



QUESTION TIME
OF THE
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
FOR THE
AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

HANSARD

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Thursday, 2 August 2018

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Ministerial arrangements

MR BARR: Madam Speaker, I advise of ministerial arrangements for today in Minister Fitzharris's absence. The same as yesterday, Minister Rattenbury will take questions on health, Minister Gentleman—although it is not his birthday today—on transport and city services, and I will take questions on higher education, training and research.

Questions without notice Australian Labor Party—preselection

MR COE: My question is to Chief Minister regarding so-called dirt sheets about a Labor candidate allegedly distributed to members of the Labor Party, including MLAs. Chief Minister, yesterday you said that you were confident that no MLA or staff members were involved in the production or distribution of the material. Chief Minister, have you or your office made any inquiries of MLAs and Assembly staff—or executive staff—to ensure that they were not involved?

MR BARR: Yes, I have raised my concern in relation to that material with colleagues and sought assurances that no-one in this building would have anything to do with that, and I have received those assurances.

MR COE: Chief Minister, when did you seek these assurances, what inquiries did you make and in what format did you make these inquiries to give you confidence that no MLAs or staff were involved as opposed to just making an assumption?

MR BARR: Since the material arrived, and face to face.

MR PARTON: Chief Minister, have you seen the material? If so, did your office receive the material at the Assembly?

MR BARR: I understand that one piece of material was posted to me. I do not see every piece of mail that comes in to my office, but this was brought to my attention.

Planning—development applications

MS LE COUTEUR: My question is to the minister for planning. It relates to reconsideration of development applications. Minister, is there any discretion for ACTPLA staff to accept applications for reconsideration after the statutory timeframe has passed? How much difference is available for the same DA to be reconsidered without it being considered as a new DA?

MR GENTLEMAN: I thank Ms Le Couteur for the question. There is some availability for directorate staff to look at DAs in regard to the best outcomes for the community. If we look at a development application that has been refused and is resubmitted, there may be an opportunity to look at that development application in regard to the work that the proponent has been doing with the community relating to the application and any other planning work occurring around the source of the application. Yes, there is some scope there. There are definitive timelines of course in

our building act. I would be interested to see any particular development application that Ms Le Couteur is interested in.

MS LE COUTEUR: Could you answer the first part of my first question: how much difference is allowable for the same DA to be reconsidered without needing to lodge a new DA entirely? That is the major thing.

MR GENTLEMAN: My understanding is that it is as long as the development application changes are similar to the original development application. It would have to be the actual area that was allocated in the first development and around the same footprint. But there may be scope for having a look at another development application or looking at changes made by a proponent if it is in line with community views and, of course, with the planning outcomes that the government wants to see for the future.

MR PARTON: Minister, does receipt of further information push out the notice and statutory time periods?

MR GENTLEMAN: The proponent would need to ask the directorate for an extension on looking at the application. Then the 20-day period would be looked at at the end of the time period. So the time period allocated for the end of discussion on the change to the application would be when the 20-day period starts.

Australian Labor Party—preselection

MS LAWDER: My question is to Chief Minister regarding so-called dirt sheets about a Labor candidate allegedly distributed to members of the Labor Party, including MLAs. Chief Minister, did you or any other member of the Assembly refer the content or distribution to the police or any other body?

MR BARR: Yes.

MS LAWDER: Chief Minister, have you commissioned, or will you commission, an investigation to ensure that there have been no breaches of the Public Sector Management Act, the ministerial code of conduct or any other ACT government code regarding the content or distribution of this material?

MR BARR: I have no reason to believe there are any breaches of any of those activities. There is currently an investigation underway in relation to those particular documents. Should that process identify the source of those documents, that may necessitate further action or it may not. In fact, it most likely will not, as I do not believe, and have no reason to believe, that those documents had any origination in this building or indeed within the ACT public sector and, in fact, is completely beyond the purview of this chamber.

MR COE: Chief Minister, would you please clarify: did you refer the content or distribution to the police? Secondly, did you or any other MLA receive a copy of the dirt sheet through ACT government or ACT Legislative Assembly delivered mail?

MR BARR: The matter was referred to the Government Solicitor for advice. My

understanding is that the mail arrived through Australia Post.

Land—rural property acquisition

MISS C BURCH: My question is to the Minister for Housing and Suburban Development. Minister, I refer to a report in the media on 11 July that the value of the block of land at the centre of the former Land Development Agency's Fairvale land deal has increased in value by 60 per cent in two years. Why did the LDA agree to the subdivision of Fairvale, given that acquiring the remaining part of the property will be more expensive in future?

MS BERRY: I understand that this is the subject of an Auditor-General's report and the government will provide a response in due course.

MISS C BURCH: Did the LDA agree to the subdivision of Fairvale so it would avoid the \$5 million trigger that would require a business case to be prepared?

MS BERRY: As I said in my first response, this particular piece of land was the subject of an Auditor-General's report. The government will respond to the report in due course. I understand that there is significant interest in a response from the government to this report and I have asked for the directorate's and government's response to be provided as soon as possible but certainly within the time frame required.

