's households. This scheme is a key delivery mechanism for the climate change strategy. The strategy sets out the next phase of the ACT's response to climate change, taking the steps to achieve a resilient, net zero emissions Canberra by 2045.

Climate change is a major challenge and we understand the gravity of the issues we face and the need for urgent action. But we also see opportunities for our region, and the ACT is well placed to take advantage of these in becoming an international hub for climate change innovation and solutions. The climate change strategy has been developed in coordination with the planning, transport and housing strategies, which together provide an integrated approach to building a smart, prosperous and highly liveable, net zero emissions city.

This act that we are talking about today provides for a market-based scheme that places an obligation on electricity retailers in the ACT to achieve energy savings. The objects of the act are to encourage the efficient use of energy, reduce greenhouse gas emissions associated with energy use in the territory, reduce energy use and costs and in particular assist low income households suffering from utility cost stress. The scheme works by establishing a territory-wide energy savings target and obliging individual electricity suppliers to deliver savings to achieve the target.

Large tier 1 retailers are required to achieve energy savings by undertaking eligible activities in Canberra households and businesses. ActewAGL is currently the only tier 1 retailer and to date has delivered nearly all the EEIS energy and abatement savings. Smaller tier 2 retailers can opt to pay an energy savings contribution in lieu of delivering activities. The act requires that these contributions be used to support activities consistent with the objects of the act. About 15 tier 2 retailers currently operate in the ACT, and their energy savings contributions have funded activities such as scheme administration, relevant Actsmart programs and the solar flow income initiative.

The scheme has proven to be highly effective in reducing Canberra's emissions. Over 1.3 million energy saving items have been installed under the scheme, to achieve more than 6.5 million gigajoules of lifetime energy savings and 500,000 tonnes CO₂ equivalent of greenhouse gas emissions. This is equivalent to taking approximately 165,000 cars off Canberra roads for a year, to give you a sense of the scale of impact that the scheme has had.

An important point to discuss today—and I think it is particularly relevant in light of the comments from Mr Coe—is that the scheme supports households and small to medium businesses to reduce bills. To date, the scheme has delivered about \$400 million in lifetime energy bill savings to around 74,000 households and businesses. Importantly, close to 19,000 priority low income households have received EEIS savings. Savings have also been delivered in about 16,000 rental properties—16,000 renters who really suffer from that classic split incentive problem have benefited from this scheme—and through this scheme we have managed to overcome that issue that has plagued rental properties in this city and other places for decades.

I comment in particular on the scheme's contribution to a just transition to net zero emissions. The benefits that the scheme delivers to low income households are largely achieved through its priority household target. This target ensures that a proportion of scheme savings is delivered in low income and vulnerable households which pay a high proportion of their income on energy and are least able to make improvements and invest in efficient items without assistance. The priority household target is expressed as a percentage of the tier 1 retailer's energy savings obligation.

I review the scheme's delivery each year, aiming to set the priority household target at an optimal level that provides significant assistance to low income households while maintaining the scheme's economic efficiency. From 2015 until this year the previous climate change minister and I set the priority household target at 20 per cent, but

I have been able to increase that target to 30 per cent for 2020 as a result of several related initiatives. In particular, the government has allocated more than \$7 million to assist public housing properties to upgrade to more efficient heating and hot-water systems. The government has also expanded the scheme's original categories of priority households so that more low income households are eligible for the greater discounts they receive.

I must say that those programs in public housing are particularly important. I have been to some of the households who have benefited from these upgrades. To meet the householders who say, "I can't believe what a difference it makes to have this new and improved device or a more modern device installed in my home, and I have noticed the difference in my energy bills," is really inspiring. It tells me that we are getting these programs right, that people who are struggling to meet their energy needs are really benefiting personally and directly from these programs. It is great to have those moments in this job, which can be a tough job at times, and to get out and meet the people who really benefit from these schemes that we put in place.

Another point in support of the bill is the clear evidence that the scheme is achieving health and wellbeing benefits across Canberra. The scheme's 2018 compliance period was the first year in which space heating and cooling activities delivered a large proportion of scheme savings. To take account of this development, and recognising that efficient space heating and cooling can improve comfort as well as costs, new survey questions were included, aiming to learn about any health and wellbeing impacts.

The representative sample of scheme participants who took part in the phone survey was enthusiastic about the impact of their new appliances in keeping their homes comfortable in summer and winter. A full 76 per cent believe that new equipment has made a substantial impact on comfort at home.

