



**QUESTION TIME**  
OF THE  
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY  
FOR THE  
AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

**HANSARD**

Edited proof transcript

Thursday, 22 February 2018

This is an **EDITED PROOF TRANSCRIPT** of question time proceedings that is subject to further checking. Members' suggested corrections for the official Weekly Hansard should be lodged with the Hansard office (facsimile 02 6205 0025) as soon as possible. Answers to questions on notice will appear in the *Weekly Hansard*.

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## **Leave of absence**

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

That leave of absence be granted to the Chief Minister, Mr Barr, to attend the Prime Minister's delegation to the United States.

## **Ministerial arrangements**

**MR GENTLEMAN:** For question time today Minister Berry will act as Chief Minister and Treasurer and take questions in that portfolio, Minister Fitzharris will take question on economic development, and Minister Ramsay will take questions on tourism and major events.

## **Questions without notice**

### **Light rail—Gungahlin**

**MR COE:** My question is to the Minister for Transport Canberra and City Services. Minister, I wrote to you on 19 December on behalf of numerous Gungahlin businesses that have had their financial viability threatened by light rail construction. Minister, will the government provide any form of financial compensation or relief for these businesses that are at risk of going under because the light rail work has made their operations unviable?

**MS FITZHARRIS:** I thank Mr Coe for the question. Certainly the government, through TCCS and of course through Canberra Metro, the consortium constructing light rail, has been in regular contact with businesses in the Gungahlin town centre and I have also had conversations with businesses in the Gungahlin town centre. I certainly accept that there has been disruption to a number of these businesses.

We have been working with them on ways that we can support them throughout the construction process and also, of course, giving them information on what steps are coming next. They will soon start to see some of the more immediate impacts of construction diminish, particularly on that section of Hibberson Street between Gungahlin Place and Hinder Street, which I know has had an impact on the street frontage for the businesses there. The government will continue to work with those businesses but no, as we have stated previously, financial compensation is not something the government is considering.

**MR COE:** Minister, how can you expect restaurants, cafes, dry cleaners and other service businesses to survive, given the dust, the fencing and the fact that there are no loading zones and there is no nearby parking in addition to there being limited access for those businesses?

**MS FITZHARRIS:** I personally visit a number of those businesses on quite a frequent basis and it is the case that there has been an impact. There has also been an impact from the construction works for the Gungahlin bus station. It is also the case that those businesses will soon start to see some of the benefits of significant upgrades directly in front of their businesses.

*Opposition members interjecting—*

**MS FITZHARRIS:** That is the case for many of them. They have been kept well informed. We understand that it has been difficult, but we have also kept in very close contact with them to provide them with information about the impact of light rail. My understanding is that the business engagement and outreach area of Canberra Metro is quite frequently in contact, in fact on a weekly basis visits businesses there and asks them what more they can do. I also note that it is a very busy part of the Gungahlin town centre.

*Opposition members interjecting—*

**Ms Berry:** Point of order, Madam Speaker.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Resume your seat. Point of order.

**Ms Berry:** Madam Speaker, their continuous—

**MADAM SPEAKER:** I think it is about the noise, the interjections.

**Ms Berry:** Yes, also the continuous snide and sarcastic comments that have been coming across the chamber. It is completely unacceptable behaviour. The interjections are making it difficult for anybody to hear the minister's response.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** I will ask those on the opposition benches to refrain from the interjections. Do you have anything further to add?

**MS FITZHARRIS:** No.

**MR MILLIGAN:** Minister, what legal recourse will be open to businesses to seek compensation for the economic loss resulting from your government's disregard for their plight and the welfare of their families?

**Mr Ramsay:** Madam Speaker, on a point of order, I believe that question is asking for a legal opinion, and I believe it is inappropriate.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** It is indeed, and—

**Mrs Dunne:** On the point of order, the question is not asking for a legal opinion. The question is asking: is there legal recourse? Because he used the word "legal" in a sentence it does not mean that it is asking for a legal opinion.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Thank you. The advice is that it is out of order under standing order 117(c)(iii).

*Mr Hanson interjecting—*

**Ms Berry:** A point of order, Madam Speaker.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Can I just finish?

**Ms Berry:** I beg your pardon for interrupting your ruling.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** I have just said that that question was out of order.

**Ms Berry:** It was about another comment that was called out across the—

**MADAM SPEAKER:** I did not hear it.

**Ms Berry:** chamber. Mr Hanson just called out across the chamber that the Attorney-General was a dud. I believe that that is unparliamentary, and he should be made to withdraw.

**Mr Coe:** Madam Speaker—

**MADAM SPEAKER:** I did not hear the member. Before I go to you, if it is on the point of order—

**Mr Coe:** It is on the point of order.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Can I finish? I do not know how many times I have raised the point about not only interjections but language that is disrespectful. It may not be considered unparliamentary by the absolute rule of the standing orders but certainly much of the interjection is offensive and disrespectful. I ask people to be very mindful of that.

**Mr Coe:** Madam Speaker, on your ruling, the question was: what legal recourse? In effect, you could also say: what recourse? The point of saying “legal” is not to seek a legal opinion but, in effect, to ask what contractual recourse is available. We could have easily dropped the word “legal” and we would have had, in effect, the same meaning. What recourse will be open to businesses to seek compensation? In effect, what contractual recourse, what legal recourse or any recourse is open to them? It is right and proper that the minister answer that.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Mr Coe, I have made a ruling.

**Mr Gentleman:** Madam Speaker, on the point of order.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Mr Gentleman.

**Mr Gentleman:** Madam Speaker, you have made a ruling. There is no debate on your ruling. It is important I think that you reaffirm that.