MR COE: Minister, have you commissioned an internal investigation into this subdivision, and will you table the documents related to the subdivision of Fairvale in the Assembly by tomorrow afternoon?

MS BERRY: I responded to a question yesterday regarding this particular issue. I said that I had asked for some advice on this particular piece of land. That could be legal advice, and, if it can be tabled, I will table it. Otherwise I will provide the advice that I can to the Assembly about the question, as I responded to the question yesterday.

Public housing—renewal program

MS CODY: My question is to the minister for housing and suburban land development. Can the minister update the Assembly on the renewal of public housing across Canberra?

MS BERRY: I thank Ms Cody for her question. We are on the homestretch of the public housing renewal program. As everyone in the chamber is aware, this has been an incredible investment in the ACT's public housing, with over 11 per cent of the stock renewed over the life of the program. There is a budget investment of \$608 million over this time to renew and replace, roof-for-roof, 1,288 public housing properties.

There have been 815 dwellings completed and handed over for public housing tenants to date. Currently 419 dwellings are under construction or being purchased for the renewal. An amount of \$345.61 million has been spent so far on the construction and purchase of replacement dwellings. In addition, Housing ACT has continued their

capital program, which spent over \$26 million renewing public housing last financial year.

The renewal of public housing is bringing benefits to public housing tenants and changing the lives of people in their new homes. There have been a number of stories—indeed an art exhibition has been held in this place—on the change it has made to the lives of public housing tenants in the ACT. I understand that those exhibitions will continue to be shown throughout the city. I encourage members who have not had the chance to see it here in the Assembly to get along and see that exhibition in other places in this city and learn the stories of some of our public housing tenants.

MS CODY: Minister, how is the renewal program improving the spread of public housing and fostering better outcomes for tenants and the community?

MS BERRY: I thank Ms Cody for the supplementary. The renewal program is developing public housing, as everybody knows, all across Canberra. Older and inefficient dwellings that no longer suit the needs of tenants are being replaced. In line with the government's salt and pepper approach, these are being built in every region across Canberra. Over 700 of these homes are in growing areas of Canberra such as Gungahlin and Molonglo. These areas have had limited public housing in the past, and new dwellings will offer more choice for public housing tenants looking to be closer to families, schools and services in those areas.

The government is renewing and building housing near the Northbourne corridor, with 202 new dwellings being built as part of the program. This will build on the established network of public housing in the inner north as well as being placed to utilise transport and services. The new homes provide comfortable, accessible housing that is energy efficient, is more affordable to maintain and meets the needs of some of Canberra's vulnerable residents.

MS ORR: Minister, what other investments is the government making to improve the quality of public housing in Canberra?

MS BERRY: I thank Ms Orr for her question. Significant measures were announced in this year's budget to improve and build on the quality of public housing in Canberra. Two thousand, two hundred public housing properties will receive energy-efficient products such as split air conditioners through energy efficiency improvement schemes. This \$5.7 million initiative will deliver energy-efficient upgrades to help tenants reduce their power bills and use energy more efficiently, as well as cutting greenhouse gas emissions. This will provide significant savings to tenants, up to \$500 a year in a reduction in energy bills.

The government is delivering a second dedicated culturally appropriate housing project for older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. This \$4.4 million budget project will build on the success of the first complex. Work has started on the second Common Ground in Dixon. This will be a fantastic project once complete, providing social and affordable housing and a great social mix for tenants. This social mix is working very well at the Gungahlin Common Ground.

Finally, this year's budget has committed an extra \$6.5 million in addition to the \$20 million funded each year for the specialist homelessness services sector. This extra funding is targeted at cohorts at risk of chronic homelessness, including women and children escaping domestic violence, older women and migrant families. This investment can help prevent the cycle of homelessness and get more people into secure housing. This year's budget is delivering on the government's commitment to support public housing and people who are experiencing homelessness.

Land—Molonglo stage 3

MS LEE: My question is to the minister for planning and environment: in May you signed off on an exemption for an environmental impact study for Molonglo stage 3 despite concerns over sewage contamination and explosive ordnance waste. Last year the ACT Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment stated she was uncomfortable with moves to exclude the same project from the environmental impact statement process. Minister, why did you decide to exempt Molonglo stage 3 from the EIS process despite concerns over sewage contamination and explosive ordnance waste?

MR GENTLEMAN: I thank Ms Lee for the question. It is an important question as we look at future planning for Canberra and the use of previous studies in the area. That is the reason for the decision. The Molonglo River reserve, of course, is a new reserve comprising about 1,280 hectares that follow the river from Scrivener Dam downstream. The draft plan describes the values of the Molonglo River reserve and defines objectives. Consultation on the plan concluded on 23 March this year and submissions received during the consultation period are being reviewed.

In regard specifically to environmental impact statements and the opportunity to look at prior work, the directorate gives me the opportunity to look at all the prior work that occurred in the area to inform me on whether or not an EIS exemption can be granted. It is probably not very good terminology to call it an EIS exemption because, really, it looks at all the previous environmental study work that has occurred. If you like, the work has been done, and that is why we can give that terminology and allow development to go forward.

MS LEE: Minister, have you received correspondence or a briefing from the commissioner about proposals to exempt Molonglo stage 3 from the EIS process, and what was your response?

