



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

**HANSARD**

Edited proof transcript

Wednesday, 9 May 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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## **Questions without notice**

### **Senator for the Australian Capital Territory—casual vacancy**

**MR COE:** My question is to the Chief Minister. On 25 March 2015 in this place you proposed a motion that the Assembly choose Ms Katy Gallagher to fill a casual vacancy in the Australian Senate. In that motion you stated that Ms Gallagher was “a person who is eligible to be a senator”. Today the High Court ruled that Ms Gallagher, in taking her position as a senator following her election at the 2016 federal election, was ineligible to do so under the Australian Constitution. It follows that she also was not eligible to fill the casual vacancy in 2015. Chief Minister, what process did you follow to ensure the statement you made in your motion was accurate and, given the High Court ruling, will you now correct the record?

**MR BARR:** I relied upon past practice in relation to such vacancies; and, in light of the High Court’s determination today, I will take advice on the second matter.

**MR COE:** Chief Minister, when and how were you first alerted to the fact that the statutory declaration that you tabled may be wrong?

**MR BARR:** That matter is not one that I have information available on at this time. I will take it on notice.

**MRS DUNNE:** Chief Minister, have you received any legal advice on this issue?

**MR BARR:** I cannot comment.

### **Emergency services—communications**

**MS LE COUTEUR:** My question is to the minister for emergency services. It relates to the practice of discontinuing the landline service—discontinuing, in fact, the whole operation of the landline service—in properties in the area where NBN is supplied. How is this practice going to impact on our emergency communications system in the event of widespread power outages and mobile telecommunications outages?

**MR GENTLEMAN:** I thank Ms Le Couteur for her question. What I can say is that the ACT ESA is working across directorates to ensure that we have the appropriate and sufficient responses to emergency calls throughout the Canberra region when we have particular outages such as the one that occurred just the other week.

In regard to planning for the future, we ensure that we work with our telcos to have the opportunity for mobile towers where appropriate. We continue to work with them and the community to ensure communications across the territory.

**MS LE COUTEUR:** What is the current practice for contacting residents in the event of either power or mobile phone outage?

**MR GENTLEMAN:** I am sorry, Madam Speaker; I missed the first part of the question.

**MS LE COUTEUR:** What do you do at present in the event of either phone or

electrical outage? How do you contact people?

**MR GENTLEMAN:** ESA has an SMS policy for contacting people regarding outages, particularly in regard to notifications about fires. But in regard to the technical aspects, I would have to take that on notice and come back to the member.

### **Light rail—stage 2**

**MR STEEL:** My question is to the Minister for Transport and City Services. Can the minister update the Assembly on the next steps for light rail stage 2 from the city to Woden?

**MS FITZHARRIS:** I thank Mr Steel very much for this question and his keen interest, particularly in investment, in Woden.

As promised, this government is building light rail stage 1 and is continuing to develop plans for a city-wide light rail network, starting with light rail stage 2 to Woden. Transport Canberra and City Services is currently undertaking detailed planning for the design, development and approvals for the city to Woden light rail route for our preferred route through Parkes and Barton. These activities include the completion of a precinct approach for refining the design for the diverse urban environments along the preferred alignment; lodging a referral of a proposed action with the Department of the Environment and Energy to confirm the appropriate pathway for assessing impact on matters of national environmental significance and achieving commonwealth environmental approval; continuing to work closely with the NCA to progress a design solution that aligns with commonwealth planning requirements; and the development of a concept design for the preferred alignment.

It is clear that Canberrans support light rail stage 2 to Woden, with the *Canberra Times* reporting on 9 April that half of all Canberrans support the expansion of the city's light rail network from Civic to Woden. The UnionsACT poll of 2,044 people found that 51.5 per cent supported the second stage of the light rail project, 41 per cent were against it, and 7.5 per cent were undecided. I look forward to continuing to develop our plans for light rail to Woden.

**MR STEEL:** Minister, what are the benefits of the preferred route through Parkes and Barton?

**MS FITZHARRIS:** The preferred route was subject to quite significant consultation over a period of time. It provides a number of benefits over the other option. This includes providing the best access through the parliamentary zone to employment hubs, cultural institutions and other places of interest, including Manuka Oval.