Scheme participants were also impressed with the impact of new appliances on improved physical or mental health, with 49 per cent saying that the new appliances had made a substantial improvement, and one out of five believing it had made a huge difference. Those who had experienced health benefits were asked to explain them. While some were simply happy to be warmer, for others the installation had impacted greatly on their physical and mental health. There is also evidence that the scheme's space heating and cooling activities have reduced absenteeism, with 17 per cent of respondents feeling that their households were experiencing fewer sick days.

Importantly, these health and wellbeing outcomes are being experienced by those most in need of assistance as well as those more able to pay their heating bills. Of those reporting improvements, 18 per cent were public housing tenants and 37 per cent were other low income priority households.

This bill extends a highly cost-effective scheme which delivers a range of economic benefits to the territory. Electricity retailers pass the scheme costs through to ACT electricity customers. An independent review of the scheme completed in 2018 reported average household electricity bill costs, due to the scheme, of 58c per week over the life of the scheme, balanced against savings of \$2.60 achieved on average

across all Canberra households. Participating households are making average weekly savings of \$5.78.

As I said when I presented the bill, small and medium businesses are estimated to save \$154 million and households are expected to save more than \$210 million over the lifetime of products installed. The independent review of the scheme found the scheme had been operating with a benefit to cost ratio of four to one, making it extremely cost effective. Indeed, rather than imposing a cost on carbon savings, this scheme has been delivering an economic benefit of lifetime savings to the ACT economy valued at \$190 per tonne of greenhouse gas emissions that are avoided.

Modelling has shown that a balanced approach in setting the scheme metrics to optimise economic and social equity and environmental outcomes will continue to deliver strong economy-wide benefits over a 10-year extension. The net present value of benefits to the ACT economy has been modelled at \$15.4 million for an extension which retains the current energy savings target and pass-through costs to householders and businesses. At that level, householders and businesses would not see any increase in energy costs as a result of this bill—not see any increase in their energy costs as a result of this bill.

I am happy to provide a further briefing for the Canberra Liberals after the passage of this bill. The speech we heard today was full of opinions but not a lot of evidence. I am very happy, and I am sure my officials in the Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate would be happy, to go through these details for members of the opposition if they are interested. The government is continuing the modelling work so that an initial energy savings target may be set at an optimal level following legislation of the scheme extension.

While on the topic of cost-effectiveness, it is worth reminding the Assembly that this scheme is also helping to develop sustainability industries in the territory. Before an electricity retailer or authorised installer can undertake eligible activities, they must complete induction training on the scheme and the individual activities they will be undertaking. Since the scheme began in 2013, 93 induction training sessions have been held, attended by more than 550 installers, most of them from local companies.

Another important point is how this bill relates to the ACT's successful achievement of the 100 per cent renewable electricity target by 2020. In short, the bill both responds to and supports the target. The bill responds to the target by redefining the energy savings obligation as an energy metric measured in megawatt hours of electricity saved instead of tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent. The use of the electricity metric of megawatt hours is a convenience to support scheme delivery by electricity retailers. Where the scheme delivers gas or other energy savings which are more commonly measured in joules, these will be converted to megawatt hours for target setting and reporting purposes.

This change was recommended by the independent review and reinforced by modelling which showed that this approach will best serve the scheme's cost-effectiveness in the context of 100 per cent renewable electricity. The energy metric will unlock new benefits to the ACT economy by supporting upgrades to

electrical equipment which would not receive any credit if the scheme retained its emissions metric after the ACT transitions to zero emissions electricity.

Modelling confirms that there are substantial untapped opportunities for energy savings in the ACT, through both electrical upgrades and the transition of heating systems off gas. The scheme's new energy metric will be agnostic to the source of energy and will support all types of efficient upgrades. When I introduced the bill, I referred to the new insulation activities that have recently been introduced to the scheme. Modelling shows that these new eligible scheme activities will be cost effective using the new energy metric, along with upgrades to both electric and gas heating systems, refrigerators, pool pumps, water heating air compressors and more. I do note that refrigerators were in that list.

When this scheme delivers upgrades from gas heating systems to efficient electric alternatives, it directly reduces Canberra's greenhouse gas emissions. When it replaces old inefficient electrical equipment with efficient upgrades, it supports the 100 per cent renewable electricity target post 2020. In doing so, this bill supports the recent amendments to the Climate Change and Greenhouse Gas Reduction (Renewable Electricity Target) Act, which has locked in our renewable electricity targets for the long term.

The bill also expands the scheme to potentially include transport activities. This change has strategic benefits, since 100 per cent renewable electricity means that transport will account for 62 per cent of emissions in the ACT from 2021. As I have spoken about this week, this presents new challenges. While the scheme cannot deliver savings from transport until activities are both developed and then picked up by electricity retailers, there is considerable interest in these developments. Work is already underway to investigate options for energy efficiency rebates on electric vehicles and other transport options.