MR GENTLEMAN: Yes, we did have a briefing, more on the whole area, and the study that the commissioner has been doing. Indeed she brought up some concerns that she had about previous study recognition. We have taken those on board, and we will be responding to that in the near future.

MR HANSON: Minister, will you table the documents related to the decision to exempt Molonglo stage 3 from an EIS in the Assembly by the end of today?

MR GENTLEMAN: I think I have already outlined those documents. If there is further information I am happy to bring it to the Assembly.

Floriade—financial management

MRS KIKKERT: My question is to the Minister for Tourism and Major Events. I refer to media reports of 23 June about significant financial management issues with Floriade. The deputy director-general of your directorate is quoted as saying, “With the change of personnel and the records that we had available to us it wasn’t exactly clear which invoices related to prepayments as opposed to last year’s delivery as opposed to tidying up the 2016.” Minister, why is the record keeping in your directorate so bad that you cannot determine which invoices are related to which Floriade?

MR BARR: In this particular case, invoices for multiple years and multiple contracts for Floriade 2016, 2017 and 2018 were incorrectly coded within that directorate. That issue has been assessed and rectified, and information has been provided, I believe, to the estimates committee in relation to that matter.

MRS KIKKERT: Minister, has any supplier been paid twice as a result of the problems with your directorate’s management?

MR BARR: I have no advice to that effect.

MR WALL: Chief Minister, why is the record keeping in the Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate so bad, whether it relates to discussions with the CFMEU, invoices for Floriade or decisions to change the structure of Health?

MR BARR: Undoubtedly record keeping needs to improve, and it will.

Youth—social participation

MS ORR: My question is to the Minister for Disability, Children and Youth. Minister, what is the government doing to support young people to make positive contributions to our community?

MS STEPHEN-SMITH: I thank Ms Orr for her question. The ACT government’s youth participation and engagement strategy is implemented through the youth interACT initiative. This initiative provides opportunities for young people to contribute to policy and program discussions and aims to ensure that young people have a real voice on matters that affect them.

Youth interACT engages young people through a range of activities, including the Youth Advisory Council, the young Canberra citizen of the year awards and a number of grant and scholarship programs. Members will be pleased to know that applications are currently open for this year’s round of youth interACT grants. These grants provide funding of up to \$1,500 for young people to organise one-off projects, events and programs that benefit other young people in the community.

Another key component of the youth engagement strategy is the government’s Youth Advisory Council. The Youth Advisory Council develops an annual work plan to guide their strategic direction and identify priority issues affecting young people in

the ACT. The focus for the past 12 months has been inclusive sexual health and wellbeing, environment and planning, and youth employment rights and opportunities.

Later this year the Youth Advisory Council will partner with the government's youth engagement team to host an ACT youth assembly. The youth assembly will provide a platform for up to 80 young people to have their voices heard on key issues. Participants will be empowered to speak up on topics that matter to them through a series of interactive sessions to be held right here in the Assembly chamber. I would like to take this opportunity to thank you, Madam Speaker, for granting permission to Canberra's young people to use this place for their own assembly.

MS ORR: Minister, how does the government's support for youth-led initiatives fit in with the broader strategy to promote inclusion and participation for all Canberrans?

MS STEPHEN-SMITH: I thank Ms Orr for her supplementary question. Canberra's young people, we know are, dynamic and diverse and bring a wide range of unique skills and perspectives to our community. It is important for this government to support young people to make their best contribution to our city and our society. Recipients of youth interACT grants from previous years have demonstrated that empowering young people to make their own contributions helps to promote inclusion across a broad cross-section of the community.

Among last year's grant recipients was Trash Mob, a volunteer-run initiative that aims to keep Canberra looking cleaner and greener. All Canberrans benefit from the work that Trash Mob does to clean up our open spaces and the message of environmental conscientiousness they promote. I understand that it has already been spoken of earlier this week in the chamber. I encourage all members to visit Trash Mob's Facebook page to see what work they may have done in each member's own corner of Canberra.

Another of last year's grants winners was Girls Take Over, a program that aims to empower young women to be leaders, giving them the tools and support to help them take action and pursue their dreams. Members are aware of the vital importance of ensuring that our young women are supported and empowered to be a part of the next generation of leaders.

Past youth interACT grants have also supported initiatives and activities focused on the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community, the LGBTI community and multicultural communities. The benefits of the youth-led initiatives such as these supported by the youth interACT grants are felt across the community. I strongly encourage all members of this place to get out into their communities and encourage young people and the organisations that support them to put in an application for the youth interACT grants.

MS CHEYNE: Minister, why is it important for the government to have a role in encouraging social participation among young people?

MS STEPHEN-SMITH: I thank Ms Cheyne for her supplementary question. Young people have life experiences, ideas, thoughts and perspectives that can enrich decision-making processes and ensure that policy decisions and services are

appropriate, relevant and responsive to the specific needs of young people. We know that young people face unique challenges. It is important that the government facilitate appropriate engagement with them to inform our responses to those challenges. The youth interACT initiatives I have mentioned give young people the opportunity to take a leading role in the community and in decision-making processes. The government's strategy facilitates direct engagement with young people to inform how we govern and provides resources to young people so that they can lead their own communities and explore their own solutions to social problems.

