



QUESTION TIME
OF THE
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
FOR THE
AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

HANSARD

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Thursday, 3 August 2017

Ministerial arrangements	1
Questions without notice.....	1
Asbestos—treatment policy	1
Asbestos—treatment policy	1
Asbestos—Ainslie shops	2
Planning—Coombs shops	3
Roads—safety	3
Alexander Maconochie Centre—addiction treatment	4
Economy—defence industry.....	4
Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders—bush healing farm	6
Alexander Maconochie Centre—women’s accommodation	7
Planning—Federal Golf Club	8
Crime—motorcycle gangs	9
Health—Mental health staffing.....	11
Government—events policy	12
Greyhound racing—cruelty reports	13
Housing—new housing strategy	14

Ministerial arrangements

MR BARR (Kurrajong—Chief Minister, Treasurer, Minister for Economic Development and Minister for Tourism and Major Events) (2.30): I advise members that Minister Fitzharris will not be present in question time today. In addition to taking questions on behalf of Minister Gentleman, I will also take questions on behalf of Minister Fitzharris.

MADAM SPEAKER: You may be busy, Chief Minister.

MR BARR: It may well be true.

Questions without notice

Asbestos—treatment policy

MR COE: My question is to the Chief Minister regarding the activities of the asbestos response task force. Chief Minister, the media has recently reported the case of a property that was deemed “genuinely unique” by the task force. How many unique cases has the asbestos response task force come across that have warranted a non-standard approach in the actions of the task force?

MR BARR: I will have to take that question on notice.

MR COE: The Chief Minister might also be able to take on notice whether the government has criteria that, if not complied with, automatically qualify the situation for a non-standard treatment.

MR BARR: Thank you. I will take that on notice too.

MRS DUNNE: Chief Minister, do cases where no asbestos has been located on the property qualify the block for special treatment?

Mr Barr: I am sorry?

MRS DUNNE: Where no asbestos has been found, is the block treated specially?

MR BARR: Where properties share common walls, common roof spaces, there have been examples throughout the diverse number of properties that have been impacted by Mr Fluffy asbestos. There is a commercial property in Ainslie that has both a residential unit above it and adjacent commercial properties that has been the subject of some media coverage in recent times. There are examples amongst the more than a thousand properties where there have been impacted and affected properties.

Asbestos—treatment policy

MS LAWDER: My question is also to the Chief Minister regarding the activities of the Asbestos Response Taskforce. Chief Minister, where loose-fill asbestos is located in a unit in a multi-unit complex or duplex, are all units in the complex condemned for demolition under the guidelines?

MR BARR: I will need to check. It has been a while since I have had portfolio responsibility for this but I am certainly aware that at the time there were a number of properties, for example, in a row of town or terrace housing, where one or a number of properties, sometimes even in the middle of a row of attached housing, have had the loose-fill asbestos in their roof space and that has extended across the entire roof of the units.

Fortunately, the overwhelming majority of properties were detached dwellings. But there are example such as, as I mentioned in response to the previous question, Ainslie, which has clearly received a degree of media attention.

MS LAWDER: Chief Minister, are the structural circumstances of each complex taken into consideration when determining whether other units in a complex are demolished or not?

MR BARR: I understand that certainly has to be a factor.

MR STEEL: Can the Chief Minister advise of the success of the Mr Fluffy scheme across Canberra?

MR BARR: The latest update that I have seen from the task force is that work is progressing ahead of previously published schedules and that they are undertaking the tasks of both demolition of affected properties and resale as quickly as possible.

Asbestos—Ainslie shops

MR DOSZPOT: My question is to Chief Minister regarding the Asbestos Response Taskforce. A *Canberra Times* article of 3 July 2017 stated regarding Ainslie shops that the internal walls, ceilings, cornices, timber beams and the roof of the first-floor above Edgar's would be removed to clean the asbestos, leaving only the perimeter walls. Chief Minister, was an exception to the usual process required to allow for the relevant Ainslie shops building to be cleaned rather than demolished?

MR BARR: No, the Ainslie shops will need to be demolished.

MR DOSZPOT: Chief Minister, under what circumstances will the government allow for a structure to be thoroughly cleaned rather than demolished?