The proposed route also allows people living in the city-to-Gungahlin corridor to access reliable, frequent public transport to work in Barton or Woden. There are also fewer technical challenges associated with the alignment than the alternative route around Parliament House or any alternative routes considered earlier in the corridor selection process.

Finally, and importantly, there was very strong support for that route during

community consultation last year. Further technical assessment of the route has resulted in adjustment of the indicative bus stop locations on London Circuit to better serve the proposed West Basin precinct and New Acton, in addition to an extra stop in Barton to better serve the significant employment hubs in this area.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Before I call the supplementary, members on my left, this is question time. If you want to have a conversation during question time, can you take yourselves to the antechamber? I am finding it hard to listen to the question and to the answer. I call Ms Cody.

**MS CODY:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I was about to ask the same thing. Minister, what are the challenges to delivering this stage of the city-wide light rail network?

**MS FITZHARRIS:** I thank Ms Cody for this question. I thank very much our members for Murrumbidgee for these terrific questions. Of course, any large-scale infrastructure investment such as light rail presents some challenges. But the government is focused on planning for the future growth of our city, so we are tackling these challenges head-on.

Unlike those opposite, we know it is important to meet these challenges now for the benefit of future generations. Due to the location of the route, the heritage and national significance of the area, it will be necessary for commonwealth government approvals to be obtained, as well as commonwealth parliamentary approvals. We want to enhance the public realm and ensure light rail integrates seamlessly into a changing urban environment shaped by future development.

The alignment requires a number of new structures to be built, including new bridges potentially on Commonwealth Avenue, at Adelaide Avenue over State Circle, Hopetoun Circuit and works under Kent Street and Yarra Glen. A number of existing utilities will also need to be assessed for potential replacement or relocation to avoid conflicts with the alignment.

Perhaps the biggest challenge to the next stage of light rail is not technical at all; rather it comes in the form of Liberal Senator Zed Seselja. He is determined to block this city-building project. He failed to stop light rail when he was in the chamber. His colleagues failed to stop light rail nearly two years ago. Now he is having another crack.

Perhaps the opposition could comment and reflect on their position, confirm their position, on this significant city-shaping project for the benefit of the Canberra community. They have been silent and appear therefore to support the senator's position. I would ask them to clarify this for the Canberra community and ask whether they will back this city-shaping project for our community.

### **Roads—Ashley Drive**

**MS LAWDER:** My question is to the Minister for Transport and City Services. Minister, during the 2012 election Katy Gallagher promised to duplicate Ashley Drive in Tuggeranong. At the 2015 election the Barr government again promised to duplicate Ashley Drive.

**Mr Barr:** I think you'll find the election was 2016, actually.

**MS LAWDER:** I think you might have said it—never mind. During annual report hearings in November 2017 your directorate promised that the duplication would be completed in February 2018.

*Members interjecting—*

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Members, please! Mr Wall, thank you.

**Mr Hanson:** And Mr Barr, Madam Speaker.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** I was about to go to Mr Barr as well. Can I ask you, Ms Lawder, to start again?

**MS LAWDER:** I would love to. My question is to the Minister for Transport and City Services—again. During the 2012 election Katy Gallagher promised to duplicate Ashley Drive in Tuggeranong. Prior to the 2016 election the Barr government again promised to duplicate Ashley Drive. During annual report hearings in November 2017 your directorate promised that the duplication would be completed in February 2018. In March 2018 in this place in response to a question you promised that the duplication would be finished by April 2018. We are now in May. Minister, when will this duplication of Ashley Drive finally be finished?

**MS FITZHARRIS:** We are pleased to be duplicating Ashley Drive, and the works are proposed to be opened to the public in the second quarter of this year. There has been recent progress, including most recently a road closure on 28 and 29 April between Erindale Drive and Isabella Drive to allow the final asphalt to be placed on this section of the road. The traffic lights at the two intersections at Statton Street and Bugden Avenue under this section of the works will be operational from this week. I am not sure if that has occurred yet. Additional road closures to complete the new road between Isabella Drive and Johnson Drive are being planned as well.

