



QUESTION TIME

OF THE

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

FOR THE

AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

HANSARD

Edited proof transcript

Thursday, 15 August 2019

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Questions without notice

Access Canberra—unkempt properties

MR COE: Madam Speaker, my question is to the Minister for Business and Regulatory Services regarding a property in Kaleen with hundreds of whitegoods in the front and back yards and on adjacent public land. The evidence suggests that the owner is operating a scrap metal and whitegoods storage business, and perhaps even sales.

As you would be aware, Minister, numerous controlled activity orders have been issued for decades. These orders have required the lessee to remove all second-hand appliances, waste materials and scrap metals from various precincts. Minister, why are all these goods still there, including on adjacent public land?

MR RAMSAY: I thank Mr Coe for his question. In terms of the particular matters in relation to the property in Delegate Street in Kaleen, I want to put it in context.

Mr Hanson: Nothing like naming the street.

MR RAMSAY: They have been made public already. Putting it in context, there have been 179 complaints received in 2018-19 regarding 159 properties: 132 of the properties did not meet the unclean leasehold criteria; the remaining 27 properties did meet the unclean criteria. Twenty of those were resolved without enforcement action. Of the remaining seven, three had controlled activity orders that were issued and four are still under investigation. Of those three controlled activity orders, one has been complied with and two are still being monitored. Of the two that are still being monitored, one relates to hoarding. That is the context of what we are talking about across the ACT.

When it comes to matters of hoarding, as you would be very aware, Madam Speaker, it is important to take a broad and holistic approach. I put on record my empathy for those who live around that property and note the concern that has been voiced in the community. But I also acknowledge that there is complexity around it. Simplistic solutions are not going to be a helpful way forward. I note that there have been comments made across the community sector in the past 24 hours about simplistic solutions that are offered by the opposition. It is important for us to work carefully—*(Time expired.)*

MR COE: Minister, is a person in Canberra allowed to have 250 whitegoods on a residential property, which goes to occupy the vast majority of that site?

MR RAMSAY: In relation to that site, as I say, there is a controlled activity order and the hoarding case management group is working carefully. The hoarding case management group was formed in 2015 because they are complex issues. Simplistic responses to complex issues will not only not solve the issue, it has been demonstrated that they make it worse, not better. So what we will continue to do—

Mr Coe interjecting—

MR RAMSAY: Each hoarding case has—

Mr Coe interjecting—

MADAM SPEAKER: Mr Coe, enough, thank you.

MR RAMSAY: Each hoarding case has a government-led agency. The health protection service in the ACT Health Directorate is the body that chairs that hoarding group. In this particular circumstance, the most recent visit to that site by the government regulators was on 13 August. The government will continue to work on this.

MS ORR: Minister, what is the best way to treat the root cause of hoarding, and is a punitive approach effective?

MR RAMSAY: I thank Ms Orr for the question, and it is an important question.

Mr Coe: Point of order.

MADAM SPEAKER: Mr Ramsay, resume your seat.

Mr Coe: I ask you to consider whether that supplementary question is in order. The issue that I raised was not hoarding; it was about a commercial activity taking place on a property in Kaleen.

MADAM SPEAKER: A substantive part of the minister's response referred to complexity around matters such as hoarding. Therefore I believe it is in order.

MR RAMSAY: It is important to be able to deal with matters with the complexity they deserve and the seriousness they deserve, not the simplicity of the Canberra Liberals.

When it is a matter that has been determined to fit within the unclean leasehold provisions, it can be that the hoarding case management group works with that. Hoarding is ultimately, as has been commented on in the media over the past 24 or 48 hours, a matter that arises from mental health conditions as well. In particular circumstances, it is important to be able to deal with the whole of that. The government agencies that are working with the hoarding case management group are Housing ACT, Access Canberra, Transport Canberra and City Services, waste regulation, ACT Fire & Rescue, the Ambulance Service, the Public Advocate, the Public Trustee and Guardian, Canberra Health Services, the ACT Health Directorate and the Community Services Directorate. They work together with the community sector as well.