Canberra's young people have shown that, when given the right tools, they can be genuine advocates, genuine entrepreneurs and genuine leaders. We need look no further than the evidence that the Youth Coalition gives at many of our inquiries and hearings. We need also look no further than the 2018 Young Canberra Citizen of the Year winner, Ms Dhani Gilbert. She is an exceptional role model in our community. Ms Gilbert, a proud Wiradjuri woman, was awarded the 2018 Young Canberra Citizen of the Year award for her community work, her academic pursuits and her advocacy for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Most recently she was also named the ACT NAIDOC awards young person of the year. I have not got that name right, but members get the drift.

Canberra's young people have genuine contributions to make. It is important that government ensure that these opportunities are not lost. I look forward to seeing how the next round of youth interACT grants will benefit our community. I am also especially excited to see the outcomes of the youth assembly, which will bring us real and considered opinions of young people in our city.

Building—code compliance

MR PARTON: My question is to the Minister for Planning and Land Management. Minister, you have repeatedly assured the ACT community that you are confident in the safety of the ACT's buildings and that significant reforms in our building compliance codes over the past five years have improved the quality and compliance of our buildings, including residential buildings. What have you done to ensure that the Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate are issuing a certificate of occupancy only for buildings that are compliant with the building code of Australia, fire standards and other relevant construction standards?

MR GENTLEMAN: I thank Mr Parton for this important question. It is, of course, important that ACT residents feel safe in their properties. The government is aware of some of the detrimental effects on the community and industry of poorly designed and constructed buildings. That is why the ACT government has implemented and continues to implement a series of reforms arising from a review of the ACT building regulatory system. There has been one review. We are not starting a new review; we will continue with the reform program that I announced in June 2016, which was funded in this year's budget. We will also consider the outcomes of the current inquiry that the economic development and tourism standing committee is undertaking.

The reforms aim to ensure that our legislation, administration and regulatory systems are effective and relevant to the industry and the community, are wide reaching and

target all stages of the regulatory system, from training, licensing and design up front through to the construction process and resolving post-occupancy disputes.

These reforms are well supported by industry and community stakeholders.

MR PARTON: Minister, what have you done to ensure that private certifiers are approving or signing off on buildings only once they are compliant with the Building Code of Australia, fire standards and other relevant construction standards?

MR GENTLEMAN: I have prioritised reforms to improve the compliance of residential construction across the ACT. The reform package also includes actions to address issues such as security payments and the building regulatory system as a whole, and problems of course with the Building Act. It will take some time to implement. It may take a few years to start to see the results across the industry. The changes we are making are quite fundamental and extensive. They cover aspects from pre-construction such as design, training and licencing to supervision and verification during construction works right through to post-occupancy dispute resolution.

MR WALL: Minister, can you assure buyers of new homes in the ACT that they can be confident that the property they are purchasing is compliant with the building code fire standards or other relevant construction codes?

MR GENTLEMAN: Yes, I am very confident in the work that our directorate does. Unfortunately, of course, we may continue to see problems emerge with buildings that are already designed and constructed, some of which were built over a decade ago. We will need to manage these problems as best as we can.

Problems in these buildings, of course, may be very difficult to resolve but a defect found in an older building does not mean that we are going to prevent major defects in new buildings. Of course, we are looking at all of those new buildings to ensure that they comply in all of the circumstances that Mr Wall mentioned.

Health—adult mental health unit

MRS DUNNE: My question is to the Minister for Mental Health. I refer to reports yesterday regarding assaults on staff at the Dhulwa mental health unit. The reports indicated that there had been 10 assaults on staff in recent weeks with some staff having to be taken to Canberra Hospital's emergency department. Mr Matthew Daniel of the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation said on ABC radio in relation to proposed discussions with management about issues such as violence management training:

... I don't hold out much hope for those discussions because there is a history of denials that there are problems

Why has ACT Health denied that there are problems with security at the Dhulwa mental health unit?

MR RATTENBURY: Yes, this example highlights the challenges of working in a forensic mental health space. Whilst it can be a very rewarding job for our staff, particularly our nurses, it can also be dangerous at times because of the extreme

behavioural issues of the clients in that facility.

I am concerned by the commentary of the ANMF. I expect our staff to have the training they need. I will follow up those complaints raised by the Nursing and Midwifery Federation to ensure that we are addressing the points that they have raised. As I said, I expect our staff to have adequate training. This is a young environment in the sense that it is a relatively new facility in the ACT. There is still some degree of development of protocols and standards. But it is important that we ensure a safe working environment for all of our staff as best we can and as soon as possible.

MRS DUNNE: Minister, why do staff have concerns about the adequacy of violence management training, and why do you think they have been ignored until now?

MR RATTENBURY: As I touched on, this is a difficult environment for staff to work in. There is an ongoing discussion about how we make it safe and what the right training for staff is. With these comments that were made publicly this week, it was the first time that that particular concern has been raised with me, and I will be following it up in the coming days to get to the bottom of those questions.