**MS LAWDER:** Minister, what is the reason for the delay, with completion being promised in February and now occurring in the second quarter of the year?

**MS FITZHARRIS:** As members will know, major infrastructure projects such as this one, which is a \$24.6 million investment in the Ashley Drive duplication, can at times experience delays. I am very confident that that work is very close to being completed, as are other major works, notably soon the Cotter Road.

**Ms Lawder:** A point of order, Madam Speaker. It goes to relevance. I asked what the reason for the delay was. The minister has failed to address that.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** The minister has 1½ minutes.

**Mr Parton:** Madam Speaker—

**MADAM SPEAKER:** On the point of order?

**Mr Parton:** A supplementary.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** There was a point of order. The minister now has one minute and 19 seconds left. Do you have anything to add?

**MS FITZHARRIS:** If there is anything further I can add, I will take that on notice.

**MR PARTON:** Minister, what other infrastructure developments in your portfolios are currently running behind schedule?

**MS FITZHARRIS:** There are literally dozens of infrastructure projects underway in my portfolio. The one that comes most immediately to mind is Gundaroo Drive, which is causing considerable frustration. It is a very difficult project that has faced a number of significant challenges. I will take the rest of the detail on notice. I also note that we very much look forward to the opening of Cotter Road in the imminent future.

### **Trade unions—influence on government**

**MR WALL:** My question is to the Attorney-General. Attorney, documents released under freedom of information show you had a meeting with the secretary of the CFMEU on 22 January this year. Given the reported influence of the CFMEU in removing the previous Attorney-General, will you now give a full explanation as to the nature, purpose and outcome of that meeting?

**MR RAMSAY:** The meeting in January, along with my colleague Minister Stephen-Smith, was in relation to WorkSafe practices in the ACT.

**MR WALL:** Attorney, did you make any promises or undertakings of any sort to the secretary of the CFMEU, given the reported influence that that union had in removing your predecessor?

**MR RAMSAY:** No, I did not make any promises to the member in that meeting. It was an open meeting about WorkSafe practices in the ACT.

**MR PARTON:** Attorney, did the discussion with the secretary of the CFMEU include anything on the Tradies selling poker machines or the bid of the Canberra casino?

**MR RAMSAY:** No.

### **Trade unions—influence on government**

**MRS DUNNE:** My question is to the Minister for Health and Wellbeing. I refer to the meeting that you held on 14 March with representatives of United Voice, the Health Services Union, the Australian Salaried Medical Officers Federation, UnionsACT and the Community and Public Sector Union. Minister, did any of the union representatives present at this meeting raise with you concerns about senior management of ACT Health?

**MS FITZHARRIS:** I certainly welcomed the opportunity to meet with a number of unions representing a significant proportion of the ACT health workforce which, as was discussed yesterday, of course, the opposition are very much behind, and I do welcome that. It was a great opportunity to talk to them about a number of issues. I do not recall specific mention of any individuals but I did discuss with them recent changes in ACT Health and discussed with them the welcome that they gave to changes that had previously been announced.

**MRS DUNNE:** Did any of the discussions held at this meeting on 14 March contribute to your decision to restructure the Health Directorate, which you and Mr Rattenbury announced on 23 March?

**MS FITZHARRIS:** No.

**MISS C BURCH:** Were any members of the union movement involved in the planning of the restructure?

**MS FITZHARRIS:** No.

### **ACT Health—proposed organisational changes**

**MR PARTON:** My question is to the Minister for Health and Wellbeing. Minister, on 19 April 2018 the media reported comments by Dr Stephen Robson of the AMA regarding your planned restructure of the Health Directorate. Dr Robson said:

My concern at the moment is it's not well understood. The nurses, doctors, everyone needs to understand who they are working for.

Certainly with director general leaving suddenly and unexpectedly it engenders concern with everyone.

Minister, why have you failed to explain the proposed restructure to doctors, nurses and other stakeholders?