It is important to note that, as has been demonstrated over and over again, unless you deal with this matter with a wraparound, holistic approach, you will make the matter worse. Then we will simply—

Mr Coe: It's a massive public health issue. The neighbours. The mosquitoes. The rats. The snakes.

MR RAMSAY: You can yell “rats” and “snakes” as much as you want, Mr Coe, but the issue here is that if you do not deal with the matter holistically, the matter will become worse, not better. *(Time expired.)*

Planning—Molonglo Valley

MS LE COUTEUR: My question is to the Minister for Planning and Land Management and relates to the lack of a supermarket in Molonglo. Minister, with the current closure of the Denman Prospect supermarket and the recent DA rejection of KOKO Molonglo, all three suitable sites released so far have failed to provide the Molonglo community with a supermarket. What is the ACT government doing to ensure that the local community has a reasonable level of facilities?

MR GENTLEMAN: I thank Ms Le Couteur for her question. It is of course important to have facilities where possible in new areas and they normally go through in the planning process to approve applications for the construction of those buildings. The lease of those is really up to the private sector, the owner of the buildings.

I went out and visited the supermarket site in Denman Prospect earlier this year. It was, I thought, a pretty good supermarket and I was impressed by the operation there. Obviously the supermarket owner could not see it working. They are now vacating that site, and I understand from the owner of the centre that there will be a new leaseholder there very shortly.

MS LE COUTEUR: Minister, will land release in the Molonglo group centre be the answer? Will it be brought forward to give the local community a chance of having a full-sized supermarket within the next three years?

MR GENTLEMAN: I will take that on notice in regard to the timing of the release for the full-sized supermarket.

MRS JONES: Minister, what have you done about the state of local supermarkets in both Denman Prospect and Coombs, where residents regularly experience difficulties in buying what they want?

MR GENTLEMAN: We have had many conversations with the local community about the services that could be provided in those areas.

Mrs Jones interjecting—

MR GENTLEMAN: I am sorry, I did not hear the interjection.

Mrs Jones: The shopkeeper at Coombs has never met you.

MR GENTLEMAN: It is, of course, important that we provide whatever services we can for the residents of those new areas. We will work with the owners of those shopping centres to the best of our ability to be able to get people on board to work in the areas.

Transport Canberra—weekend bus services

MISS C BURCH: My question is to the minister for transport. Minister, in addition to hiring more bus drivers, are you making changes to the enterprise agreement in order to address the ongoing issues plaguing the weekend bus network?

MR STEEL: No, not at this stage. In response to Miss Burch's question, we are looking at a range of different options. The focus is on recruiting more drivers. At this stage we are not looking at changing the enterprise agreement. We are seeing what options are available to us to meet reliability issues on the weekend by increasing the number of drivers, in addition to a range of other options.

MISS C BURCH: Minister, are there plans to cut weekend services because of the staffing issues you have been unable to resolve?

MR STEEL: As I just mentioned, the government is looking at a range of different issues to make sure that we provide reliability for weekend services. The focus for us is on recruiting more drivers. That is how we will deliver the increased services on the weekend.

MR COE: Minister, how many shifts are yet to be filled for this coming weekend?

MR STEEL: As I explained yesterday in the debate here in the Assembly, there is a range of complex factors in our rostering system. We try to fill the roster right up until and including the weekend of those services being delivered to make sure that as many services can be delivered as possible to the community. To say now on a Thursday, two days out from the weekend, that we are not running services would mean that we could not possibly fill those services. The Transport Canberra team works very diligently right up until the last minute to make sure that we can fill as many shifts as we can on the weekend and deliver more services, which we have done under the new network.

Mr Coe: Point of order, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: Mr Coe.

Mr Coe: It is on relevance. The question I asked was: how many shifts are yet to be filled? It is quite objective. As of right now, where are the vacancies? To say that there is an in-principle objection to stating it—

MADAM SPEAKER: I think he explained that he was unable to provide that answer and that the department is working on it right to the end. So there is no point of order.