MR BARR: Under no circumstances. I will be very clear. The properties will be demolished. Consistent with the scheme that allows for a management regime to be in place in the medium term, which is the case for a number of residential properties as well, there is time to work through the detail. But ultimately the only lasting solution will be the demolition of those properties.

MS LEE: Chief Minister, when will people who are in this situation be notified of what the future of their homes or commercial property will be?

MR BARR: It is on a case-by-case basis.

Planning—Coombs shops

MS LE COUTEUR: My question is to the Minister for Housing and Suburban Development and relates to the Coombs shops, the site for which was sold in March 2015 but is still not operating. Minister, given that the site operators are now telling residents that they cannot find a supermarket operator, what is the government going to do to ensure that residents of Coombs and Wright have local shops and that the pressure is taken off the Cooleman Court shops?

MS BERRY: I will have to take the question on notice so that I can provide some more information to the member. It might include information from another minister as well.

MS LE COUTEUR: Minister, will you investigate other options, such as pop-up shops or a coffee van or encouraging some mixed-use developments to include shopping facilities?

MS BERRY: I do not know whether it would ordinarily be the case to look at those different options. Again, I would have to take the question on notice and get some more advice to you on that.

MRS JONES: Minister, given the lack of shops in Coombs, now some years after the block was sold, when will additional shops be opened in the new Molonglo region?

MS BERRY: I can advise that the developer of the Denman Prospect development out in the Molonglo area did announce and put out a plan for a new shopping centre precinct as part of their development.

Mrs Jones: By when?

MS BERRY: 2018. I would be happy to provide the member with some more information on that at another time, if she is interested in that particular project.

Roads—safety

MR WALL: My question is to the Minister for Police and Emergency Services or, I dare say, the Chief Minister in his absence. Chief Minister, the intersection of Preddy Way and Lewis Luxton Avenue in Gordon has been the scene of a number of serious motor vehicle accidents, including five incidents of out-of-control vehicles landing in the backyard of a residence located on Lewis Luxton Avenue. Chief Minister, given that this location has been known as a speeding hotspot since at least 2014, what action has been taken to prevent further damage to people and property since then?

MR BARR: I will need to take that question on notice.

MR WALL: Chief Minister, in response to that, given that little has happened, will it take a fatality as a result of speeding to occur before action is taken to fix the problem of out-of-control cars and speeding at this location?

MR BARR: ACT Policing and Roads ACT have an established system in relation to

both road safety and dangerous driving. Given that this matter has been raised today, I will seek from the offices of the police minister and the Minister for Transport and City Services confirmation that the matter has been examined and that potential solutions have been identified.

MR PARTON: Chief Minister, can you provide a guarantee to the residents of Preddy Way and Lewis Luxton Avenue at Gordon that you will do everything in your power to ensure that adequate safety measures have been put in place to guard against damage and injury caused by speeding vehicles near their homes?

MR BARR: Within human reason and the capacity of the government to be able to address the issues in a commonsense manner we will endeavour to respond to the issues that have been raised.

Alexander Maconochie Centre—addiction treatment

MRS JONES: My question is to the Minister for Corrections. Minister, I refer to the use of the drug Suboxone in the Alexander Maconochie Centre as an alternative treatment method to methadone for people with opioid addiction. Suboxone contains buprenorphine and naloxone, comes in a film tab form, and must be absorbed orally by placing the tab under the tongue. If the tab is not placed under the tongue, it will not be absorbed properly. As a result, this drug is known for having a high diversion rate. Minister, what are the guidelines for the prescribing, dispensing and administering of Suboxone at the Alexander Maconochie Centre?

MR RATTENBURY: Given the very detailed nature of Mrs Jones's question, and to ensure that she gets an accurate answer, I will take that on notice and provide the details.

MRS JONES: Minister, what policies and operational procedures are in place at the AMC to ensure that Suboxone is not diverted and shared amongst other inmates?

MR RATTENBURY: As with my previous answer, I will provide Mrs Jones with the details on that later.

MRS DUNNE: Minister, will there be any review of the use and dispensing of Suboxone at the AMC, and how many prisoners are currently prescribed Suboxone?

MR RATTENBURY: The nature of Mrs Dunne's question is that she is suggesting that it should be reviewed. I will find out—

Mrs Dunne: No, I am just asking you whether there is a review. Is there one?