There are a number of measures in this bill that produce administrative streamlining. That is, of course, the important part of the scheme. I thank officials for their work on those measures.

Before closing, I can confirm to the Assembly that thorough consultation and engagement processes have been completed throughout all stages of developing the bill. The bill was informed by a public workshop, in-depth interviews, focus groups and other workshops, as well as post-implementation surveys incorporating feedback from over 2,000 scheme participants. Further consultation and another stakeholder forum informed the development of the bill. The consultation has confirmed the benefits associated with the scheme and the widespread support for its continuation as provided by this bill.

In concluding, I simply want to reflect on some of the figures that have been independently put together as to the effects of this bill. The energy efficiency saving scheme will have saved an estimated 739,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide by 2020. Over the lifetime of products installed, households are expected to save more than \$210 million, with an average weekly saving of \$5.78. Businesses are estimated to save \$160 million, with average weekly savings of \$96. More than 19,000 low income

households are expected to save nearly \$70 million off their energy bills over the lifetime of the items installed under the EEIS. We are increasing the priority household target. These figures highlight the fact that Mr Coe's speech today was simply not accurate. I am disappointed. I am prepared to share all of this information in great detail with our colleagues across the chamber to show them that these sorts of schemes make a real impact for people in our community. I commend the bill to the Assembly.

Question put:

That this bill be agreed to in principle.

The Assembly voted—

Ayes 11		Noes 8	
Ms J Burch	Ms Orr	Miss C Burch	Mr Parton
Ms Cheyne	Mr Pettersson	Mr Coe	Mr Wall
Ms Cody	Mr Ramsay	Mrs Dunne	
Mr Gentleman	Mr Rattenbury	Mr Hanson	
Mr Gupta	Ms Stephen-Smith	Mrs Jones	
Ms Le Couteur		Ms Lawder	

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Bill agreed to in principle.

Detail stage

Bill, by leave, taken as a whole.

MR RATTENBURY (Kurrajong—Minister for Climate Change and Sustainability, Minister for Corrections and Justice Health, Minister for Justice, Consumer Affairs and Road Safety and Minister for Mental Health) (4.08): Pursuant to standing order 182A(b), I seek leave to move an amendment to this bill which is minor and technical in nature.

Leave granted.

MR RATTENBURY: I move amendment No 1 circulated in my name and table a supplementary explanatory statement [*see schedule 1 at page 3680*]. This is a very minor technical amendment that is really about the detail. This clause substitutes clause 4(1) of the bill to clarify the instruments that will be repealed by the clause. Clause 4(1) will now provide that the current instruments, which were notified on 9 and 12 August 2019, will be repealed when clause 4(1) commences by way of ministerial notice. This is a rather technical tidy-up but an important one for the effectiveness of the scheme.

Amendment agreed to.

Bill, as a whole, as amended, agreed to.

Bill, as amended, agreed to.

Adjournment

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

That the Assembly do now adjourn.

Jeannie (Fay) Skyring OAM—tribute

MR RAMSAY (Ginninderra—Attorney-General, Minister for the Arts, Creative Industries and Cultural Events, Minister for Building Quality Improvement, Minister for Business and Regulatory Services and Minister for Seniors and Veterans) (4.09): I rise this afternoon to celebrate the immense contribution that Fay Skyring made to the arts and crafts community of our city and our nation.

Fay died on 11 August this year at the age of 87, after a long and fruitful life of creativity. I extend my sympathy to Fay's husband, Graham, and to her daughters, Fiona, Sally and Melissa, during this difficult and sad time. I also acknowledge Graham and a number of other family members, friends and colleagues who have joined us in the Assembly today.

Recently I was privilege to attend a memorial service for Fay at CMAG, and I was able to hear many tributes to her, including from Graham, whose love for Fay and her achievements was so evident in his moving words, which remembered Fay as a loving wife and mother, a great photographer and colourist and a weaver of very significant note.

After Fay moved to Canberra with her family in the 1970s, she was introduced to weaving. She was taught by Pam McDougall, one of the early members of the Canberra Spinners and Weavers, and became a member of the group herself, exhibiting and attending classes and workshops. Fay was awarded a grant by the National Capital Development Commission to study textiles in Japan, and returned eager to establish a weaving workshop where the Canberra community could learn this craft.

She was a generous mentor and a wonderful teacher. Fay's students have spoken of her meticulous attention to detail, and her great patience and friendship while they were learning the complicated skill of weaving at the Skye Workshop, when she established the space in 1985 at Ainslie Village, funded by a commonwealth employment program grant. Several of her students went on to develop careers in textiles.