Education—early childhood education

MR PETTERSSON: My question is to the Minister for Education and Early Childhood Development. Minister, why has the government committed to working towards free, universal preschool access for all three-year-old children?

MS BERRY: I thank Mr Pettersson for the question and for his interest in early

childhood education across the ACT. The impact of early childhood education on positive life outcomes is indisputable and supported by international and national research. OECD research involving 72 countries concluded that a minimum of two years of early childhood education is needed to have a good chance of educational success by 15 years of age.

Between three and five years of age, children develop the peer social skills needed to regulate their emotions. This is also a time when children are naturally curious, when a love of learning can be instilled and when critical cognitive, creative and language skills can be developed. High quality early childhood education plays an important role in supporting children to learn during these pivotal years. This is because learning is cumulative. Each stage builds on the last, enabling a child to learn for life. For children experiencing vulnerabilities or disadvantage, this education plays an even more significant role in turning the curve on inequity. When children start their formal education behind their peers, they often stay behind. Catching up becomes harder year on year.

The ACT government acknowledges that cost is a key barrier to children in the ACT equitably accessing early learning programs. Providing free, universal access to high quality early childhood education for three-year-olds will give every child a fair start to life. It is for this reason that the ACT government has committed to working towards 15 hours per week, 600 hours per year, of free, universal early childhood education for all three-year-old children.

MR PETTERSSON: How will the government target those three-year-old children who will most benefit from improving access to preschool?

MS BERRY: The introduction of free universal preschool for all three-year-old children will of course require a phased implementation in order to build the capacity of the sector in meeting this demand. Targeting access to those children and families most in need will ensure equity and fairness during the first phase of the implementation, with a \$2.2 million investment towards equitable access to early childhood education committed in the 2019-20 ACT budget.

In the first phase it is anticipated that vacancies within existing ACT services will be utilised to improve access for families experiencing disadvantage and vulnerability. Consultation with services will be ongoing over the coming months as the proposed approach is being confirmed.

Based on extensive modelling work, it is envisaged that dedicated places will be funded in these services in partnership with early childhood schools, public schools in locations to meet the needs of these priority families. Families will be identified through trusted supported networks and services already working with families most in need such as maternal and child health services, public housing, child and family centres and the child development service. This is important because when the services partner together they can deliver coordinated supports that meet the holistic needs of families at times when life can otherwise be overwhelming.

Importantly, during this first phase the ACT government will also be ensuring positive childhood experiences for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. Again, this

work is still being finalised. However, I anticipate being able to provide further information in coming months.

MS CHEYNE: Minister, how will this initiative complement the broader programs delivered by the government to support early childhood education?

MS BERRY: I thank Ms Tara Cheyne for the supplementary. Delivering three-year-old preschool will be one of a range of strategies to enhance early childhood education and care in the ACT that will be outlined in the early childhood strategy later this year. Some of the excellent programs that will be strengthened through the strategy include Koori preschools, which provide early childhood education for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children aged from three to five years. Koori preschools focus on cultural integrity, parent engagement and transitions to school. The Koori preschool program also works closely with the ACT child and family centres to develop strong partnerships and link families with programs that strengthen community and cultural connections.

The prep for pre program engages families to be active partners in their children's learning prior to them entering the education system. Prep for pre is a targeted program for children and parents who need extra support to prepare for preschool. This could be because of particular needs or family circumstances. The program also provides for developmental assessments of children if needed.

Play groups and out-of-school hours care also play key roles in connecting with families in local communities. The early childhood strategy will have a focus on partnerships that support community connections for families and effective transitions for ACT children through strong collaborative relationships.

The details of these collaborations will unfold over time but what is clear is that three-year-old preschools will be an integrated part of a holistic service system that supports families and children from birth right through to their early school years.