MR RATTENBURY: I will confirm that is the case. Also I will confirm for her the number of people that are currently accessing the drug.

Economy—defence industry

MS CHEYNE: Chief Minister, how is the defence industry contributing to the diversification of Canberra's economy?

Mr Hanson: You came up with a good policy, didn't you, Andrew? It was very similar to mine.

MR BARR: Thank you!

MADAM SPEAKER: Chief Minister, you are easily amused; but to the question, thank you.

MR BARR: I am always amused by the former Leader of the Opposition. He continues to be a source of amusement. I thank Ms Cheyne for the question. I am pleased to advise the Assembly that defence and defence industries are indeed major contributors to our territory economy, collectively adding about \$4.3 billion each year and providing over 23,000 jobs in the Australian Capital Territory.

We are, comparatively speaking, a major player in the Australian defence industry, with 11 of the top 40 defence contractors headquartered here. This includes two rather famous Canberra born and bred companies: Aspen Medical, well known to everyone here; and Australia's largest privately owned defence company, CEA Technologies. There is also the fantastic news that Electro Optic Systems will be consolidating their business into the ACT, further contributing to the diversification of our city's economy.

It is worth noting that our research institutions are also valuable partners in defence industry development. Many of Canberra's academics have seized opportunities to spin off their research into commercial ventures. Examples include Seeing Machines, a successful Canberra-based company with defence-related capability. The future is bright for our local defence industry. I am advised that the next 10 years will see something in the order of \$200 billion worth of capital investment in defence capabilities, including \$17.5 billion in intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance, electronic warfare and cybersecurity capabilities, all areas where we have particular strengths. The ACT government will seek to capitalise on these strengths by establishing—by running out of time, in this instance. (*Time expired.*)

MS CHEYNE: Chief Minister, how is the government building on the appointment of the Defence Industry Advisory Board?

MR BARR: As I was just saying, the Defence Industry Advisory Board will help guide our industry and successfully target these key sectors. This is significant for the economy. KPMG estimates that for every \$1 billion spent on defence operations in the Canberra region, our gross state product is boosted by \$1.4 billion and nearly 8,000 jobs are created. Since the establishment of the Defence Industry Advisory Board in March, its members have been working to grow the ACT's defence industry.

One of the board's main priorities is to provide strategic advice to government. Last month I released the ACT defence industry strategy "Established, capable, skilled". This strategy is the product of the board's advice to government and it will guide our efforts to grow our city's defence industry. It is a sector-specific strategy that is consistent with our ongoing efforts to diversify the ACT economy.

It identifies key strengths of our ACT industry. These include the established defence presence in the ACT, across both government and industry; our capable businesses and institutional ecosystem; but, most importantly, our people, our high performing, skilled workforce.

With the release of the strategy we have committed to 23 distinct actions across five key priority areas. We will support Canberra region businesses to maximise opportunities from defence procurement. We will continue collaboration with other states and territories. We will attract investment to grow the defence industry in our region. We will continue to build a skilled, innovative and connective workforce. We will foster new ideas and grow research and industry partnerships.

MR STEEL: Chief Minister, what success has the board had since its establishment?

MR BARR: We are using the board's skills to promote our defence capabilities. I made some opening remarks at last month's Defence + Industry conference, which provided an opportunity to remind key decision-makers of the reasons to be based in Canberra. We have also used the board's expertise to develop a joint paper with the South Australian government on the development of the space industry in Australia. The paper, which I will lead discussion on at tomorrow's COAG Industry and Skills Council meeting, argues that the commonwealth government needs to provide clear leadership in the development of the space sector if the defence white paper's goal of having our own intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance capabilities is to be met.

Next month the board will consider providing the government with advice on how Canberra companies can make the most of funding available through the Centre for Defence Industry Capability and, in particular, the next generation technology fund. The board will also advise government on which of the many defence events we should seek to attract to Canberra, and how to best promote our city's defence capabilities.

Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders—bush healing farm

MR MILLIGAN: My question is to Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs. Minister, the government promised the community a new model of care for the Ngunnawal bush healing farm, consistent with the current intention of the property. What role have you played in the development of this model and when will it be published?