**MS FITZHARRIS:** As I indicated on a number of occasions yesterday, I attended ACT Health last week with hundreds of members of ACT Health staff present. I discussed with them a range of issues. One of the most important was indeed the separation of ACT Health. I also had a very constructive meeting last week with the Australian Medical Association and continued that discussion with them last week.

**MR PARTON:** Minister, why did the former director-general of Health leave suddenly and unexpectedly?

**MS FITZHARRIS:** I thank Mr Parton for the supplementary question. As I said at the time and have subsequently said, she decided to pursue other options.

**MRS DUNNE:** Minister, why did you make the sudden and unexpected decision to restructure the ACT Health Directorate without consulting stakeholders?

**MS FITZHARRIS:** I have spent significant time, since coming into the position of Minister for Health and Wellbeing, consulting a range of stakeholders on a range of

matters, including the structure and governance of ACT Health. I indicated when I met with hundreds of staff last week that they would have a very good opportunity to contribute to the design of the two new organisations. There will be a very comprehensive consultation approach with staff. That is very important. I made that point very clearly to staff directly last week, with every stakeholder I have met. I made it very clear yesterday.

What I indicated to them was that I was not going to put to staff a final view on what those organisations should look like, precisely because I wanted to include them in the process of that work in the lead-up to the beginning of the two new organisations on 1 October this year.

### **Women—government support**

**MS CODY:** My question is to the Minister for Women. Minister, can you please update the Assembly on the latest government initiatives to further support women's participation and safety in the ACT?

**MS BERRY:** I thank Ms Cody for the question. This year's theme for International Women's Day was "press for progress", which I interpret as a way that we can keep the momentum going to drive real equality in the ACT. One way that the ACT government is committing to do that is through the women's grants program. These grants have a specific focus on the prevention of violence against women and also on projects to increase women's participation in our community. The total amount available is \$180,000 to community not-for-profit organisations, who are able to apply for up to \$20,000 each. Applications are encouraged from consortiums as well, which will increase the grant entitlement for each additional organisation.

Grants rounds such as the women's grants program are an important opportunity to turn little ideas into real change on the ground. Every one of us has the responsibility to find ways to drive gender equality and provide opportunities to provide a safer and more inclusive community for all of us. The women's grants program is just one way to do that.

**MS CODY:** Minister, how have these grants been used in previous years?

**MS BERRY:** Last year there were some great projects that received funding across a wide span of organisations, cultures, issues and ideas. Last year I joined with Winnunga Nimmityjah Aboriginal Health Service to launch the Aboriginal women's safety program. Legal Aid ACT was funded to develop a suite of resources to raise awareness of the experience of older women subjected to family violence in the ACT, as well as offering practical information to women, support workers and family and friends.

The Canberra Multicultural Community Forum Inc was funded to deliver the CALD women's consultation initiative for domestic and family violence. This project will examine the accessibility, effectiveness and cultural relevance of service delivery in relation to domestic and family violence and look at new ways to consult and engage with CALD communities on this important issue.

There were many other funded projects which included: increasing sexual health testing among young women in the ACT; development of an integrated service which includes legal advice, financial counselling and capacity building targeted to women experiencing severe financial stress as a result of domestic violence; and a program to enhance culturally and linguistically diverse women's safety following separation due to domestic violence.

**MS ORR:** Why are grants such as the women's grants important for the Canberra community, and how can the community contribute to this important work?

**MS BERRY:** I thank Ms Orr for the supplementary. Although women have achieved many things over the last century, such as the right to vote and the right to access equal pay, we continue to face barriers and challenges to fully and equally participate in our community.

In terms of violence, one in four Australian women—2.2 million women—have experienced violence by an intimate partner since the age of 15. So it remains critical that, where possible, support is available in the form of either funding or policies that can allow individuals, collectives or organisations in our community to develop and run programs to make a difference for women and girls.

Even small ideas can lead to significant and real change. I hope that the ACT women's grants can make a real difference for women in our community. I encourage members to support the program by encouraging community groups that they know to apply for the grants.