**Mrs Dunne:** I do not think you had a chance to finish making your ruling.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** I did say that I had ruled that supplementary out of order, and as for how questions are structured, I think we all should be mindful of that. I took advice; I was very clear to members that I took advice from the Clerk, and I have used that advice to base my opinion on.

**Mr Coe:** On your ruling, if we were to say what contractual recourse will be open, would that have been permissible?

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Mr Coe, I have made a ruling, and I am not debating it. The ruling has been made. The supp has been made out of order, and all of us should be very mindful about how you structure your questions.

**Mr Milligan:** Madam Speaker, can I rephrase the question?

**MADAM SPEAKER:** I will give you this one chance, but from now on, there is no more go-back. Mr Coe, I don't appreciate that little snigger from you.

**Mr Coe:** No, I was commending James for the—

**MR MILLIGAN:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. Minister, what recourse will be open to business to seek compensation for economic loss resulting in your government's disregard for their plight and the welfare of their families?

**MS FITZHARRIS:** That would be up to those businesses, but I utterly reject the facts put in Mr Milligan's question, and I ask that he would provide evidence for the government's disregard.

*Members interjecting—*

**MADAM SPEAKER:** We are just a few minutes in to question time. We have had to stop a number of times because of interjections. I have given Mr Milligan enormous leeway by allowing him to recraft that question. That will be the only leeway given this year; make no mistake. I will ask those on the opposition bench to be a bit more respectful during question time.

### **Public housing—Chapman**

**MRS JONES:** My question is to the Minister for Housing and Suburban Development. Last year, 872 residents signed a petition requesting that the development proposal for housing on block 1 section 45 in Chapman be withdrawn due to its location within the bushfire prone area, amongst other reasons. As the minister would be aware, last week the development application was approved. Minister, was the ACT government genuinely open to changing the plans or refining the plans based on the development application consultation process? If not, what is the purpose of such a process?

**MS BERRY:** As members will know, this matter has been discussed in this place at length and also within the community of Chapman. There were over six consultation sessions with the Chapman action group. A number of the issues that were raised were taken into account and the feedback that was provided by the Chapman community was taken into account in the design of the dwellings.

That included a reduction in the number of dwellings from 29 to 20, ensuring that there were central trees kept on the site, adjusting the building layout and also making

sure that the access to the site was changed. Yes, it was genuine consultation and the feedback was listened to and changes were made.

**MRS JONES:** Minister, given that you claim this was a genuine consultation process, why were the many objections to the development application made by residents overridden, and what would it have taken for the government to actually change the plans to build on this block?

*Mr Wall interjecting—*

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Have you finished your question, Mrs Jones?

**MRS JONES:** I do not know. People want to rephrase my question for me.

**Mr Wall:** That is not allowed, apparently.

**Mrs Jones:** That is not allowed.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Mr Wall, you are about one interjection away from being warned, given the attitude and the behaviour of your team today.

**MS BERRY:** Of course, the plans were changed. The development application has been approved by the planning authority, and now there is a period of time when people who object to the development application and the decision of the planning authority can object. That is the process. Prior to the development application being approved a considerable amount of time was taken with the community to take them through the plans and to listen to their ideas, so much so that members of the Chapman action group said that they wanted to be involved in discussing the kinds of products that would be used to build these dwellings, and that has been agreed to as well.

**MR HANSON:** Minister, had the government identified any backup sites for this supportive housing development should the consultation process have resulted in a rejection of the development application, or was the outcome actually decided from the very beginning?

**MS BERRY:** Public housing is being built all across the city, including as part of this renewal program.

### **Schools—International Women’s Day**

**MS LE COUTEUR:** My question is to the minister for education: how are ACT government schools being encouraged to acknowledge International Women’s Day on 8 March and the International Day of the Girl Child?

**MS BERRY:** International Women’s Day is on 8 March and there will be lots of events all across the city to mark that day celebrating the social, economic, cultural and political achievements of women. Schools across the community will hold a number of events, and I can give some examples of some of the events that have occurred in schools in the past on International Women’s Day.

In 2017 Gungahlin College had a special panel of women attended by students where Louise Maher, the ABC's roving reporter, talked to year 12 students about being a female leader. As well, at the International Women's Day breakfast the guest speaker was Group Captain Sally Dawsett RAAF with 120 staff, principals, teachers, seniors and students. The Education Directorate also holds tables at the UN's International Women's Day lunch where both women and men are invited to attend.

**MS LE COUTEUR:** Last year a government primary school decided to change the International Day of the Girl Child to the International Day of the Girl and Boy Child, thus completely changing the focus of the day. What guidance is provided to schools to ensure that they are not undermining the purpose of the day?

**MS BERRY:** I trust that schools will make decisions with their school community on the best way to celebrate International Women's Day. I do not think there is any benefit to anybody by excluding boys and young men from this conversation. Teaching boys and young men about International Women's Day: what it is about, what it means, where it has come from and what it hopes to achieve, and encouraging them to be inspired to become feminists themselves, is something that I would encourage every school to promote.

### **Education—Teacher Quality Institute**

**MR STEEL:** My question is to the minister for education. Minister, how is the government supporting a strong, professional teaching workforce in the ACT?

**MS BERRY:** I thank Mr Steel for his question. Just like lawyers, doctors, nurses and engineers, teachers are professionals and they are experts in their field. Teachers should also be respected and valued because of the specialist knowledge they have and the skills they possess.

The government is focused on delivering a strong, professional teaching workforce by implementing systems that support teachers to grow and to best use their knowledge and skills rather than telling teachers what to do in the classroom and interfering whenever there are challenges. We trust our teachers.

Over the term of this government we have implemented some important initiatives for our teaching workforce. Great teachers by design and great teaching by design provide systemic approaches to train and recruit expert teachers into our schools and to draw out the best evidence-based practice inside the school gate.