MS STEPHEN-SMITH: I thank Mr Milligan for his question. As I think he is aware, the policy responsibility for the Ngunnawal bush healing farm lies with the minister for health. I can advise that I understand that there will be some announcement on that shortly. I do not want to speak on behalf of the minister for health on that matter. So I will take that question on notice on her behalf.

MR MILLIGAN: When will the intended operators of the Ngunnawal bush healing farm be made available?

MS STEPHEN-SMITH: I will take that question on notice.

MRS DUNNE: Minister, will there be Indigenous leadership in the delivery of the services at the Ngunnawal bush healing farm?

MS STEPHEN-SMITH: I thank Mrs Dunne for her supplementary question. I realise I did not respond before to Mr Milligan's question about my involvement. I have been briefed regularly on the update, but I have not had a brief for some little while. I can say that ACT Health is working closely with the Ngunnawal bush healing farm advisory board to finalise a non-residential day program to run over a period of approximately 10 weeks targeting 10 to 12 clients and subject to final negotiations with service providers, as I indicated in the previous question that I took on notice.

The advisory board will continue to meet frequently to ensure that the bush healing farm is best placed to succeed. ACT Health continues to work with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community. In relation specifically to Mrs Dunne's question, I understand that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leadership is very important in this matter and that will be the case. I will take the detail of the question on notice.

Alexander Maconochie Centre—women's accommodation

MRS KIKKERT: My question is to the Minister for Corrections. Minister, I refer to your ministerial statement today in which you stated "the relatively sudden increase in female detainee numbers is a development for which we were unable to plan". In 2003 the National Centre for Crime and Justice Statistics released a report highlighting the massive growth in the number of women in Australian prisons since 1995. In 2016 the Vera Institute of Justice released a report on the 14-fold increase in the population of women in US prisons since 1970. These are just two of the many national and international reports on the growth in the number of women in prisons. You also stated that last year's expansion of AMC accommodation was "successful". However, the dedicated women's accommodation in the AMC comprises 29 beds, while we have had up to 45 women in the prison. The prison is having to rely on the management unit and health unit for further women's accommodation. Minister, did you look at the national and international evidence which shows that the number of women in prisons is growing at a rapid rate and, if you did, why were you not able to plan for this increase in the number of women detainees?

MR RATTENBURY: Mrs Kikkert was not here in the last term, but there was quite a bit of debate in the last term about our modelling and what the right size should be for the AMC. As members who were here will recall, the ACT government contracted external expertise, criminologist John Walker, who is well recognised in this field. It is a challenging field, frankly, as I said in my remarks this morning—estimating future population numbers in custody. We contracted out to, frankly, the best person we could find to give us that advice, and the government took that advice. That advice did not identify the sort of increase in the female population that we have experienced here in the ACT.

Mrs Jones: Was he asked?

MR RATTENBURY: Mrs Jones interjects and gets an extra question in, and because I am feeling generous, I will answer it.

Members interjecting—

MADAM SPEAKER: Members, allow Mr Rattenbury to answer the question.

MR RATTENBURY: Of course, I am not supposed to respond to interjections, and this has been a demonstration of why. Mr Walker was asked to model the numbers for all detainees at the AMC.

Opposition members interjecting—

MADAM SPEAKER: Members, you should have respect for your own colleagues when they stand to ask a question.

MRS KIKKERT: That is okay. I do not mind a little laughter. Is it reasonable for our prison to have to house women detainees in the management unit indefinitely because there is a lack of dedicated women's accommodation?

MR RATTENBURY: I can assure the Assembly, as I have before, that there is complete separation of the women in the management unit from any men's part of the jail. There has been a very clear effort to do that. The Human Rights Commissioner has been briefed on the situation so that we can ensure a degree of external scrutiny in making the accommodation decision that has been made for the AMC.

It is not for an indefinite period. There is work going on at the moment, as I indicated this morning, to provide further short to medium-term solutions. We are also undertaking a longer term strategic assessment of accommodation needs at the AMC.

MRS JONES: Minister, how can you describe the AMC accommodation expansion as completely successful given all of the problems with the women's accommodation over the past couple of years?

MR RATTENBURY: Last week I attended the corrections ministers conference, and what I can tell the Assembly is that every jurisdiction in Australia has experienced a range of accommodation issues like this. All of these jurisdictions are doing their best to predict what future numbers will be but there are a range of factors external to corrections. The colloquial expression is that corrections is the end of the line—we take whoever gets sent to us. The ability of corrections to influence that is limited and corrections needs to do the best it can to accommodate those who arrive. That is continuing. It is a dynamic environment.