### **ACT Health—proposed organisational changes**

**MISS C BURCH:** My question is to the Minister for Health and Wellbeing. Minister, did anyone, including the former director-general of your directorate, counsel you against splitting the Health Directorate in half?

**MS FITZHARRIS:** No.

**MISS C BURCH:** Minister, who did you consult about this decision before it was announced?

**MS FITZHARRIS:** A range of different people.

**MS CHEYNE:** Minister, will staff continue to be consulted on the restructure?

**MS FITZHARRIS:** I thank Ms Cheyne for that question. Absolutely. As I indicated previously, that decision was taken by me precisely because it provided close to six months of consultation with staff about how they would like to be engaged in this process, and also because many staff felt like they had not been engaged in processes in ACT Health. My belief is that they welcome this. I really look forward to working with them over the coming months about these two new organisations, which I believe will improve the performance, the governance and the delivery of health services to our community.

## **Canberra Hospital—accreditation**

**MR HANSON:** My question is to the Minister for Health and Wellbeing. I refer to comments made by the president of the ACT AMA, Dr Robson, on 19 April 2018 about the accreditation problems facing the Canberra Hospital. Dr Robson said:

When the governance is wonky it sends ripples through the entire organisation ... There's been a huge upheaval at ACT Health recently and a lot of balls in the air.

Their accreditation runs out in July, unless they meet that, it would be a bit of a disaster.

Minister, what contingency plans have you made in case the Canberra Hospital fails to gain accreditation?

**MS FITZHARRIS:** That work is progressing and there are a number of options available to the government should that not occur. I stress that there has been significant planning since the “not met” report was received. A leadership committee is being chaired by the interim director-general to make sure that every core “not met” item is being very methodically and thoroughly addressed. There is regular reporting to the interim director-general and to me. The interim director-general has also had conversations with the Australian Council on Healthcare Standards and the national safety and quality commission. Copies of the action plans to address the accreditation criteria have been provided to both originations. They have provided positive feedback on all of those. It is something that is of the utmost priority for ACT Health now.

**MR HANSON:** Minister, what impact would a loss of accreditation of the Canberra Hospital have on its status as a teaching hospital?

**MS FITZHARRIS:** It is my understanding that it would have no immediate impact, but I will take the specific question on notice.

**MRS DUNNE:** Minister, what impact will the ongoing problems in our hospital system and accreditation in particular have on our ability to attract doctors, psychiatrists, psychologists, nurses and other health workers to Canberra?

**MS FITZHARRIS:** That is a concern for me but, as I indicated, ACT Health continues to attract specialists, doctors, nurses, midwives and allied health staff. Indeed, earlier this year a number of interns, most notably from the ANU, were welcomed into ACT Health. It is very clear that there is a focus on meeting accreditation. But it is also the case that there is a very good story to tell about the future of ACT Health and the opportunities for health professionals right around the country to join ACT Health.

## **Housing—housing choices**

**MS ORR:** My question is to the Minister for Planning and Land Management. Minister, can you please update the Assembly on the consultation underway on housing choices in the ACT?

**MR GENTLEMAN:** I thank Ms Orr for her continuing interest in good planning for the territory. The Canberra community has always shown considerable interest and involvement in the planning of our city. Housing policies have again come to the fore, with considerable interest in housing choice.

Last November, I was pleased to announce the start of the consultation on the housing choices discussion paper. The discussion paper aimed to find out more from the community about the type of housing they would like to live in. The broader community, including the industry stakeholder groups, were invited to provide suggestions for improvements to housing choice.

I want to thank everyone who got involved in the conversation. I am pleased to report that we received significant feedback from the community, with 600 surveys completed, more than 340 people engaged at community kiosks, and over 150 written submissions received. An engagement report with a full summary of the feedback received has been published on the your say website, along with all of the individual submissions.

This report will inform the second stage of community engagement, the collaboration hub, which will run from May to July this year. A number of key themes or topics have been identified, including but not limited to ageing in place and ability to downsize; housing design quality; bush capital and garden city; climate and environment; community engagement; neighbourhood amenity, character and design; the planning system in general; and the Territory Plan codes and zoning.