MS LEE: Minister, have there been cases where staff have been unable to return to work due to the extent of injury they have suffered arising out of an assault?

MR RATTENBURY: Without going into individual details, the answer to the member's question is, yes, in the short term some staff who have recently been assaulted have been able to return to work immediately. Some have had more time off as a result of the injuries they have sustained.

Housing—housing choices

MS CHEYNE: My question is to the Minister for Planning and Land Management: can you update the Assembly on the housing choices consultation and demonstration housing project?

MR GENTLEMAN: I thank Ms Cheyne for her interest in planning across the city. I begin by thanking everyone who has taken the time to get involved in the housing choices conversation to date. We have received significant feedback from the community on the housing choices discussion paper with more than 600 surveys completed, more than 340 people engaging at community kiosks and over 150 written submissions received. An engagement report providing a full summary of the feedback has been published on the your say website, and individual submissions are available on the EPSDD planning website.

Feedback has been collected via the housing choices collaboration hub. Video recordings of presentations from the collaboration hub, a detailed information kit provided to participants and additional background information have also been published on the your say website.

The feedback to date covers a wide range of topics. They include: ageing in place and downsizing; building construction quality and policy; bush capital and garden city;

climate and environment; community engagement; evidence base; housing affordability; housing delivery, ownership and rental models; housing density and infill; housing design quality; housing and block options and types; infrastructure planning; neighbourhood amenity, character and design; the planning system in general; strategic planning; suburb-specific comments; and Territory Plan codes and zones.

The topics I have mentioned demonstrate the complexity of housing policy and related challenges facing the ACT as well the diverse range of community participants involved in the consultation process. We have heard so far in this process that a wide range of housing types is desired and needed to suit the needs of the diverse members of our community.

The demonstration housing project is a key element of the broader housing choices paper. The ACT government is committed to the planning and delivery of housing that supports a vibrant, compact and sustainable city. (*Time expired.*)

MS CHEYNE: Minister, can you provide further detail on the collaboration hub undertaken as part of the housing choices consultation?

MR GENTLEMAN: I thank Ms Cheyne for her supplementary. Following three months of in-depth work by participants, on Saturday, 28 August I was pleased to receive the recommendations from the housing choices collaboration hub about different ways of meeting our city's housing needs.

Over five sessions, members of our community were directly involved in the collaboration hub. Through their participation in the deliberative democracy process, they shared their views to examine our growing city and consider housing choices in particular. Participants shared their thoughts and viewpoints on topics about planning, housing and development in the ACT. The collaboration hub sessions included a range of experts from across industry and government to support discussions and deliberations on ideas, challenges and opportunities.

This has been a new and bespoke engagement process that provided a genuine opportunity for a wide cross-section of the community to bring their own perspectives and ideas to the table. The topics of discussion have included housing types, affordability and use of zoning. It was great to see the energy and commitment of the participants. Their input will now influence the options the government takes forward into future planning and development.

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

I am very pleased with the work that my directorate did—time on weekends, so in their personal time—in coming along to assist in the collaboration hub. They did a great job.

MR STEEL: Minister, can you outline to the Assembly the next steps for the housing

choices consultation and demonstration housing project?

MR GENTLEMAN: I thank Mr Steel for the question. There is no one right answer to the question of how we meet our future housing needs. It is quite complex. The collaboration hub has been a genuine opportunity for the citizens of Canberra to influence future housing choices and planning and development in our city. The hub has presented me with a report of their recommendations. The government will now consider the collaboration hub's recommendations and present a formal response in the coming months.

The government will also carefully consider the recommendations presented by the hub, alongside the feedback received through the consultation on the housing choices discussion paper, before developing any proposals for further community engagement. For anyone interested in the recommendations from the hub or the feedback received during consultation on housing choices, the reports on both are published on the your say website.

With regard to the demonstration housing element of the broader housing choices project, the first stage of an expression of interest process has now closed to submissions. I am advised that there has been a great response to the call for proposals, with a diverse group of applicants with a range of ideas received. After assessing proposals received from stage 1 of the EOI, the directorate will refine the requirements for the next stage of the process. Demonstration housing precincts will provide an opportunity to showcase innovative housing design and delivery in a real-world example.

Building—code compliance

MR WALL: My question is to the Minister for Planning and Land Management. Minister, the CFMEU have recently embarked on a campaign to discredit certain builders in the ACT. The campaign against certain builders includes claims that imply that buildings currently being offered for sale are not compliant with the Building Code of Australia, fire standards or other relevant construction standards. Minister, are you aware that CFMEU officials have been actively engaged in a smear campaign against certain builders and building companies and also blockading display suites across the ACT?

MR GENTLEMAN: I am not quite sure how that falls into my portfolio of planning. Interestingly, this is the first I have heard of the actions that Mr Wall has notified us of.

Mr Wall: Supplementary question, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: Can you resume your seat for one moment, Mr Wall? Mr Wall, I am just mindful that, as the minister alluded to, he is not responsible for the actions of a third party, but ask your question and we will see what it is.