I think that the expansion of the AMC was successful in that it provided a range of improved accommodation options and improved safety and management options for ACT Corrective Services. I expect that, as we consider future options for particularly the women's accommodation, some of the expertise gained from the successful expansion will be brought to dealing with the question we now have to deal with.

Planning—Federal Golf Club

MS LEE: My question is to the Chief Minister in his capacity as acting Minister for Planning and Land Management. Chief Minister, today's *Canberra Times* reported

that the government has set up a panel to progress the Federal Golf Club's plans for a new clubhouse with a gym and 125 homes. Despite first floating plans to sell parts of its land as early as 1999 and plans for the development of villas being discussed in 2015, the Federal Golf Club is yet to lodge a development application. Now, in August 2017, the government has set up this panel. Chief Minister, what criteria does the government use in determining when to establish a panel of this kind and in selecting the panel's membership?

MR BARR: This is a one-off commitment, I am advised. The panel meets for the first time this evening. Deliberations of the panel are without prejudice and do not bind the ACT government, the National Capital Authority, the proponent, the various participants or the groups they represent to a preferred option or a stated position.

Given the history of this particular issue, which I think goes back to the Carnell government, it is an attempt to reach a community consensus in relation to the proposal.

MS LEE: Chief Minister, what role will the government play in assessing the development application when and if it is lodged?

MR BARR: The independent Planning and Land Authority assesses development applications.

MR PARTON: Chief Minister, with the government's decision to now set up this panel, what association does it have with the Federal Golf Club's recent decision to withdraw its membership of ClubsACT?

MR BARR: Absolutely none.

Crime—motorcycle gangs

MR HANSON: My question is to the Attorney-General and relates to outlaw motorcycle gang activity in Canberra. A senior NSW police officer was quoted in January as saying, "A lot of clubhouses have been closed down and bikies are no longer roaming in packs in NSW but it is frustrating that they can still operate freely in Canberra." The ACT Chief Police Officer was reported as stating that she "agreed that Canberra's lack of anti-consorting laws made Canberra a haven for bikies. I believe that is a factor in the decision to come here and undertake their activities." Attorney-General, how can you maintain that anti-consorting laws are ineffective when police advice is that they are moving from NSW to the ACT as a result of the absence of those laws?

MR RAMSAY: I thank the shadow attorney-general for his question. When we were in a committee hearing earlier this year I was commenting that the member has a habit of being able to find one particular tool in the toolbox and just keep going with that one. I think we have now managed to swap portfolios, but we are seeing the same thing happening again. There are issues, but the shadow attorney-general sees only one matter and grabs the only tool that he has in his toolkit, which is to talk about—

Mr Coe: A point of order.

MADAM SPEAKER: Be seated, Attorney-General. A point of order, Mr Coe.

Mr Coe: On relevance, I think the attorney owes it to Canberrans to be directly relevant to the question and not consume half the answer talking about Mr Hanson.

MADAM SPEAKER: It was not half the answer; and I should have stopped the clock for the attorney. Attorney, you now have less than a minute to conclude your answer.

MR RAMSAY: I note that the hammer keeps going in one particular place. The reason the government is choosing to do what it will do is that it will be based on the evidence. I am pleased to hear from my colleague Minister Gentleman about the conversations he has had with the Chief Police Officer and the way the focus is going. The number one focus for ACT Policing I am advised is in relation to outlaw motorcycle gangs. In relation to law reform, we will work on the basis of evidence. I again draw the attention of the Assembly to the report in relation to the New South Wales laws which says repeatedly—

Mrs Dunne interjecting—

MADAM SPEAKER: Mrs Dunne, can you refrain, please, from shouting across the floor.

MR HANSON: Attorney-General, what are the factors causing bikies to reduce activity in New South Wales and increase activity in Canberra?

MR RAMSAY: I would advise the shadow—

Opposition members interjecting—

MADAM SPEAKER: Minister, can you resume your seat. Members opposite—Mrs Jones, Mr Wall—I would have thought that you considered that your questions were serious. Therefore you are asking the minister for an answer but you go straight into the jokes, Mr Wall. I ask that you refrain. Attorney, can you get to your answer.