What we have heard so far in the process is that there is a wide range of housing types desired and needed to suit the needs of the diverse members of our community.

**MS ORR:** Minister, can you further explain how the government is consulting the community on the housing choices project through the collaboration hub?

**MR GENTLEMAN:** The next part of the housing choices consultation is the collaboration hub. Launched on Saturday, 5 May, it will explore issues such as what zoning should allow, and what provisions and principles Canberrans agree are important to deliver the housing we want and to plan for future needs. The next three months will see these 38 participants discuss ideas, opportunities and challenges and explore how our housing needs might be met in future.

In March invitations to participate in the collaboration hub were sent to approximately 15,000 randomly selected households. Of those that responded, 38 were selected by newDemocracy Foundation independently of government to represent a broad and representative cross-section of Canberrans.

The housing choices discussion paper issued in November last year was a helpful way to outline a number of topics around housing and to engage with the community. The feedback that followed from a broad range of submitters provided an excellent basis for the collaboration hub to take a deep-dive examination of housing and will identify recommendations on what the government should consider.

There is no one right answer, of course, to this problem. We have to respond to the diversity of the community and its needs now and into the future. This is a genuine opportunity to influence the range of housing choices and future development in our city.

Five in-depth hub sessions will be held over three months to immerse the participants in all aspects of housing and planning and development in the ACT. These selected participants represent a wide cross-section of the community and will bring their own perspectives and ideas. Throughout the process they will have access to a range of experts from industry and government to cover specific topics such as housing affordability and land use zoning.

**MS CHEYNE:** Minister, how does the recently released expression of interest for demonstration housing projects support the housing choices project?

**MR GENTLEMAN:** I thank Ms Cheyne for her interest in this topic. The next important part of the housing choices consultation is a demonstration housing project. Last month I announced a process inviting the Canberra community and industry stakeholders to submit an expression of interest to deliver best practice and innovative planning and design projects across the territory.

The ACT government is committed to the planning and delivery of housing that supports a vibrant, compact and sustainable city while also providing a wide range of housing options. The demonstration housing project is a sign of this commitment and forms one part of the government's approach to planning for the future housing needs of Canberrans and the housing choices consultation that I have outlined.

This project will provide an opportunity for architects, builders, residents and social housing providers to showcase innovative design and delivery of real-world examples that are not currently available in the ACT, including small houses, co-housing and carbon neutral buildings.

It is anticipated that the demonstration housing project will deliver built outcomes highlighting how innovative planning design and delivery can benefit Canberra's future through a more compact and vibrant city while delivering a greater choice of housing to the Canberra market.

The first stage expression of interest will assess market interest, capability and the experience of suitably qualified proponents. Proponents will have the chance to identify existing planning constraints that may need to be changed to enable the delivery of their proposal. Successful first-stage applicants will then be invited to refine their proposals further and submit more detailed design concepts during a second stage.

### **Light rail—stage 1 construction**

**MR MILLIGAN:** My question is to the Minister for Transport and City Services. Minister, my office has received numerous complaints from Gungahlin businesses about the level of noise in the town centre resulting from light rail construction. In fact yesterday one business owner recorded noise at over 100 decibels that lasted the

entire business day. Minister, how do you expect business owners and employees to operate under these conditions when they cannot conduct a conversation, serve customers, take phone calls or conduct their daily business?

**MS FITZHARRIS:** I do not expect that that sort of noise level would be part of the construction, particularly during business hours. I will take specific advice on whether that was the case yesterday. It is clear that there is a lot of construction, which actually means a lot of investment in the Gungahlin town centre. I am aware it is having an impact on businesses.

I am pleased that the Gungahlin bus station has now opened. With some final work to be completed on the landscaping of that project, there were recent quite extensive discussions. There are discussions ongoing all the time between TCCS, Canberra Metro and the Gungahlin businesses, particularly at Gungahlin Village and across the road adjacent to the light rail site. There was an extended working day recently approved after significant consultation with local residents and businesses. I will take advice on exactly what was happening yesterday that apparently may have caused significantly increased noise levels.