Canberra Hospital—emergency department

MR HANSON: My question is to the Minister for Health. It has been reported to the opposition that the Canberra Hospital emergency department has been closed and patients are being diverted to Calvary. It has also been reported to us that nurses are being SMSed to do extra shifts and that beds are being opened across the hospital. Minister, can you confirm whether the ED at Canberra Hospital is closed to new patients? Is a bypass policy in place to take patients to Calvary? Are nurses being called on to do extra shifts, and are beds being opened elsewhere in the hospital to deal with the situation?

MS STEPHEN-SMITH: I thank Mr Hanson for the question. I cannot confirm in relation to the ED at the moment, but I can confirm that the emergency department at Canberra Hospital was on bypass for a period last night. For the information of the Assembly—and I know that Canberra Hospital and Canberra Health Services have indicated this on their Facebook page as well—yesterday was a day when they experienced a particularly large increase in demand through the emergency department. Last night, Wednesday, 14 August, Canberra Hospital exceeded capacity.

To ease the pressure across the hospital, they created internal capacity, discharged appropriate patients and transferred patients to private hospitals.

Canberra Health Services have strong existing relationships with the private hospitals to ensure that patients receive safe and clinically appropriate care in cases of increased demand. Canberra Health Services also worked closely with the ACT Ambulance Service to manage transfers of patients across the health system. There was no obvious cause for the surge in admissions, other than usual seasonal fluctuations. This situation is likely to take a few days to resolve.

As I mentioned, Canberra Health Services had a period of bypass from 10 pm on Wednesday evening, yesterday evening, to 2 am today, 15 August. A bypass period provided a period to reduce inflow into the emergency department, to ensure that the emergency department stays safe. I would assure members, though, that during a bypass, where possible, ambulances are diverted to an alternative hospital to manage a peak period of demand, but only stable patients who meet clinically appropriate criteria are diverted. The Ambulance Service would never bypass a hospital during a life-threatening emergency. Paediatric patients, those with life-threatening emergencies and trauma patients would always be taken to Canberra Hospital.

It is a good opportunity to remind the community, and Canberra Health Services has sought to do so, to attend emergency departments only in a genuine emergency. (*Time expired.*)

MR HANSON: Minister, what risks will patients face from being turned away from the emergency department at Canberra Hospital?

MS STEPHEN-SMITH: As I have already said, only stable patients who meet clinically appropriate criteria are diverted. The Ambulance Service would never bypass a hospital during a life-threatening emergency. Paediatric patients, those with life-threatening emergencies and trauma patients will always be taken directly to the Canberra Hospital.

MRS DUNNE: Minister, is this the first time that the hospital has been on bypass? Has it happened before? If so, when and how often?

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

Centenary Hospital for Women and Children—child and adolescent mental health unit

MRS DUNNE: My question is to the Minister for Mental Health. Minister, on 15 November 2017, you told the Standing Committee on Health, Ageing and Community Services that the expanded Centenary Hospital for Women and Children, including a dedicated child and adolescent mental health unit, would be operational by early 2020. Around seven months later on 27 June 2018, you signed the answer to a question taken at estimates on notice advising that the Centenary hospital expansion was forecast to be completed by the financial year 2021-22. Minister, a further 14 months on, can you give the Assembly the latest update on when the dedicated

child and adolescent mental health unit within the Centenary hospital will be fully operational?

MR RATTENBURY: As Mrs Dunne has highlighted, there has been a revision of the date. Those earlier answers I gave were based on the advice given to me by ACT Health at the time. As both the current Minister for Health and the previous minister for health have outlined, there has been substantial work done on the design of that facility, including engagement with clinicians. Particularly in the mental health space, that has resulted in ongoing discussions about the best way to design that facility and also what the right model of care is.

Personally, I think that has been a good process. That additional discussion has ensured that we are getting a facility that will meet the needs of our prospective patients. In terms of Mrs Dunne's very specific question, given her penchant for wanting to come back and quote these things later, I will get an exact answer and provide it to her on notice.