MR RAMSAY: Thank you Madam Speaker. Without accepting the premise of the question, I would assume that the best thing for Mr Hanson to do, if he is keen to know the answer for the motivation of any individual member of an outlaw motorcycle gang, is for him to ask them.

This is Question Time - Aug03-33

MR STEEL: Minister, has any new evidence—

Opposition members interjecting—

MADAM SPEAKER: Members, Mr Steel cannot be heard.

Mr Hanson interjecting—

MADAM SPEAKER: Mr Hanson—enough.

MR STEEL: Minister, has any new evidence of the effectiveness of anti-consorting laws been published since yesterday?

MR RAMSAY: I thank Mr Steel for his question. The answer is simply: no. Accordingly the answers that I gave yesterday continue to stand today. We will continue to work on the evidence and not on speculation.

Mr Hanson interjecting—

MADAM SPEAKER: Mr Hanson—enough.

Health—Mental health staffing

MRS DUNNE: My question is to the Minister for Mental Health. I refer to a statement, reported in the *Canberra Times* of 24 July, by Mr Stephen Crook, the secretary of the Australian Salaried Medical Officers Federation ACT. Mr Crook was speaking about staff shortages in mental health and he said:

Senior management appear to continue to expect more services to be opened and staffed, while current units have inadequate staffing ...

Minister, do we currently have enough staff providing mental health services to the community and, if not, which areas are the most affected?

MR RATTENBURY: Yes, I did see the press release put out by ASMOF making those concerns public about the shortage of psychiatrists in the ACT. I can inform the Assembly that there has been a degree of staff turnover and 12 staff have left in the last period of time. However, during that same period, ACT Health has undertaken seven recruitment rounds and successfully recruited 13 new psychiatrists. Not all of those are on board at this time; some are coming a bit later this year.

Certainly, the challenge that we face is that there is nationally a shortage of psychiatrists. The ACT is competing with other jurisdictions to encourage people to come and work in our jurisdiction. That presents its challenges. We have just been discussing why people want to come to Canberra. This is one of the issues that we need to deal with here. But we are successfully recruiting psychiatrists. One of the issues I intend to raise at the COAG health ministers meeting tomorrow, with other mental health ministers in particular, is how we can address the issue of the national shortage of psychiatrists and whether there are steps we need to be taking nationally to get more people to enter the profession. That will not provide an immediate response but I think it is an important long-term workforce strategic planning question.

MRS DUNNE: Minister, how often has the adult mental health unit at the Canberra Hospital had only one psychiatrist present when the unit is meant to be staffed by four psychiatrists at any one time?

MR RATTENBURY: I will take that question on notice and provide Mrs Dunne with

an answer.

MR WALL: Minister, what actions have you taken to satisfy yourself that the adult mental health unit has enough qualified staff to meet the rising levels of demand?

MR RATTENBURY: I have had quite a number of discussions with my directorate about the availability of psychiatrists in the ACT and we have been discussing in detail the recruitment strategies used by ACT Health to ensure that we have enough staff in the ACT.

Government—events policy

MR STEEL: My question is to the Minister for Regulatory Services. Can the minister outline how the government is making it easier to stage events in Canberra, including in my electorate of Murrumbidgee?

MR RAMSAY: I thank Mr Steel for his question. The government is committed to making Canberra a vibrant city which strikes the balance to facilitate events whilst ensuring that public safety is maintained. It can be time-consuming to have all of the relevant information and to go through all of the possible applications. That is why Access Canberra has set up their events case management team. Those who want to host an event in Canberra need only fill out one online form and this team will kick into action to ensure that organisers have all the relevant information. They will then work with them to help them to obtain all the relevant government approvals they need.

This team works with events of all sizes and natures. Whether it is something as large and complex as Summernats or Spilt Milk, something new and innovative like the Pop Inn mobile wine bar or even a community dance event in the park commemorating a song from the 1970s, the events team in Access Canberra are ready to do everything they can to ensure that our citizens have every relevant government box ticked across all relevant directorates and authorities.