The ACT Teacher Quality Institute truly is Australia's leader in its work. Across our schools, in all systems, teachers are also engaged working together with universities and consulting experts to grow the body of knowledge about facilitating student learning. For example, Tom Lowrie, a mathematician at the University of Canberra, has been working with teachers on the use of spatial awareness as a maths teaching method and the results so far have been outstanding. The government also works very closely with the Australian Education Union which, alongside its industrial focus, is deeply interested in growing confidence and expertise amongst teachers.



**MR STEEL:** Minister, how has the ACT Teacher Quality Institute contributed to building professionalism and expertise amongst teachers?

**MS BERRY:** In 2010 the ACT established its own Teacher Quality Institute. The institute is led by Anne Ellis. She and her team are making an incredible contribution to building a professional, expert teaching workforce in the ACT. The ACT Teacher Quality Institute, unlike some other teacher professional regulators, has among its core functions the building of a trusted teaching profession. It does this through practical efforts aimed at raising teacher quality. The institute also emphasises work across school sectors, because when teaching professionals work together they are able to best share practice and engage in coaching and mentoring.

The outcomes of the institute are very clear. Over my time in this portfolio I have now twice had the opportunity to recognise teachers attaining highly accomplished and lead status, as well as the expert teachers who assess people seeking this recognition. ACT teachers are doing way better than any others in schools across the country in establishing accomplished and lead status, with around 15 per cent of the national attainment, despite our having a significantly smaller number of teachers in the profession. The institute is making a very vital contribution to our teaching profession.

**MS ORR:** Minister, what is the government's focus for furthering the teaching profession in the ACT?

**MS BERRY:** The government is working hard to support a strong teaching workforce in the ACT, and we trust our teachers. That work needs to continue and needs to be done alongside the profession to make sure that students are accessing the best learning opportunities.

Teachers and teaching have been an important theme of the future of education conversation, with some key insights that have already been shared. These include: "Teachers are the single most important resource to a child's learning." That was said by a school. "What makes us succeed is being surrounded by people, teachers and principals who encourage you but also push you to be the best that you can be," from a student. "Free your teachers from the administrative burden of recording everything and allow them to teach in a way that engages children and provides them with a lifelong love of learning," from a parent.

Over coming months I will be asking teachers to reflect on their work, on their profession and to consider what else needs to be done. I look forward to releasing a discussion paper soon about this and I look forward to encouraging teachers to be part of that conversation. As a quote from a parent highlighted, I am keen to look at how assessment and reporting can be aligned to what teachers know so that we can best support our students.

### **Public housing—Chapman**

**MR HANSON:** My question is to the Minister for Housing and Suburban Development. I refer to your media release of 15 March 2017 in relation to the site selection of block 1 section 45 in Chapman for supportive housing. I acknowledge residents of Chapman in the Assembly here today.

In the media release you stated that the sites were selected for supportive housing to support “Canberra’s most vulnerable residents”. Minister, why are you placing some of Canberra’s most vulnerable residents within the bushfire-prone area?

**MS BERRY:** The development application has been approved by the planning authority, including ensuring that those homes will be built to the highest standard to ensure that they have the best fire safety standards, probably higher than some other residences in Chapman.

**MR HANSON:** Minister, is it the government’s intention to locate aged, disabled or special needs tenants on this site, and if so, are these tenants expected to self-evacuate in the event of a fire?

**MS BERRY:** As I have said previously in this place, one-on-one conversations are occurring with tenants across Canberra who are being relocated into new homes. They will choose where they live across Canberra. That may be Chapman, if it suits their needs.

**MRS JONES:** Minister, in the event of evacuation—as many in the gallery have experienced—of this site due to fire, where will the tenants be relocated, and how?

**MS BERRY:** I assume that Chapman residents will have done safety plans in the case of an unfortunate event occurring, such as a fire through Chapman again. I would suggest that the same would occur for public housing tenants—in fact, more so—and that Chapman residents would be able to assist in that process.

### **Crime—victim welfare**

**MR WALL:** My question is to the Minister for Police and Emergency Services: my colleague Mr Hanson recently asked you to demonstrate that you cared about the workers of the Raiders Weston Club and Aldi by meeting with them regarding recent robberies. You said, and I quote—

*Members interjecting—*

**MADAM SPEAKER:** I ask those having a conversation across the floor to stop; I assume that Mr Gentleman would be having trouble hearing Mr Wall. Mr Wall, can you start from the beginning.

**MR WALL:** This question is for the Minister for Police and Emergency Services: Mr Hanson recently asked you to demonstrate that you cared about the workers of the Raiders Weston Club and the Aldi store at Weston Creek by meeting with them regarding recent robberies. You said:

I am not sure that it would be appropriate at a ministerial level to take that sort of action.

Minister, why do you consider it is inappropriate for you to have direct contact with members of the public about an issue relating to your portfolio?

**MR GENTLEMAN:** I meet regularly with members of the public across my portfolios. So what Mr Wall is saying in the premise to his question is incorrect. I do meet with members of the public on a regular basis across all my portfolios.

**MR WALL:** Minister, do you genuinely consider that it is not your job to meet with members of the public about your portfolio responsibilities, given your quote earlier this week?

**MR GENTLEMAN:** The quote that Mr Wall provides is a question I put to the Assembly in general terms. It was not an assurance that I will not meet with members of the community.

**Mr Wall:** Refer to *Hansard*, mate. Sit down before you make yourself—

**MR GENTLEMAN:** Mr Wall interjects again.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Mr Wall, you have been asked. You have been forewarned about being warned. You are now warned.

**MR HANSON:** Minister, will you now commit to visiting the employees at Raiders Weston Club and Aldi?

**MR GENTLEMAN:** As I said to Mr Hanson in reply to his question the other day, I have not received a request to meet with those employees.