MRS DUNNE: Minister, when you are supplying the answer, or before that, can you explain to the Assembly how, given the Greens' so-called commitment to mental health and given your pivotal role in keeping this government in power, you have allowed this high priority facility to languish in the way that it has?

MADAM SPEAKER: Mr Rattenbury.

Mr Hanson interjecting—

MADAM SPEAKER: Mr Hanson, there are no interjections. Enough.

MR RATTENBURY: I reject the premise of Mrs Dunne's question. In my previous answer, I outlined some of the considerable work that has been going on around that project and the professional engagement that has been happening in order to get the right design. I have followed this issue very closely.

Mrs Dunne's premise also suggests that we have been standing still on a range of other matters. She would well know from budget papers and the various comments I have made in this place that we have continued to move forward on a range of other projects as well that are highly beneficial for young people. For example, our outreach service, according to the clinical advice to me, is a really effective way of helping young people in mental health crisis. For some young people, that can be even more effective than spending time in an inpatient facility.

We are not standing still. We are continuing to develop services; we are continuing to increase resourcing for these services; and we continue to do the work to ensure that we deliver an adolescent mental health unit in the ACT.

MRS JONES: Minister, how many beds will be in the dedicated child and adolescent mental health unit, and what will you do to ensure that it does not have the same capacity issues that the adult mental health unit has recently had?

MR RATTENBURY: Those numbers will be based on the best modelling available

to the ACT government.

Chief Health Officer—recruitment

MRS JONES: My question is to the Minister for Health. Minister, in January 2019 the ACT's then Chief Health Officer announced his resignation, effective March 2019. On 10 August 2019 it was reported in the media that a national search had begun for a replacement. Minister, why has it taken eight months to begin the search for a replacement?

MS STEPHEN-SMITH: I will take the question on notice in terms of the detail, noting that it is a matter for the directorate to undertake staffing. But there is a perfectly competent Acting Chief Health Officer in place and she is doing a fantastic job.

MRS JONES: Minister, what implications for healthcare outcomes for Canberrans are presented by the lack of a permanent chief health officer since March?

MS STEPHEN-SMITH: I thank Mrs Jones for the supplementary. As I noted, there is an Acting Chief Health Officer in place who is doing a great job, and there are no implications for the community. We will of course work as quickly as possible now to recruit a permanent chief health officer but the current Acting Chief Health officer is doing a great job.

MS CHEYNE: Minister, have we been without an acting or a chief health officer during the past 10 months?

MS STEPHEN-SMITH: Not to my knowledge, Ms Cheyne.

Tuggeranong—public transport

MS LAWDER: My question is to the minister for transport: in a recent ABC radio interview you admitted that patronage in Tuggeranong has fallen since the introduction of network 19. When will your government be giving residents in Tuggeranong the public transport they deserve?

MR STEEL: I thank Ms Lawder for her question. That data is freely available and was provided to the estimates committee. It is something that we continue to monitor as the system rolls out. Obviously we are in the early days of the new public transport system and we have seen overall a very significant increase in the number of people using public transport. Journeys are up by 10.5 per cent over the first 10 weeks of the new network compared with the same period in 2018. Overall there is a significant strength. In relation to the regions—

Ms Lawder: A point of order, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: Minister, resume your seat, please; there is a point of order.

Ms Lawder: The question was very specific about patronage in Tuggeranong falling since the introduction of network 19. Not generally across the system: in

Tuggeranong.

MADAM SPEAKER: Yes, Ms Lawder. I will ask the minister to come to that point, if he has more comments to add.

MR STEEL: We continue to monitor the new transport system and how people are using it throughout all parts of Canberra, including in Tuggeranong. We are looking at whether some tweaks need to be made in certain areas. We have already made a substantial number of tweaks, particularly working with local schools, and we will continue to monitor the outcome of the new network.

With any new network change of this size we would usually expect to see a drop overall in the number of people taking journeys on public transport. In fact, we have seen the opposite.