**MR MILLIGAN:** Minister, will you commit to the light rail project abiding by the usual noise restrictions that apply to construction projects?

**MS FITZHARRIS:** I can certainly commit that the light rail project is conducted within the framework of the approvals that it has. I expect that that is the case. If it is not, I will be following it up.

**MISS C BURCH:** Minister, is stage 1 of the light rail project running on time?

**MS FITZHARRIS:** Yes, it is.

### **Schools—Weston preschool**

**MS LEE:** My question is to the Minister for Education and Early Childhood Development. In answer to a question in the Assembly last September you said that a decision on the future of Weston preschool would be determined after discussions had been concluded with the community. Since then your Labor colleague Mr Steel has written to constituents stating that Weston preschool is not closing. However, parents have informed us that Weston preschool has not taken any enrolments this year. Minister, is Weston preschool open or closed?

**MS BERRY:** To provide some clarity around the situation, the school has not been closed as in shut down completely. There were only a very small number of enrolments at that school, so they have been redirected to another preschool. I think that is what you are inquiring about, Ms Lee. I will double-check that that is the case. If it is different to what I am informing the Assembly of, I will correct the record.

**MS LEE:** Minister, if the school is not shut down, why have staff been told to remove anything of a personal nature and equipment identified for disposal?

**MS BERRY:** I suspect, if it is the case that I have just referred to with that school, it

is not actually being used at the moment, so it is empty. I will double-check that that is the case for that school, and if the situation is different, I will let the Assembly know.

**MR HANSON:** Minister, could you provide advice for Weston parents on what options they now have for preschools in their area?

**MS BERRY:** I understand that that advice has already been provided by the directorate, but I will make sure, if it has not, that it is provided.

### **Casino Canberra—development proposal**

**MS CHEYNE:** My question is to the Attorney-General. Attorney-General, how does the government's announcement on 13 April 2018 regarding the Canberra casino relate to previous legislation on the possible redevelopment of the casino?

**MR RAMSAY:** I thank Ms Cheyne for the question. At the time the Assembly passed legislation to allow the Canberra casino licensee to have electronic gaming machines, I did foreshadow that there would be more work underway to make the legislation that governs our casino even more transparent and focused on securing benefits for Canberrans.

The focus of that legislation was to promote economic development and renewal in our city whilst also delivering robust protection against the harms of problem gambling. That legislation demonstrated that this government's decisions about the casino and about the gaming industry as a whole are and will continue to be focused on what is best for our community.

The government's announcement of 13 April represents the next step in creating an unprecedented level of transparency and accountability in decisions about the Canberra casino. We will do this by introducing legislation that provides for an independent panel to evaluate and to report on decisions about licensing and about redevelopment. The government's policy will continue to be transparent and transparently focused on maximising the benefits to our whole community in our decisions about gaming.

**MS CHEYNE:** Minister, how will the harm minimisation framework that the government requires as part of the redevelopment benefit the ACT community?

**MR RAMSAY:** I thank Ms Cheyne for the important supplementary question. The legislation that was passed in November sets up the core framework for the casino licensee, irrespective of who holds the licence, to acquire and to operate electronic gaming machines. That can only happen if the licensee commits to redeveloping the casino precinct and meets some of the strongest harm minimisation criteria in the country for operating electronic gaming machines.

The harm minimisation measures set in place for EGMs at the casino were based on the latest research about how to prevent gambling harm. We legislated to require the casino to introduce mandatory pre-commitments. We also legislated for a \$2 per spin bet limit, which is the lowest in the country.

These new regulations will help to ensure that economic development and revitalisation in the casino precinct come forward in a way that takes the risks of gambling harm seriously. The government does not trivialise the impact of problem gambling by comparing it to chocolate addiction. Gambling-related harm has real consequences for people and for families, and we will continue to take it seriously across the community.

**MR PARTON:** Minister, why did the government take 17 months to give advice to Aquis after they lodged their detailed business case in June 2016?