### **Community sector—government support**

**MS ORR:** My question is to the Minister for Community Services and Social Inclusion. Minister, how does the community support and infrastructure grants program support the ACT community sector to become more effective and efficient in service delivery to assist more Canberrans?

**MS STEPHEN-SMITH:** I thank Ms Orr for her question. This government works in partnership with our community organisations and community sector to provide a range of services and programs to support all Canberrans to reach their full potential. The recently opened community support and infrastructure grants program supports community organisations to deliver their programs and services for the benefit of members of the ACT community.

In 2018 the ACT government has made a total of \$230,000 available to support Canberra's community sector through this program. Organisations can apply for funding under one of the following categories: community support and capacity building; non-fixed infrastructure and equipment; and minor capital works and fixed infrastructure.

Funds may be used for a variety of purposes, all aimed at allowing these organisations to operate more efficiently and effectively, and so support Canberrans better. This can include administrative improvements, such as enabling shared service models to reduce operational burdens on organisations, allow for innovation in administration

and better focus on serving clients, as well as providing for training in business and organisational planning to underpin better processes and planning inside an organisation.

Funds also may support the purchase of equipment, including furniture and storage, work safety equipment, and equipment such as cooking equipment for community rooms or kitchens. These sorts of small purchases can make a big difference to a community organisation, and also allow the organisation to continue meeting work health and safety requirements. Minor physical infrastructure can also be improved or built, allowing for better energy efficiency, improved environmental outcomes or enhanced storage.

Applications for the grants close on 19 March 2018. I encourage all members to make their communities aware of these grants, and I look forward to announcing the successful applicants later this year.

**MS ORR:** Minister, what is the government doing to reduce barriers to online and digital participation for community organisations and their members?

**MS STEPHEN-SMITH:** I thank Ms Orr for her supplementary. The ACT government, through the participation (digital communities) grant program, is supporting community organisations to adopt or enhance their capacity to use digital technology.

A modern and responsive online presence means that community organisations can connect more effectively with our diverse community and Canberrans can more easily find the information they need. Through this program, community organisations can apply for grants to establish or upgrade their websites, purchase ICT software and hardware, conduct digital literacy training for members of the community, and translate and provide online information to members. This can be of special value to culturally and linguistically diverse Canberrans, Canberrans with disabilities and others who might otherwise feel socially excluded from the life of our city or unaware of the services, supports and social activities available to them.

In recognition of the needs of particular communities in Canberra, the digital communities grants include three priority areas for applications. Projects under the three priority areas could be (1) people, projects, activities or initiatives that contribute towards closing the gap on disadvantage, recognising the ACT government's commitment to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in our community; (2) targeted digital and/or ICT projects which assist mature age workers, aged 50 plus, to access programs and services that increase their ability to find work, reintegrate back into employment, re-skill and ensure that they remain active and productive members of our community; or (3) projects which raise awareness of domestic violence issues or programs that address the drivers or impacts of domestic violence within the community.

In 2018, the ACT government has made a total of \$101,115 available for grants to enhance Canberra's community digital participation. These applications are open until 19 March, and I again encourage members to make their communities aware.

**MS CHEYNE:** Minister, what sorts of projects have been funded by the community support and infrastructure grants program and the participation (digital communities) grants program in previous rounds?

**MS STEPHEN-SMITH:** I thank Ms Cheyne for her supplementary question. The community support and infrastructure grants program and the participation (digital communities) grants program have supported the ACT community for a number of years, funding a range of projects over the past four years.

Last year under the community support and infrastructure grants program, 37 organisations shared total funding of \$220,000 for their projects. The grants funded some essential infrastructure upgrades. For example, Companion House, a community organisation that assists survivors of torture and trauma, was successful in receiving funding to upgrade its phone system. The new high-quality conference phones that Companion House purchased enabled their clients to remain in a safe and confidential space with access to offsite interpreters. I am told that this has made a significant positive impact for clients at Companion House.

Other initiatives funded under the community support and infrastructure grants program included accessible kitchen equipment for the ACT Disability, Aged and Carer Advocacy Service, better known to most of us as ADACAS, and solar panels for the new Gungahlin mosque.

Under last year's participation (digital communities) grants program, 37 organisations shared a total funding of \$115,749.23 for their projects. The ACT Deafness Resource Centre received a digital communities grant to redesign its website to make it compatible with mobile devices. The Deafness Resource Centre relies heavily on digital media to communicate with their members. The upgraded website will utilise a different format to enable members of the deaf and hearing impaired communities to access the website from their mobile devices.

Among other organisations, Migrant and Refugee Settlement Services for the ACT was also a recipient of a digital communities grant. This funded a digital literacy program for seniors and mature aged workers.

These grants programs enable community organisations to better include and support all Canberrans in the life of our city in line with the ACT government's strong commitment to social inclusion across the board. (*Time expired.*)

### **Minister for Planning and Land Management—Europe delegation**

**MR PARTON:** My question is to the Minister for Planning and Land Management in relation to his study visit to Prague as reported on ABC radio this morning. Minister, you said you were not in control of the \$2,400 bill or the dinner venue as these were decisions made by your directorate on your behalf. Minister, why did you fail to exercise your own judgment about the excess of this dinner? Do you think it is within community standards to spend \$200 per head of taxpayers' money on a dinner in Prague?

**Mr Hanson:** Go to Hibberson Street.

**MR GENTLEMAN:** I thank Mr Parton for his question and Mr Hanson for his interjection of “Go to Hibberson Street” for dinner. I will put it to the next delegation that comes to the ACT that if they want to deal with the Canberra Liberals on international business they should take them to Hibberson Street, perhaps. It is very good. I enjoy Hibberson Street.