Fay was an active member of Craft ACT and she participated in a key exhibition of theirs, *Office Environment*, which aimed to showcase local craftspeople during the planning for Australian Parliament House. Fay's skill as a weaver caught the eye of

the APH architect, Romaldo Giurgola, and its arts and crafts program coordinator, Pamille Berg, who subsequently commissioned Fay to produce custom handwoven fabrics for the suites of the Prime Minister, the Leader of the Opposition and the Speaker.

As Meredith Hinchliffe, who is also with us in the gallery this evening, has observed:

The project required imagination and expertise with the colour and design aspects, experimentation and determination to refine the technique, and the capacity to complete the job under pressure.

Fay was subsequently commissioned to reproduce the fabric three times for the re-upholstery of furniture pieces at Parliament House. The work was recorded in a 2013 documentary called *The Warp and the Weft*, a weaving story of national significance produced by Richard Snashall and commissioned by CMAG. CMAG also cares for upholstery fabric samples for Parliament House created by Fay Skyring and Di Lansdown, which they generously donated to the gallery. These featured in last year's excellent CMAG exhibition *Crafting the house on the hill: art, design and the building of Australian Parliament House*.

In 2017 Fay was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia—a fitting recognition of her service to the creative arts and to the community of Canberra. In closing, I would like to acknowledge and remember Fay Skyring for her generous contribution to our arts community and the creative legacy that she leaves for Canberra and far beyond.

Kashmir

MS LE COUTEUR (Murrumbidgee) (4.14): I rise this afternoon to speak on an international issue of grave concern—that is, the situation in Kashmir. Last week a prominent member of Canberra's Islamic community, Mohammad Ali, came to speak with me, along with his compatriot Iqbal Khan. Both gentlemen are longstanding Canberrans and have been very active in contributing to multiculturalism in our community, and I thank them for their contributions.

Mr Ali and Mr Khan told me about some of the complexities in the region of Jammu and Kashmir. There is a long history of territorial dispute and conflict between India and Pakistan. Sadly, we are all too aware of the political unrest and grievances associated with this circumstance. Adding to this burden is the religious divide in what is a predominantly Muslim state—India being, of course, a majority Hindu country.

The United Nations has been actively involved over a number of years in the dispute between India and Pakistan over Kashmir. The UN Security Council has passed a resolution stating that the people of Jammu and Kashmir should be able to decide their own fate with free will in a UN-organised plebiscite. This resolution was passed very shortly after partition and India's and Pakistan's independence.

The UN, as well, has provided many reports and recommendations regarding human rights abuses and concerns in that part of the world. Over the past year the violence in Kashmir appears to have increased, with a July 2019 UN report stating that 160 civilians were killed in 2018 alone. Unfortunately, the UN does not have any mechanism—the world does not have any mechanism—for countries to be held accountable for the atrocities talked about and documented in UN reports like this.

Possibly as a result of that report, in August this year India stripped Jammu and Kashmir of its semi-autonomy and statehood. At the same time, thousands—possibly hundreds of thousands—of additional Indian troops were sent to the Kashmir Valley and a curfew was imposed. Most communications with Kashmir have been stopped. The curfew and the communications blackout have meant it is entirely unclear if inhabitants of the region have access to food, health services or any of their basic needs. Reports claim that some 3,000 people, including politicians, businesspeople, activists, aid workers and journalists have been detained trying to enter the region. It appears to be completely blockaded and it is unknown how many people internally have been imprisoned or worse.

The fear of violence is so severe that parents are afraid to send their children to school. Clearly there appears to be no access to justice. There is the reality—not the fear—that, without any information from Kashmir, people outside are unable to know if their families and loved ones are safe or what is happening to them.

We know that, typically, in situations like this there is indiscriminate killing, arbitrary detentions, rape, torture and oppression. I know that people in Canberra—and I am sure in the rest of Australia and around the world—with family and friends in Kashmir are thinking along these lines. These actions have an impact on people around us in Canberra. We have a community of Kashmiris here in Canberra who are very anxious and depressed because they are unable to ascertain any reliable information about their family and friends, and they certainly cannot talk to them.

This is a humanitarian issue as well as a political and religious issue. But it is a humanitarian issue first of all, and the Canberra members of the Kashmir community would like Canberra—and, of course, the rest of the world—to be aware of the situation. As I have said before in this place, we are all human, we are all equal and we need to treat each other as brothers and sisters, and with compassion. Sadly, around the world, this simple act of kindness does not always occur. As the Indian politician—and possibly saint—Mahatma Gandhi said, “Live simply so that others may simply live.” This is a good maxim for all of us, for all our lives.