**MR RAMSAY:** Noting that those matters do not fall within my portfolio, the conversations with the current casino licensee have been taking place for some time. The information requested was requested a number of years ago. We have been waiting for that ever since.

### **Bimberi Youth Justice Centre—assault allegations**

**MRS KIKKERT:** My question is to the Minister for Disability, Children and Youth. Minister, we have been informed that the investigation into the 6 May 2016 incident at Bimberi has been concluded, with the government having reached a financial settlement with staff involved. Minister, does this mean the government has accepted full responsibility for this outbreak of violence that resulted in Bimberi youth workers being sent to hospital?

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

**MRS KIKKERT:** Minister, have staff members agreed not to speak about this incident as part of their settlement? Is this standard procedure in such cases?

**MS STEPHEN-SMITH:** I forgot to thank Mrs Kikkert earlier for her first question. I understand that non-disclosure is a standard part of a number of agreements, but I will take the question on notice. I do not know what I can say on that.

**MR WALL:** Minister, has the Human Rights Commission concluded its review of this incident? If so, will the review be tabled or made public, and what conclusions did it reach?

**MS STEPHEN-SMITH:** I thank Mr Wall for his question. I think he is referring to the Human Rights Commission's self-instigated inquiry into a number of allegations that were raised last year. My understanding is that the commission has not completed that review. I look forward to receiving it when it is completed.

### **Federal government—budget**

**MR PETTERSSON:** My question is to the Chief Minister. What is the impact of last night's commonwealth budget on the ACT?

**MR BARR:** I thank Mr Pettersson for the question. The short answer perhaps reflects where we are at in terms of commonwealth budgets—that is, the impact of last night's

commonwealth budget on the ACT was minimal. There was not much bad news which we have become used to receiving; there was not a huge amount of good news either. But to the extent that there was some new infrastructure investment proposed for the ACT, that infrastructure investment is in two areas potentially inside the borders of the territory as it relates to the Monaro Highway and the duplication of—

*Opposition members interjecting—*

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

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Stop the clock, please. I think I can anticipate the point of order, Ms Orr.

**Ms Orr:** Sitting behind the Chief Minister, it is very hard to hear his response when those opposite are making considerable comment.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** I uphold the point of order. Please, Mr Hanson, let the Chief Minister answer in peace.

**MR BARR:** An unlikely scenario, Madam Speaker. As I was saying, the commonwealth budget identifies two pieces of road infrastructure physically located inside the territory for some further business case development—namely, the Monaro Highway and Pialligo Avenue for duplication, with a capped commonwealth commitment and with the bulk of that funding coming outside the forward estimates period—heading into the mid-2020s.

The ACT government will certainly consider those projects that the commonwealth has suggested. They are not new; they have been suggested previously and we have put them forward. We are happy to undertake some further work on those projects with a view to bringing the actual construction into the forward estimates period. That would be a useful thing so that the works would be completed within the next four years rather than some time beyond the forward estimates period, in the mid-2020s. There is also a positive in that the commonwealth has established a new major projects fund that will enable business cases to be developed. (*Time expired.*)

**MR PETTERSSON:** What does the commonwealth budget mean for ACT jobs?

**MR BARR:** It would not be a Liberal budget if there were not some job cuts in Canberra, and we see our national institutions are again in the firing line with job losses, particularly at the National Library and the National Archives, which is of course disappointing.

One area where it would appear there could be bipartisan agreement is the disappointment at the continuation of the decentralisation agenda that appears to be driven principally by the National Party, seeking to move jobs and agencies out of the ACT. That process has continued. It was ironic, I thought, that fully one-quarter of the ACT's total infrastructure allocation, around \$25 million, was set aside to get the APVMA out of McDonald's, Armidale, and into some new building. They have lost most of their staff. It has been an abject failure as a policy direction. It should be abandoned, and I think those opposite actually agree with me on this point.

**MR STEEL:** Chief Minister, how will the forthcoming ACT budget differ in approach from the commonwealth's?

**MR BARR:** The ACT budget will invest in Canberra.

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