*Opposition members interjecting—*

**Ms Fitzharris:** I raise a point of order, Madam Speaker. While we are pleased to see the Canberra Liberals in true form, for the benefit of everyone, it is extremely difficult to hear not only over the interjections but also the personal and frankly nasty nature of many of these interjections.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** I have asked you to stop your interjections, Mr Hanson. You are warned now as well. Quite frankly, the behaviour this afternoon and the interjections are quite above normal.

**Mr Hanson:** Madam Speaker, I accept your warning but I am not clear what is so offensive about saying, “Go to dinner on Hibberson Street.” That is what my interjection was. It is hardly a slur or offensive.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Mr Hanson, I have made a warning. Throughout the afternoon your interjections have been loud, they have been constant and they have been quite snide and disrespectful.

**MR GENTLEMAN:** Of course, as minister I am the person responsible for those decisions. Those decisions are made in a budgetary sense. The directorate puts forward a budget for such trips to the Chief Minister. That is looked at by the executive and either approved or not approved. The articles in relation to the trip, including the dinner, were approved within the budget set aside for that particular trip.

Trips like this are very important. We learn new ideas and share international best practice. The delegation visited cities that demonstrated best practice examples of urban innovation, environmental sustainability and smart city initiatives. Indeed, the response from the EU world cities program was very positive. In November last year, following our trip, we had a delegation to Canberra from the world cities program to look at investments in business activities in the ACT. This year in March we will host a conference of 35 delegates from cities across the world that belong to this program. So there are fantastic learning opportunities for Canberrans and it is a very good investment.

**MR PARTON:** Minister, who actually approved the expenditure for this dinner, and were you presented with a budget for the trip in advance?

**MR GENTLEMAN:** Yes, that is the detail I just went into in my answer. Of course a budget is prepared well in advance for such a trip. The Prague EU delegation provided an incentive for us to travel there of some \$12,500. The dinner provided a response to that, as appropriate. Thirteen delegates attended the dinner, including four from the Prague City Council and one from the EU Parliament itself.

**Mrs Jones:** A point of order, Madam Speaker, on relevance. The question was who approved the dinner. Minister Gentleman said he refers to an earlier answer, but it did not actually state whether he had seen the budget, which is a very important part of the question.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** From memory in the minister's earlier answer he made reference to the fact that trips have budgets and that is stock standard process. Mr Gentleman, do you have more to add?

**MR GENTLEMAN:** No.

**MR WALL:** Minister, are you not ultimately responsible for the decisions of your directorate; therefore why will you not take responsibility for the decision regarding a \$2,400 dinner bill?

**MR GENTLEMAN:** I have been open to the public, but I am responsible for the decision, and it was my responsibility for the particular dinner. So Mr Wall is incorrect in his statement that I have not taken that responsibility.

### **Public housing—Chapman**

**MISS C BURCH:** My question is to the Minister for Housing and Suburban Development. I refer to the decision last week to approve development application 201732687 to place supportive housing on block 1 section 45 in Chapman. This block falls within the bushfire-prone area, and consequently conditions were imposed on the DA by ACT Fire & Rescue. Minister, was the ACT Rural Fire Service consulted on this development application and, if so, what special conditions did they require to be applied to the supportive housing development?

**MR GENTLEMAN:** Madam Speaker, it would be appropriate for me to take that since it relates particularly to the development application for those properties. I can say that this DA in block 1 section 45 was lodged on 11 October 2017. The notification period for the proposal commenced on 20 October and was publicly notified for five weeks until 4 November. During the notification period, 83 representations were received. Concerns included registered trees, community consultation, access to shops, services and public transport, water pressure, use of community land and bushfire risk. Concerns have been considered by the planning and land authority, and where necessary conditions have been imposed on the development.

**Mrs Jones:** Point of order.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Mrs Jones.

**Mrs Jones:** On the question, on relevance, the question was whether the Rural Fire Service was consulted, and that was not touched on at all in the minister's answer.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Thank you, Mrs Jones. You have a minute left, minister.

**MR GENTLEMAN:** RFS were consulted through the ESA.

**MISS C BURCH:** Minister, was the ACT Ambulance Service consulted prior to approval of the DA? If so, what special conditions did they require to be applied to the supportive housing development?

**MR GENTLEMAN:** Yes, all ES agencies were talked to during the consultation period of the development application. The directorate talks to them on a regular basis about particular issues in relation to development applications, and planning for the future of Canberra.

**MR HANSON:** How do public liability, professional indemnity and property insurance costs and cover vary for a public housing site inside the bushfire prone area as compared to a public housing site outside of the bushfire prone area?

**MR GENTLEMAN:** PLI is not my responsibility, Madam Speaker.

### **Gungahlin—sporting facilities**

**MR MILLIGAN:** My question is to Minister for Sports and Recreation. In December 2016 you promised a feasibility study for an indoor sports centre for Gungahlin and reported to this chamber, and I quote, “The feasibility study is being conducted.” Then in February 2017 you reported that the feasibility study was happening very soon, and again I quote, “It’s not going to happen next year; it is going to happen this year.” Minister, given that we are now in 2018, when can the people of Gungahlin, Belconnen and Woden expect work on this project to begin?

**MS BERRY:** I can give some information on the feasibility study. The consultants have been engaged and conversations have occurred recently with community councils in Gungahlin and Woden. I am not sure about Belconnen, but I know those two were consulted and were part of the conversation as well as some of the sporting communities across the ACT.

The answer to the question: when will the feasibility study be released—I do not think that is what he asked—is that it will be very soon.

**MR MILLIGAN:** Minister, why has it taken so long to conduct this feasibility study?

**MS BERRY:** To make sure that it was comprehensive.

**MR COE:** When can the people of Gungahlin expect that an indoor sports centre is going to be built given you have done this year-long comprehensive study?