Recently the team helped with the Brave Tailgate season opening event, which was a fan-led event in the car park of the Phillip ice skating rink for the Australian Ice Hockey League team prior to their first match of the season. The event attracted over 400 people across three hours and helped to create a buzz for the start of the season. Afterwards, I am advised, the organisers remarked, “It was so easy, especially after nearly not proceeding due to the red tape involved in closing a car park and obtaining a commercial liquor permit. But the events and business coordination team at Access Canberra made it very easy.”

Madam Speaker, this government is pleased to continue its work to make events easy to organise so that Canberrans can continue to build their community experience.

MR STEEL: Can the minister advise if this model could be used in other areas of government regulation to help businesses in Murrumbidgee?

MR RAMSAY: I thank Mr Steel for his supplementary question. I am happy to report that, after the rousing success of this model in the events space, Access Canberra have

expanded this team's remit to also help new liquor businesses navigate the relevant government processes. Liquor businesses can be some of the most complicated ones to set up, with multiple government approvals needed. This can include ensuring that the physical site complies with building, electrical and gas codes; and advising on food, liquor and outdoor dining permits. The team will help Canberrans navigate all of the requirements they need to set up. The team will also ensure that organisers have all their applications in and will organise joint inspections across the relevant areas of government, where needed, to make the process as efficient as possible.

In particular in Mr Steel's electorate, since the start of 2017 Access Canberra has issued seven liquor licences in the Murrumbidgee area, and five liquor permits in the Murrumbidgee area since 1 July 2017. Liquor permits were issued to community groups for the purpose of cultural events and fundraisers. Liquor licences issued in the area were for a wide variety of ventures, including restaurants and a brewery. The Access Canberra liquor team also helped successfully negotiate a licensed outdoor dining area for a restaurant without the need for a development application, which saved the customer approximately \$3,000. These teams go over and above, helping the businesses of Canberra to realise their dreams in a way that is both safe and lawful.

MS ORR: Minister, what is the saving to businesses by offering a case managed model for these kinds of services?

MR RAMSAY: I thank Ms Orr for the supplementary question. On the events side of the business, Access Canberra has been crunching the numbers and, on average, the events team are saving organisers around 10 hours per event. This translates to an annual saving to business of around \$1 million, a huge gain for event organisers in the ACT. While it is still too early to quantify the savings from the liquor side of the team, early indications are that they are providing an equivalent level of service.

This new way of thinking has turned traditional government service delivery on its head, with the public service doing much of the running around and finding of information that we previously asked the public to do. This change frees up businesses to spend more time organising and planning events and less time looking through government websites to find what approvals and permits are needed. This is all part of the government's push to be more facilitative in allowing innovative ideas to come to fruition in Canberra. We are working with businesses to help get their ideas over the line in a safe and lawful way, which helps the ACT economy to expand and diversify.

Greyhound racing—cruelty reports

MR PARTON: My question is to the Minister for Regulatory Services. Minister, on 13 July your ministerial colleague Mr Rattenbury asserted that he had confirmed reports of animal cruelty at the Canberra Greyhound Racing Club, despite there being no record of this on either Domestic Animal Services or RSPCA databases. Has Minister Rattenbury given you or your directorate a copy of these reports?

MR RAMSAY: I thank the member for his question. I am aware of a number of matters which have been alleged in relation to greyhounds and which have been and are under investigation. Certainly on 6 February there was a complaint which was

made in relation to alleged race fixing and swab practices. That matter has been investigated and the matter has been closed.

In addition, on 28 February there was a new piece of information provided to my office about swabbing practices. My advice is that the matter is currently being investigated by Access Canberra.

Mr Parton: On a point of order, my question specifically pertained to information that has come from your ministerial colleague Mr Rattenbury.

MADAM SPEAKER: Attorney, you do have some time yet to be more relevant to the question.

MR RAMSAY: Thank you Madam Speaker. In relation to information, I note the comments that were made by Mr Rattenbury. Minister Rattenbury has, I understand, been in contact with members of the public and, as is always the case, I encourage people to pass matters straight on to Access Canberra. Mr Rattenbury has not passed anything in particular on to me. If it is in relation to the same matters—and I understand it may well be—I have received those and have passed those directly on to Access Canberra for investigation.

MR PARTON: Minister, to the best of your knowledge, have these reports been lodged with the Gambling and Racing Commission or Domestic Animal Services?