Mr Wall: Just on your ruling, Madam Speaker, he might not be responsible for the actions of third parties but the question was specifically whether or not he was aware of those actions, given that they are claims related to buildings that were not

compliant with the Building Code of Australia, fire standards or other relevant construction standards, which is, I imagine, an area of the minister's responsibility.

MADAM SPEAKER: Yes, thank you, Mr Wall.

MR WALL: Minister, are you aware of any new buildings in the ACT that are being offered for sale that currently do not comply with the standards set out by the Building Code of Australia?

MR GENTLEMAN: I gave a full answer earlier on to questions from Mr Parton on the compliance of buildings across the territory. If that is related to that, I will refer the member back to that question. In relation, as I mentioned earlier, to the actions of the particular union: no, this is the first time I have been made aware of them.

MR PARTON: Minister, are you aware of any new dwellings in the ACT being offered for sale that do not comply with relevant fire and construction standards?

MR GENTLEMAN: No, I have not been briefed on any new buildings that would not comply with those standards.

Office for LGBTIQ Affairs—outcomes

MR STEEL: My question is to the Chief Minister. Chief Minister, what are some of the significant outcomes that the Office for LGBTIQ Affairs has achieved since its establishment just last year?

MR BARR: I thank Mr Steel for the question. The office is the centralised policy development area now for the territory government and provides a single contact point for the community. The office supports the ministerial advisory council and also conducts a range of community forums, surveys and events.

Some of the key outcomes include: extensive work across government and with community groups to implement an engagement campaign and to increase mental health and wellbeing support for LGBTIQ Canberrans; working with Canberra's universities to improve student safety on campus; input into legislative and policy reform, and broader reviews such as the religious freedom review and 2021 census topics; ensuring that public servants across the ACT public sector have access to the training and guidance they need to support LGBTIQ members of the community; and the development of a range of new initiatives in the 2018 budget particularly to support trans and intersex people.

MR STEEL: Chief Minister, what are some of the events that the office has been involved in supporting or organising for the community?

MR BARR: There is no doubt that visibility and awareness are key to understanding our past and thinking differently about our future. The office has been involved in supporting and organising a number of events for the community. There is the fair day held during the SpringOUT festival, Canberra's annual pride festival. There is support for the inclusive Canberra think tank to examine current and emerging issues facing LGBTIQ Canberrans, in conjunction with the ministerial advisory council. There are

educational events on intersex awareness day and transgender day of remembrance.

The office supports the attendance of around 50 young Canberrans at the YWCA's LGBTIQ and Allies prom. There were events during National Reconciliation Week in partnership with the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander LGBTIQ network. There was participation in the 2018 Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras, which involved more than 200 Canberrans.

There were event partnerships with national institutions such as the National Gallery of Australia and the National Film and Sound Archive. Combined, these events were attended by thousands of Canberrans and signal inclusion. They also create safe spaces for LGBTIQ Canberrans, their families and allies to connect with community.

MR PETTERSSON: Chief Minister, what benefits have we seen as a result of Canberra's participation in the 2018 Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras parade?

MR BARR: Beyond the glitter, the flamboyance and the satire, it is fair to observe that Mardi Gras is one of Australia's biggest events. Canberra's participation received local, national and international recognition. Over 300,000 spectators lined the route of the parade to watch over 12,000 participants take part in the world's biggest celebration of the LGBTIQ community. That figure includes thousands of international guests who came from all over the world to the event. One of the more famous participants in 2018 was Cher.

SBS broadcasts the event and does so in a number of different formats. I am pleased to say that both of the Canberra floats were prominently featured, including the infamous rainbow bus. That achieved significant national and local reach in Sydney and across the nation. Mardi Gras creates opportunities for businesses and cultural institutions to promote their goods and services to the LGBTIQ community and to families and allies. Many businesses take that opportunity. Visit Canberra and the National Gallery of Australia boosted a range of themed social media activity during the Mardi Gras period to reach these target audiences.

Crime—motorcycle gangs

MR HANSON: My question is to the Minister for Police and Emergency Services. I refer to reports in the media on 18 July that the Finks motorcycle gang had been involved in a violent brawl in Anketell Street near the Tuggeranong bus interchange on 6 July 2018. Minister, how many members of outlaw motorcycle gangs were involved in a violent brawl near the Tuggeranong bus interchange on this day?

MR GENTLEMAN: I thank Mr Hanson for his question. Of course, whilst Canberra is a safe city, it does not mean we are immune from crime, and we see these actions of serious criminal gangs operating outside the law. In regard to the exact number, I will have to take that detail on notice.

I assure the Canberra community that this government is taking the issue very seriously. Over the past few years we have provided additional funding and resources to ACT Policing to specifically target criminal gangs. We have also acted to strengthen the law and provide police with additional powers. We will continue to

work with the Chief Police Officer and other officials across government to help stop these gangs.

We must remember that there is no quick or easy solution to this sort of violence. I have heard the opposition suggest that there is a simple solution: just bring on one law and it will deal with the problem.

Opposition members interjecting—

MADAM SPEAKER: Members! Mr Hanson and Mr Wall, let the minister answer.