**MS BERRY:** The study will be released. It included Gungahlin but was not just Gungahlin.

### **Justice—restorative**

**MS CHEYNE:** My question is to the Attorney-General. Can the minister please update the Assembly on the government’s work to make Canberra a restorative city?



**MR RAMSAY:** I thank Ms Cheyne for the question on this important area. It is certainly timely for the Assembly to receive an update on the work that is going ahead on making Canberra a restorative city. I note that there is a gathering of the restorative communities network today, and there is a forum here this evening.

Earlier this year the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of the ACT spoke about the importance of restorative practices in criminal justice. Her Honour's comments emphasised the importance of a court process that ensures that victims have a voice in the justice system. This government recognises that an accessible justice system is one where the voices of those who seek its protection are heard, and heard well. We are developing ways to make the justice system even more timely, transparent and accessible through restorative practices.

The ACT Law Reform Advisory Council is currently developing a report on this very question, and looking at models around Australia and overseas that offer lessons for Canberra. They will report this year on ways to make Canberra a restorative city. I am looking forward to receiving their recommendations.

**MS CHEYNE:** Minister, can you give some examples of how adopting restorative practices will make Canberra safer?

**MR RAMSAY:** I thank Ms Cheyne for the supplementary question. Indeed, restorative practices are key to reaching this government's ambitious goal of a 25 per cent reduction in recidivism by 2025. Restorative approaches involve making the community whole again after there is conflict, crime or loss. Holding people responsible for crime can happen simultaneously while addressing the underlying causes of their behaviour. That is why we are investing in the development of a drug and alcohol court for the ACT.

Drug and alcohol courts are an example of therapeutic justice where the outcome sought is not just punishment but treatment of the underlying cause of offending. We know from the evidence that reaching people with the right services at the right point of time in their contact with the justice system helps to build stronger people, stronger families and stronger communities. The drug and alcohol court will help to bring this approach to the criminal justice system and help to reduce recidivism by treating people whose crimes are primarily the result of addiction.

**MS CODY:** Minister, can you provide some more detail about how restorative practices help the broader community, not just those in the criminal justice system?

**MR RAMSAY:** I thank Ms Cody for the supplementary question. Yes, indeed, decisions about services, disputes between neighbours and many other everyday processes can benefit from a fresh look at restorative practices. Our community legal centres play a key role in bringing a restorative approach to the justice system. The Women's Legal Centre's well-developed referral service is a great example. They help connect vulnerable women with support for more than just their legal issues: housing, support to end family and domestic violence, and family counselling are just some of the ways that the Women's Legal Centre can help their clients.

Building an accessible, timely and transparent justice system requires looking at more than just the courts and just the law. It requires us to view the justice system as an integrated element of our community. The government will keep working to find ways and implement ways to ensure that the courts, and our laws, contribute to a safer, stronger and more connected city as a whole.

### **Tuggeranong—town centre upgrade**

**MS LAWDER:** My question is to the Minister for Transport and City Services. Minister, last year the ACT government undertook stage 1 redevelopment or modernisation at Anketell Street of the paved area—the courtyard or gazebo area—in the middle of the Tuggeranong town centre. The project was criticised at the time for including an unusual and unpopular lighting feature/sculpture. The trees that were originally planted in the area died and had to be replaced. Now it has now become evident that the street furniture that was placed along the street is deteriorating at a rapid pace. Minister, what actions did the government undertake to ensure that the furniture and trees chosen for the area were appropriate?

**MS FITZHARRIS:** I thank Ms Lawder for the question. I have actually had a range of responses about the upgrades, including from you, Madam Speaker. I know that the upgrades are welcome. There is more work to be done. Certainly, some people criticised them—I know Ms Lawder did—but others liked the particular sculpture that was installed there.

I am not aware of deterioration. I recall potentially one letter that I may have received. I will follow up. It would certainly be the case that TCCS always takes care to select the right landscaping, the right trees and the right shrubs. They also take care to install the right street furniture. One of the key considerations they have is the ongoing maintenance of both landscaping and the street furniture. I will take the question specifics on notice.

**MS LAWDER:** Minister, who made the decision on what objects were placed in this paved area, and what consultation was undertaken?

**MS FITZHARRIS:** That was a decision taken in the directorate. I, of course, saw the early plans. I also know that there was reasonably extensive consultation on those works over a number of different phases, including with individuals in the community, with local community groups and with the Hyperdome management staff as well.

**MR PARTON:** Minister, who paid for the replacement of the trees and potentially the furniture, and how much has it cost for these replacements?

**MS FITZHARRIS:** If I could clarify with Mr Parton: I am not aware of new furniture being reinstalled. Is that what he is asking?

**MR PARTON:** The trees specifically.

**MS FITZHARRIS:** That would be within the budget of that project, I would imagine. If I am incorrect, I will correct the record.

## **Roads—Yarralumla**

**MS LEE:** My question is to the Minister for Transport and City Services. Minister, the government has begun the process of widening and upgrading Dudley Street Yarralumla at a cost of approximately \$8 million dollars. As the works include neither additional lanes nor improved access to either Cotter Road or Novar Street Yarralumla, why has the government committed millions of dollars to this upgrade?

**MS FITZHARRIS:** I do believe that this project is not a roads project that is being managed by Transport Canberra and City Services. But if I am incorrect I will follow up and government members will take the question on notice.

**MS LEE:** Perhaps the minister will need to take this on notice: why did the government commit itself to this type of upgrade rather than investing in the long-term goal of a road interchange at the Mint, which both the growing populations of Weston and Molonglo and the government's proposed plan for light rail stage 2 would require?

**MR GENTLEMAN:** I might take this question. It relates to the work in regard to the new residential opportunities at Yarralumla, where the brickworks used to be. The road that is being built is to give access to construction sites and, later on, traffic. It was as part of that process that the design framework and engineers did this piece of work.