MR RAMSAY: As I was saying, the information is that the questions that have been raised in relation to swabbing practices on 28 February have been passed on and they are currently being investigated by Access Canberra.

MR COE: Minister, have these reports been made available to the Canberra greyhound club?

MR RAMSAY: I will take that on notice.

Housing—new housing strategy

MS ORR: My question is to the Minister for Housing and Suburban Development. Can the minister advise the Assembly of the work now underway to engage the community on the development of a new housing strategy?

MS BERRY: I thank Ms Orr for her question. The ACT government is developing a housing strategy that will focus on reducing homelessness, strengthening social housing assistance, increasing affordable rental options and improving pathways to affordable homeownership. To build on last year's efforts, I have brought together industry and community stakeholders to participate in further conversations about housing in the ACT. In aiming to deliver increased affordable housing for low income households we are utilising a diverse group that represents the multiple ways in which the same problem can be looked at by different people.

Last week I issued a discussion paper, *Towards a new housing strategy*, to help inform the community conversation about housing and homelessness ahead of the

housing summit the ACT government will hold in October. The government has commenced a comprehensive engagement process, initially with community organisations, industry and service providers, in order to develop some broad themes and areas for reform. These broad themes have guided the development of the public discussion paper, and we now want to hear from all Canberrans on their experiences and ideas to address housing affordability.

A range of opportunities to contribute ideas and help to shape the government's future actions will include: online engagement through the ACT government's your say website; facilitated discussions with stakeholder groups and subject matter experts; targeted focus group discussions and workshops; engagement with key industry and corporate organisations; and public information sessions. Contributions received during the engagement period will be presented at the housing and homelessness summit on 17 October.

MS ORR: Minister, what involvement did the affordable housing advisory panel play in this process, and how will that group be used going forward?

MS BERRY: I thank Ms Orr for the supplementary. The ACT government has been proactive and responsive in seeking to address housing affordability in the ACT. By many comparisons, the ACT is doing well in responding to the housing needs of Canberrans, including the most disadvantaged households. On average measures, the ACT continues to rank first in terms of home loan and rental affordability across all jurisdictions. It is recognised, however, that market-driven initiatives have not always achieved equitable outcomes across the income quintiles and a narrower focus on providing support for households in the lowest two income quintiles is needed to address the challenge of housing affordability.

The affordable housing advisory group has been established to provide an independent, external perspective of the challenges of housing affordability in the ACT and the possible responses that might be considered by the government. The group is providing guidance and advice on affordable housing and homelessness policy and, in particular, on possible actions which could be included in the new ACT housing strategy.

The group has been chosen for their independent external expertise and reflects my and the government's desire to engage with a broader and different group of stakeholders on this important community issue. The group has been meeting monthly over the past five months. Opportunities for action have been explored in the areas of planning, regulatory and policy reform, housing supply and diversity, targeting of housing support, choice and flexibility, and measures for strong and sustainable public housing.

The group has provided advice around content for engagement and how to target specific groups who may be difficult to engage with, and will assist in the facilitation of focus groups by hosting events and reaching out to their stakeholders.

MS CHEYNE: Minister, could you advise on the arrangements for the housing and homelessness summit in October?

MS BERRY: I thank Ms Cheyne for the supplementary question. In accordance with the parliamentary agreement, the government has committed resources in the budget to convene a homelessness summit in 2017, bringing together all key stakeholders to develop innovative proposals to combat homelessness. This will be held, as I said, on 17 October 2017.

The target audience for the summit includes service provider organisations and participants in the community consultations and focus group discussions. The summit's goals are to provide an overview of what we have heard so far from the community and stakeholders; provide an opportunity to discuss, refine and prioritise possible outcomes that could be included in the new housing strategy; and continue to build a deliberative partnership and shared ownership with the community to tackle the challenges of affordable housing and homelessness. Summit attendees, who will include some of our federal parliamentarians, will workshop possible actions that could be part of the new housing strategy document and provide their perspective on prioritisation strategies.

The challenge that lies ahead is not one just for government. Different sectors need to join together in an ongoing conversation and as a community to identify and deliver workable solutions to strengthen housing assistance and address housing affordability in Canberra. This summit is an important part, but only one part, of a range of opportunities that are open to the community to contribute ideas and to help shape the government's thinking. These are all outlined on the ACT government's Your Say website.

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