MS LAWDER: Minister, why has the rapid 5 bus, that is supposed to go from the city to Tuggeranong, been known to cease its service at Woden instead of continuing further south?

MR STEEL: I think Ms Lawder is referring to the rapid 4 service, which used to be known as the blue rapid. I have provided answers to the Assembly in relation to that on notice.

MR PARTON: Minister, will you bring back Xpresso services; or will they be more long black perhaps?

MR STEEL: I thank Mr Parton for his question. The answer is that we are not currently planning on doing that. Some peak buses were provided under the new network, particularly down in Tuggeranong, and those services continue to operate.

Hospitals—University of Canberra

MS CHEYNE: My question is to the Minister for Health. Minister, how has the University of Canberra Hospital performed since its opening one year ago?

MS STEPHEN-SMITH: I thank Ms Cheyne for the question and for her interest in the University of Canberra Hospital. Since the commencement of outpatient services on 10 July 2018, a number of services were successfully relocated to the University of Canberra Hospital, including rehabilitation, aged and community services, mental health services, in-patient services, rehabilitation medicine clinics and hydrotherapy services. The aged care assessment team, ACAT, was the final service to relocate to UCH, on Monday, 30 July 2018.

On 17 July 2019 I was pleased to attend UCH's first birthday celebrations where I highlighted some of the key milestones of the preceding 12 months, including more than 2,000 patients seen at UCH; more than 10,000 visits to UCH clinics, including 4,400 in multidisciplinary therapy clinics and 2,475 in hydrotherapy; more than 65,000 in-patient meals served which, according to one of the patients I spoke with during the birthday celebrations, are of great quality; and around 44,000-kilowatt hours of solar energy captured and reused at UCH to reduce energy imported from

utility providers since the solar panels were commissioned in December 2018.

We have also achieved significant milestones in respect of our collaboration with the University of Canberra. The first University of Canberra students commenced clinical placements in UCH wards in August 2018, providing students with direct exposure to real-world clinical practices aiming to deliver more skills and more knowledgeable health professionals into the future. The UC faculty of health has a space at UCH where members of the faculty focus on building allied health research capacity across ACT Health.

I also had the opportunity to talk with several of the more than 300 staff and their patients at UCH's first birthday and was pleased to hear from them how positive their experience has been, despite the sometimes trying circumstances that patients find themselves in.

MS CHEYNE: Minister, what services and facilities does UCH offer to patients?

MS STEPHEN-SMITH: I thank Ms Cheyne for the supplementary question. The University of Canberra Hospital is a purpose-built specialist centre for rehabilitation, research and recovery, providing subacute rehabilitation care and support for adults who are experiencing mental illness or recovering from surgery, illness or injury.

At capacity, UCH provides 140 overnight rehabilitation beds, including 20 adult mental health rehabilitation beds managed by mental health, justice health and alcohol and drug services. In addition to the inpatient beds, the hospital offers, as I mentioned, day places consisting of a mix of adult mental health and rehabilitation day places. People using the day service will be admitted to the hospital to attend for full or half-day rehabilitation programs throughout the week, enabling them to stay in their homes during their rehabilitation.

Ambulatory and non-admitted rehabilitation services are also provided from this facility. Specialist programs undertaken at UCH include rehabilitation medicine outpatient clinics, a falls assessment and prevention service, hydrotherapy, a driver assessment and rehabilitation service, a vestibular rehabilitation service, a focal spasticity clinic, a speech and occupational therapy assistive technology clinic and the vocational assessment and rehabilitation service.

The mental health day program provides a range of group programs, including dialectical behaviour therapy, mood management, anxiety management, depression management, and a recovering from psychosis and mindfulness skills-based program.

It is also important to note that, given that UCH is a rehabilitation facility, of course, it does not have an emergency department and it does not perform surgical operations. The closest emergency department is at Calvary Public Hospital or the Canberra Hospital.

MS CODY: Minister, how does having a dedicated public rehabilitation hospital fit into the government's territory-wide health services strategy?