MR GENTLEMAN: The challenge of dealing with these gangs is not that simple. As I have said, we are working to deal with the challenge. Taskforce Nemesis to date has charged 264 people, laid a total of 748 charges, and executed 201 search warrants. In addition, ACT Policing have seized assets and cash as part of their efforts to tackle these serious criminal gangs. Even with these laws in other jurisdictions—the laws that Mr Hanson promotes—issues with serious criminal gangs persist.

We will continue working with all our officials to tackle this problem. Any legal change, of course, would need to be effective and comply with human rights laws, as I have mentioned before. We have invested seriously in Task Force Nemesis over recent years. *(Time expired.)*

Mr Hanson interjecting—

MADAM SPEAKER: Beside the interjection, Mr Hanson, do you have a supplementary?

Mr Barr interjecting—

MR HANSON: I do, Madam Speaker. It's a good one too. If Mr Barr would stop interjecting, I would be able to ask it.

Mr Barr interjecting—

MADAM SPEAKER: Everyone hush.

MR HANSON: He continues, Madam Speaker. He continues interjecting.

MADAM SPEAKER: Mr Hanson, to your question. If you had got there more quickly we might have been on a bit further.

MR HANSON: Minister, how have new outlaw gangs operating in the Canberra area increased the risk to the Canberra community?

MR GENTLEMAN: Any outlaw gang activity increases risk to the Canberra area. That is why we are investing in ACT police, particularly in Taskforce Nemesis, to ensure that we can arrest this progression. We have committed an additional \$6.4 million in funding over four years. We have employed eight additional staff. This year's budget built on that commitment by providing an extra \$1.6 million.

Mr Hanson interjecting—

MADAM SPEAKER: Mr Hanson, enough.

MR GENTLEMAN: The government has also increased funding to the Director of Public Prosecutions to help support the work of Taskforce Nemesis and ACT Policing. Last year, funding of \$970,000 was provided to strengthen their capacity to address organised crime by providing additional prosecutors to specialise in seizing criminal assets, depriving criminal organisations of their financial proceedings of crime. That is the key. If you take the proceeds of crime away from these gangs, you lessen the opportunity for them to be active.

MR PARTON: Minister, how many members of outlaw motorcycle gangs have come to Canberra in the past three years?

MR GENTLEMAN: The original brief I had when I took over the portfolio was that there around 40 to 42 outlaw motorcycle gang members active in the ACT. My understanding is that there are just under 50 outlaw motorcycle gang members operating in the ACT. So that is the increase we have seen. Of course, in regard to this very important topic, unlike the opposition we do not seek to politicise this issue. We do not go around perpetrating a fraud on Canberrans by pretending that a single legal change will somehow stop these serious criminal gangs from breaking the law.

These gangs have no regard for the law and they do not care what the legislation says. So, unlike those opposite, we are acting; we are investing in ACT Policing with additional resources and equipment to tackle these serious criminal gangs—

Mr Hanson interjecting—

MADAM SPEAKER: Mr Hanson, do you want to hear the answer?

MR GENTLEMAN: and we are always happy to support effective measures that are human rights compliant.

Mrs Dunne interjecting—

MADAM SPEAKER: Mrs Dunne, your colleague Mr Milligan is on his feet to ask a question without notice.

Crime—motorcycle gangs

MR MILLIGAN: My question is to the Minister for Police and Emergency Services. On 8 July, media reports cited police statistics that outlaw motorcycle gang issues made up 75 per cent of the workload of the criminal investigations area. As at 8 July, there have been two attempted murders, six shootings and seven arson attacks attributed to bikie gangs. In 2017 these gangs were believed to be responsible for eight shootings and nine arson attacks. Why do we have a situation where three-quarters of the workload of the criminal investigations area is due to outlaw motorcycle gangs?

MR GENTLEMAN: It is a direct result of the focus that ACT Policing have put on criminal outlaw motorcycle gangs. The CPO gave a direction to her criminal investigations unit to ensure that the focus will be on criminal outlaw motorcycle gangs. Mind you, they are still doing other work. I can report that just today four people faced the ACT Magistrates Court this morning on a total of 21 drug trafficking charges, after ACT Policing executed search warrants yesterday.

Members of ACT Policing criminal investigations, assisted by other police, Australian Federal Police and New South Wales officers, executed search warrants for premises in Macgregor, Cook, Macquarie and Queanbeyan as part of Operation Ghar, an ongoing drugs and organised crime investigation. During these searches police seized a trafficable quantity of a substance suspected to be cocaine, more than a thousand pills suspected to be MDMA and approximately \$5,000 in cash. As a result of these search warrants, a 39-year-old man from McKellar, a 32-year-old Cook man, a 46-year-old man from Macquarie and a 20-year-old Queanbeyan woman were arrested. They will face a combined total of 21 charges of trafficking a controlled drug.

While the criminal investigations team is certainly focusing, as the CPO has told them to do, on criminal outlaw motorcycle gangs, it is quite clear from that reading that success in other criminal investigations is being achieved as well.

MR MILLIGAN: Minister, why do we have four bikie gangs operating in the ACT when at the beginning of the decade we just had one?

MR GENTLEMAN: We have had a detailed briefing on how bikie gangs operate in the ACT, across Australia and across the world. The answer to Mr Milligan's question is competition. They have a market here in the ACT.