**MR PARTON:** Minister, on what authority can you build on the habitat of the golden sun moth when other developments around Canberra have been prevented from proceeding due to such habitat?

**MR GENTLEMAN:** There are a number of instances where you can receive commonwealth EPBC approval for construction in some areas that could be habitat for endangered species. These matters are worked on with the commonwealth. They give us permission to use habitat in those areas as long as we provide habitat in other areas. The ecologists work in these areas and give us advice on where we could build and where we should not.

## **ACT Health—workplace attraction strategy**

**MS CODY:** My question is to the Minister for Health and Wellbeing: how will ACT Health's new workforce attraction strategy affect the health workforce in the ACT?

**MS FITZHARRIS:** I thank Ms Cody very much for her question and, of course, her significant interest in ACT Health's workforce. As members know, the ACT government is expanding health and hospital services over the coming years to cater for the growing needs of our region. This planning includes the expansion of the Centenary Hospital for Women and Children, the SPIRE centre, planning for north side health services, building the popular Gungahlin and Weston Creek walk-in centres, a new inner north walk-in and health centre, and opening the new University of Canberra hospital later this year. This means that some of the best jobs in health will be available in the ACT, and ACT Health will be seeking highly talented health

staff to help meet the health needs of our community.

Attracting high calibre staff takes planning. ACT Health are developing a broader approach that not only targets individuals but also shares the benefits of living in our attractive city which offers a wonderful lifestyle for families and careers for professionals who, of course, can take full advantage of our unique higher education and research sector here in the ACT. This approach will help us to fill some existing skills gaps, particularly in some surgical specialties and psychiatry to name a few. We will build momentum as the workforce needs for new health facilities and models of care are developed.

**MS CODY:** Minister, who is the strategy likely to target?

**MS FITZHARRIS:** The strategy will likely target some key priority areas in the first instance, particularly those where ACT Health have identified a workforce need. There will also be a strong focus on management and leadership training opportunities as well as practitioners who have sophisticated skills and expertise, including surgeons, especially ear, nose and throat specialists, anaesthetists and psychiatrists, general physicians, emergency medicine specialists, nursing staff and allied health professions. All those will be vital as we build these new services.

Recruitment has commenced as part of the planning for the opening of the new University of Canberra hospital. This will continue as the hospital ramps up to full capacity with the broader workforce attraction strategy.

The new University of Canberra hospital training partnership with the University of Canberra offers an incredible pipeline of professionals, including nurses, physiotherapists, occupational therapists and nutritionists. This strategy will target these graduates to make sure they choose Canberra as the place where they want to start their career.

There is also an opportunity to build on the partnerships we have in health with our significant research and education institutions: the ANU, the University of Canberra and the Australian Catholic University, as well as the Canberra Institute of Technology. As we know, in health professional connections to education, research and ongoing professional training are a key part of career development.

**MR PETTERSSON:** Minister, how will this improve delivery of health services in the ACT?

**MS FITZHARRIS:** This work will continue to support the ACT to be in a competitive and strong position for growing and attracting a high-performing health workforce. Addressing current gaps in services through this more strategic approach will be a foundation for planning for our significant expansion of surgical procedures in the new SPIRE centre. It will help us deliver surgery within recommended treatment time frames. It will help us continue to improve our emergency department waiting times, which are now 30 per cent better than they were a couple of years ago. It will help us respond to the growing number of births in the ACT and support young mothers and families, through a workforce ready for the expansion of the Centenary Hospital for Women and Children. For people with chronic illness, it will improve

gaining access to all specialists in a timely manner, delivering joined-up care, which we are strengthening and championing through the territory-wide health services planning. The strategy will also assist in recruiting for nurse-led walk-in centres, with the opening of the Gungahlin walk-in centre later this year, a new walk-in centre in Weston Creek and a new health centre in the inner north.

### **Trade unions—CFMEU**

**MRS KIKKERT:** My question is to the Acting Chief Minister. Kevin Rudd said that Labor should sever ties with the CFMEU “given the evidence of corruption, bullying and law-breaking”. Bob Hawke has stated:

It just is appalling ... I wouldn't tolerate it.

Judges have said the CFMEU “has contempt for the law” and is trying to “usurp parliament”. Jon Stanhope has called for the first inquiry of an ACT integrity commission to be “into the relationship between the ACT government and the Labor Party and CFMEU group of clubs”. Acting Chief Minister, will you suspend the political and financial relationship between the ACT government and the Labor Party and Tradies group of clubs until such an inquiry is conducted?

**MS BERRY:** No.

**MRS KIKKERT:** Acting Chief Minister, will your government support an inquiry into the relationship between the ACT government, the Labor Party and the Tradies group of clubs?

**MS BERRY:** That question does not make sense. I am not sure which inquiry she would be referring to.

**Mrs Kikkert:** Would you support it?

**MS BERRY:** What inquiry—by whom?

**Mr Gentleman:** Hypothetical.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Have you answered the question? And it was somewhat hypothetical as well, Mrs Kikkert.

**MR COE:** Chief Minister, why are you planning to further empower the Tradies' and CFMEU stranglehold over your government by making the MOU law when some people have already flagged that it will be referred to a future ICAC?

**Ms Fitzharris:** A point of order, Madam Speaker. Under standing order 117, that supplementary question contained significant inference and was lacking in fact and I seek your ruling on whether that supplementary question was at all in order.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Ms Fitzharris is right to refer to 117(b), which says that a question shall not contain inferences and imputations. If we were to scour *Hansard* we would find lots of questions that indeed hold that tone. I will let the question stand,

but I will let the Deputy Chief Minister answer in a manner she sees fit.