MS STEPHEN-SMITH: I thank Ms Cody for the supplementary question and for

her interest in the government's territory-wide health services strategy. As I have said, UCH is Canberra's first dedicated rehabilitation facility. Its establishment saw the consolidation of public rehabilitation, subacute and mental health rehabilitation services into one facility, creating a territory-wide centre for subacute rehabilitation care and planning for subacute rehabilitation needs.

Moving patients out of an acute hospital setting into a purpose-built environment promotes recovery and encourages independence and autonomy. In providing services on a territory-wide basis, it is important that UCH services operate with strong networks and an integrated approach with referring services at Canberra Hospital, Calvary Public Hospital Bruce and any other referring hospitals and community facilities.

UCH also provides many clinical placement opportunities for both qualified health professionals and students across multiple disciplines, including medicine, nursing and allied health. The hospital supports innovative teaching and training of future health professionals through its collaboration with the University of Canberra and the collocation of the clinical education and research centre. As I mentioned earlier, the University of Canberra Hospital is developing as a centre for research, with several projects underway, including investigating the impact of the rehabilitation environment on patient and staff activity and a collaboration with UC examining patient and staff experiences within the rehabilitation facilities.

With a broad range of high quality services for physical and mental health rehabilitation and opportunities to collaborate with our educational partners, UCH offers a perfect opportunity for research and innovation to improve health outcomes for the Canberra community now and into the future.

Planning—Scullin

MRS KIKKERT: My question is to the Minister for Planning and Land Management. It follows a letter the opposition sent to him on 9 July 2019 about the government's intentions for a development in Frewin Place in Scullin. Minister, why has the government failed to consult with local residents about the future use of Frewin Place in Scullin?

MR GENTLEMAN: I will have to take the detail of that question on notice. I cannot recall the correspondence. So will take it on notice and come back with an answer.

MRS KIKKERT: Minister, what is the consultation process for developments such as what is intended for Frewin Place in Scullin?

MR GENTLEMAN: I understand that it is an urban renewal site, so there will be consultation around any development application as per the normal process.

MRS DUNNE: Minister, why are you and your agency treating the residents near Frewin Place in Scullin with disdain by basically telling them that they have no role in the consultation process?

MR GENTLEMAN: That is not the case at all.

Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders—health funding

MR MILLIGAN: My question is to the Minister for Health. The 2019-20 budget shows a decrease in funding allocated to build the much-needed upgrades to the Winnunga Nimmityjah Aboriginal Health and Community Service facility in Narrabundah. Minister, why has this funding commitment been reduced?

MS STEPHEN-SMITH: I thank Mr Milligan for the question, but it has not. Some money has been moved from one year to another in accordance with the agreement with Winnunga Nimmityjah Aboriginal Health and Community Service around their building schedule for this project. My recollection is that money has been brought forward to provide money earlier to enable Winnunga to get on with the project, which I understand is currently in the development application stage.

MR MILLIGAN: Minister, what is the total allocation in this budget for expenditure on the much-needed building for Winnunga?

MS STEPHEN-SMITH: I would note that this funding was not allocated in this budget originally and it was a \$12 million project.

MR WALL: Minister, what consultation occurred with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community before the funding profile changed for the Winnunga expansion?

MS STEPHEN-SMITH: I thank Mr Wall for the question. This is entirely driven by Winnunga Nimmityjah's own building schedule for this project and the agreement that is with them. This is a very interesting—

Opposition members interjecting—

MS STEPHEN-SMITH: I do not know if Winnunga was consulted about the question that was being asked, because my recollection is that it is a bring-forward of funding. It relates to the fact that we are entering into an engagement with Winnunga where we are giving them the funding to manage the building of this building. It will be owned by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community, by Winnunga. The project is led by them; it is owned by them; and it will be an incredible Aboriginal community-controlled health facility that is entirely owned by the Aboriginal community.