Kurrajong electorate—Dickson

MS STEPHEN-SMITH (Kurrajong—Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs, Minister for Children, Youth and Families, Minister for Health and Minister for Urban Renewal) (4.19): I rise to speak briefly about recent activity in Dickson, in my electorate of Kurrajong. Dickson is an important hub, not just for the inner north but for all of Canberra. Dickson’s unique shops, quality of services and jobs draw people from across Canberra. It is great to see this part of the city growing and thriving.

Dickson pool is a very important part of the area and a place where I spent many, many happy days in summer in my childhood and younger years. Last week I was very pleased to announce that the Dickson pool forecourt will get a refresh for the upcoming summer. Visitors to Dickson pool will soon enjoy an exciting new outdoor space with more shade, trees, soft surfaces, bike parking, seating and public art by an artist from nearby ANCA Gallery.

During the community engagement on section 72 Dickson we heard that one of the community's top priorities for section 72 was upgrades to the Dickson pool forecourt. These improvements will initially be temporary so that we can talk to pool users in the wider inner north community to find out what is working, how people use the space and what could be improved. Following this feedback the government will work with the community to develop a detailed design for permanent works.

Last week I also had the pleasure of joining Minister Berry at section 72 for the announcement of the cohort and concept designs for Common Ground Dickson. Common Ground, an ACT Labor election commitment, will provide long-term housing for people facing chronic homelessness, focusing on supporting women and children, families and single parents and older women—growing cohorts in need of assistance. Through sensitive design, which was shaped by previous section 72 consultations, Common Ground Dickson will provide four new social and affordable homes with a mix of one, two and three-bedroom units to support the needs of a mix of tenants. In time, the tenants will be part of our inner north community, close to facilities, services and public transport at the Dickson group centre.

Common Ground will also deliver more green space, trees, play spaces and an attractive and safe environment for pedestrians and cyclists. I encourage residents of the inner north to go to the ACT government's your say website to learn more about Common Ground Dickson and see the designs. I believe Common Ground Dickson will be something all residents in the inner north can be proud of, and I look forward to following the progress of this important project.

On the other side of Cowper Street, the City Renewal Authority is exploring ways to reinvigorate the Dickson group centre while retaining the special qualities that make Dickson one of Canberra's most distinctive precincts. Following the release of the Dickson Place plan, the City Renewal Authority is rolling out its Woolley Street project, which is a series of ideas to improve access, amenity and public use along one of Canberra's most unique streets.

Visitors to Woolley Street will see a temporary gate among other installations to celebrate everything that is special and quirky about Dickson. With artwork by local Canberra artist Jodie Cunningham, the gate is a demonstration of the vibrancy of Dickson and its people. The Woolley Street gate is already a highlight on social media, and I am sure many Canberrans will enjoy it as we spend more time outdoors in the warmer months.

Finally, I acknowledge the hard work of Jason Mann and the My Dickson Town team. The town team is made up of locals and business owners with strong connections to

Dickson and it helps to organise improvements in the group centre and stage events and activations. The Dickson First Friday Community Celebration Markets have been a great drawcard to the group centre, and I look forward to seeing how these grow and evolve into the future. Whether it is proximity to light rail, great schools and unique shops and businesses, Dickson's future is bright. The addition of Common Ground Dickson and the improved pool forecourt will only make this important pocket of Canberra and Kurrajong even better.

With a minute to go, I want to say a few brief words about the apparent proposal to remake the film *The Princess Bride*. Can I just say no, just no. Do not do it. It will end in tears. A perfect film is a rare thing. Leave it there.

MADAM DEPUTY SPEAKER: I gather that you are considering, Ms Stephen-Smith, that the whole thing is inconceivable.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

The Assembly adjourned at 4.24 pm until Tuesday, 24 September 2019, at 10 am.

Schedule of amendments

Schedule 1

Energy Efficiency (Cost of Living) Improvement Amendment Bill 2019

Amendment moved by the Minister for Climate Change and Sustainability

1

Clause 4 (1)

Page 3, line 5—

omit clause 4 (1), substitute

(1) The following legislation is repealed:

- *Energy Efficiency (Cost of Living) Improvement (Eligible Activities) Code of Practice 2019 (DI2019-194)*
 - *Energy Efficiency (Cost of Living) Improvement (Eligible Activities) Determination 2019 (NI2019-501)*
 - *Energy Efficiency (Cost of Living) Improvement (Record Keeping and Reporting) Code of Practice 2019 (DI2019-195).*
-