**MS BERRY:** I am confused by the Leader of the Opposition's question, given that they did not vote against the motion yesterday on the development of a code for the ACT. So the question does not make any sense to me.

*Mr Wall interjecting—*

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Thank you, Deputy Chief Minister.

**Mr Gentleman:** Madam Speaker, on a point of order, you warned Mr Wall, and he continues to interject across the chamber.

**Mr Hanson:** On the point of order, Madam Speaker, it was me who was warned, not Mr Wall. He is innocent.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Mr Hanson and Mr Wall, you are both warned. This afternoon still has plenty of time left to see you put out the door.

### **ACT Health—opioid treatment guidelines**

**MRS DUNNE:** My question is to the Minister for Health and Wellbeing: today you announced that the ACT's opioid treatment guidelines will be replaced by the national guidelines for medication-assisted treatment of opioid dependence. These guidelines were adopted at the national level in April 2014. On 2 August 2017 you told the Assembly that new guidelines would be completed in about six weeks. That was about six months ago. And you stated in this place on 14 September regarding replacement treatment guidelines:

Yes, I received those yesterday and I look forward to having a few more days to discuss those with ACT Health directly.

That is the last we heard about that until today. Minister, why has it taken the government four years to adopt the national guideline on medication-assisted treatment of opioid dependence and five years to actually replace the out-of-date guidelines?

**MS FITZHARRIS:** I thank Mrs Dunne for the question. Indeed, we were very happy today to see that the new opioid treatment guidelines have been published. When I referred to this last in the chamber in December I had, indeed, received a briefing folder. I had not yet read it, as I indicated. In that briefing folder there was further advice that relevant stakeholder groups who had been very extensively involved in consultation, upon my request, had sought a further consultation period. Given that that was in December, one of the most difficult times of the year to consult, they asked the government through the working group if further time could be allowed. That was allowed, and subsequently I believe we now have ACT-relevant opioid treatment guidelines which are based on the national guidelines.

It is also important to note that while these have now come in to effect, at no point during the preceding years were there ever outdated guidelines; they always remained

in effect and they always guided clinical practice. What we now have is updated guidelines based on the national guidelines that are very relevant to the ACT and have undergone extensive consultation with stakeholders in the drug and alcohol sector here.

**MRS DUNNE:** Minister, can you clarify for the Assembly when you received this brief? What you have said in the chamber today seems to contradict what you said in the chamber last year.

**MS FITZHARRIS:** I do not believe that I did contradict. I believe that Mrs Dunne referred to the fact that when I was asked in December I said, "I have just received those."

**Mrs Dunne:** It was September.

**MS FITZHARRIS:** Well, in that case there was ongoing consultation. There was significant consultation with a range of different health groups here. I have those dates in my office. I can provide those dates on which very consultative meetings took place to update these guidelines. They continued throughout the end of last year, most recently through January and February of this year before the guidelines were completed and announced today. I do not believe that I have misled the Assembly but I will certainly take the detail of the question on notice, reread it and come back.

**MR STEEL:** Minister, why is it important to consult on the development of new guidelines?

**MS FITZHARRIS:** It is essential to consult. I thank Mr Steel for the question because it is vital. It not only allows us to learn from stakeholders. It also makes sure that we get our policies, our procedures, our frameworks and our guidelines right.

This group that was consulted with on the opioid treatment guidelines had representation from a wide number of groups, not only within ACT Health within the justice setting but also within the community setting: those members of community groups who deliver on-the-ground services, who work daily with people with opioid dependency and who rely on these guidelines.

I am very pleased that we took the time to do this consultation but I am very pleased to see these guidelines finalised.

### **Government—recreation grants**

**MR PETTERSSON:** My question is to the Minister for Sport and Recreation. Minister, can you update the Assembly on the government's election commitment to upgrade the Mark Webber go-kart track?

**MS BERRY:** I thank Mr Pettersson for his question. The ACT government is committed to supporting new participation in motorsport through the improvement of existing infrastructure at the Circuit Mark Webber track. On 31 January 2018, the ACT government announced a \$200,000 grant to the Canberra Kart Racing Club to support an upgrade of the Circuit Mark Webber track.

I know that Mr Gentleman has a keen interest in the track, as does Ms Cody. The feedback they have had so far is that the government's new investment and how it will transform Circuit Mark Webber into an international standard track have been very well received by the community. I noted the positive comments across Facebook after the announcement was made.

Works on the upgrade are expected to commence in the coming months, and they will be completed in 2019 for the community to enjoy.

**MR PETTERSSON:** How will the upgrade improve the ability of the Canberra Kart Racing Club to attract new local participants and visitors from interstate?

**MS BERRY:** This is very exciting for the Mark Webber Canberra Kart Racing Club. It will bring the facility up to international standards. The Canberra kart club and Karting Australia will now have the chance to host a range of events. These will include state and national championships, as well as international competitions, attracting both interstate and international visitors to the ACT.

Events that the track will become capable of hosting include stages of the pro tour or Australian Pro Karting series, which can attract 200 or more karters and up to 800 spectators.

**MR STEEL:** Minister, how is the government's investment leveraging other improvements at the track?

**MS BERRY:** The extension of the Circuit Mark Webber track represents stage 1 of a broader suite of improvements the Canberra kart club wish to progress over time. These include an extension to the existing fencing and an addition to existing fencing; realignment and extension of existing gravel driveway; new ancillary building; resurfacing an existing section of the track; screen plantings; new or upgraded pit areas, including a new officials and kart weigh area; and new water sensitive urban design ponds. In addition to self-financing and in-kind support, the Canberra kart club will be partnering with Karting Australia through the Karting Australia track development fund to access additional funds to support further upgrades.

Madam Speaker, I ask that all further questions be placed on the notice paper.