Opposition members interjecting—

MR GENTLEMAN: There are interjections of comedy from the opposition but this is a very serious matter. The ACT government is responding by investing in police operations. Prior to the time Mr Milligan indicated, we had six or more outlaw motorcycle gangs operating in the ACT. We had the Finks in the early days, and the Golden Eagles; we had Hell's Angels and a number of other gangs. It does fluctuate over time. But the answer to Mr Milligan's question is competition, unfortunately.

Members interjecting—

MADAM SPEAKER: There is too much general interjection. Please all be quiet.

MR HANSON: Have police had to put other criminal investigations on the backburner because they have so many resources devoted to the investigation of crimes by members of outlaw motorcycle gangs?

MR GENTLEMAN: Clearly, from my reading of the actions in court today, that is not the case.

Domestic and family violence—family safety hub

MR PETTERSSON: My question is to the Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence: can you please provide the Assembly with an update on the family safety hub?

MS BERRY: I thank Mr Pettersson for his question. I have been updating the Assembly regularly around the issue of family safety and the prevention of domestic and family violence in our community. In June this year I presented the Assembly with the annual safer families statement in which I spoke about the family safety hub. I am keen to continue to update the Assembly on the progress of this work as often as I can because I know that there is genuine interest across the chamber in how this work proceeds and the positive impact it will ultimately have on our community.

The hub was officially launched on 11 May this year. The family safety hub was co-designed with the community services sector and with people who have lived experience of domestic and family violence. Their insights told us that a lot of people and communities who experience violence do not recognise it as violence. Power and control particularly are not recognised as violence by victims, perpetrators or the system. We learnt that people are offered generic pathways that do not always meet their needs or aspirations. For example, some people are afraid to access services and they want a non-legal response that does not involve police or child protection.

The insights gathered through the co-design have prompted this government to think differently about the role for the hub in the ACT. It was evident that we did not need a new service with a shiny front door in order to improve access; what was needed was a broad range of systemic reforms requiring a new way of working. The co-design highlighted that collaboration is needed to design and test solutions to systemic problems.

The family safety hub is a network for collaborating on better responses to domestic and family violence and brings together people with expertise to help find and test new solutions. It will then run a series of innovation challenges to identify solutions. The best of these solutions are being piloted and the pilots that are shown to be effective are used to drive change in the broader justice and service systems.

MR PETTERSSON: How was the first family safety hub challenge run, and what were the findings?

MS BERRY: I thank Mr Pettersson for the supplementary. As I said, the hub will run a series of innovation challenges where each challenge is focused on tackling a specific problem or topic related to domestic and family violence.

The first challenge for the hub has now commenced. The topic for this challenge is “How might we prevent and intervene early in domestic violence for pregnant women and new parents?” This topic was chosen as the first challenge because research says that women can be at greater risk of experiencing violence from their partners during pregnancy and post partum, especially when they are separated. According to ANROWS, over half of women whose former partners used violence against them experienced violence during pregnancy.

In May, the hub held a two-day workshop to generate new ideas on addressing and responding to domestic violence during pregnancy. Experts from across the service spectrum participated in the workshop and nearly 60 ideas were developed. Specific criteria were used to narrow down the ideas to four potential opportunities.

The first of these opportunities focused on providing free access to legal information for pregnant mums and new parents in locations that they will connect with during their pregnancy or in the earlier period of parenting, such as health or community settings. The idea stems from our insights that people are seeking ways for safe and confidential conversations about their options. We need to provide opportunities for those safe conversations in locations where people are likely to be.

In July, testing of the idea commenced. Testing included working closely with the front-line service providers to identify whether workers think it is a good idea. Participants included antenatal and postnatal midwives, social workers, counsellors, maternity staff from the Centenary hospital, child and family centres in Tuggeranong and Gungahlin, Legal Aid and the Women's Legal Centre. Feedback from the sector has been invaluable, positive and very supportive of the idea.

MS CODY: Minister, what are the next steps for this work and what broader outcomes are you working towards?

MS BERRY: In early August, challenge participants will consider the results of the testing period and, based on the findings, a decision will be made as to whether the idea should progress to a short pilot phased in during the remainder of 2018. The government will then evaluate the results of the pilot to determine whether the idea should be scaled across the system.

Evaluation may consider whether the idea: fosters a shared understanding of domestic and family violence; builds capability across the system for evidence-based responses that are culturally appropriate and family-centred; creates new or improved pathways that better meet the needs of the community; and promotes integration and cohesion across the system.

Additionally, there are three other ideas from the challenge that are being explored. Active work is underway to test the potential for a campaign on reducing the stigma of seeking help when relationships are not okay. This idea could enter into a pilot phase in the second half of 2018, depending on the outcome of the initial testing.

In addition to testing ideas from the first hub challenge, the Office of the Coordinator General for Family Safety is in early discussions around the next hub challenge. The second challenge may commence in late 2018 and focus on financial support and housing options for people experiencing domestic and family violence. I look forward to talking more about this work as it continues.

Mr Barr: Madam Speaker, further questions can be placed on the notice paper.