I will be very interested if there is a background to the question that Mr Milligan would like to share with me later, if some concerns have been raised with him. My understanding is that this is entirely in relation to the funding agreement that is with Winnunga; it is about the milestones that have been set in collaboration with Winnunga; and they are leading and controlling this project. As I said, it is currently in the development application stage. I really look forward to, hopefully, that application being approved soon and the sod-turning for the project.

Molonglo Valley—community spaces

MS CODY: My question is to the Minister for Planning and Land Management. What outdoor spaces is the ACT government providing for residents of the Molonglo Valley?

MR GENTLEMAN: I thank Ms Cody for her interest in that electorate area. The Molonglo River Reserve is one of our newest nature reserves in the member's electorate. It stretches from downstream of Scrivener Dam to the Murrumbidgee River Corridor reserve. This new reserve will be a unique addition and extension to the nature parks of Canberra as well as being part of the everyday lives of residents of the Molonglo Valley.

The reserve contains some of Canberra's best river landscapes and is home to many native plants and animals, including the threatened pink-tailed worm-lizard, the superb parrot and natural temperate grassland and box-gum grassy woodland habitat. The Aboriginal cultural landscape, the river and the gorges and the rich biodiversity provide a variety of conservation, research, recreational and educational experiences for all.

In its eastern section the reserve is bounded by the new Molonglo Valley urban area. Because of this, careful planning has been undertaken to protect the natural and cultural values while also providing opportunities for the local community and visitors to enjoy and learn from the natural and cultural landscape.

This new reserve shows this government's commitment to protecting and enhancing the bush capital. We recognise the important role our parks and reserves play in improving Canberrans' lives. Many Canberrans live not far away from them. We can protect our natural environment because of good economic management guided by our belief in the importance of public services.

MS CODY: Minister, what will this new reserve be like?

MR GENTLEMAN: Residents in Ms Cody's electorate will be able to access the reserve via a network of trails for walkers, cyclists and horse riders. This network will use existing management trails as well as some purpose-built trails. Links to nearby major attractions, including the National Arboretum, the National Zoo and Aquarium and Stromlo Forest Park, will be part of the network.

Designed to avoid areas of high ecological or cultural sensitivity, the trails will guide people to key vantage points and provide access to areas where the natural and cultural landscape can be appreciated. There will be lookouts and picnic shelters to maximise the experiences available at the reserve.

Site-specific signage about the unique natural and cultural values will enhance the experience and will educate the community on the significance of this beautiful landscape. Already two unique walking trails have been completed in the reserve near Coombs. The box-gum walk takes visitors on a return walk from Coombs through a special area of box-gum woodland, and tells the story of the woodland habitat and the crucial role of remnant trees. I believe the trail is well used by Coombs locals. On the opposite side of the river a trail takes walkers on the peninsula below Barrer Hill, where a series of Ngunnawal artworks display local plants and animals with

Ngunnawal words.

MR GUPTA: Minister, how are members of the community being included in the design of these community spaces?

MR GENTLEMAN: I thank Mr Gupta for his question. There will be two nature parks in the reserve, one at each end of the urban section. These areas will be focus points for higher level use by the community while not comprising the ecological and cultural values. Community consultation is now underway on the first of these parks.

Located adjacent to Whitlam and Denman Prospect, this park provides sweeping views over the river corridor and broader Molonglo Valley. It will offer walking trails, river access, fishing, picnics and nature play. It will also see significant native restoration of this presently degraded site.

The second nature park is located adjacent to the east of the third stage of Molonglo and implementation will start when the urban development reaches this area. During the development of the reserve management plan, the community were consulted, including recreational user groups and conservation groups. The design of experiences in the reserve will encourage the community to learn and understand this special environment, to enjoy it and use it respectfully.

Madam Speaker, it is my hope, and the vision of the new reserve, that it will become the treasured natural and cultural front yard for new residents in Molonglo. We have been able to deliver this reserve because of our belief in protecting the environment and providing community services. You cannot do this if you are copying Tony Abbott. That means cuts to services and favours to their Liberal mates.

Opposition members interjecting—

MADAM SPEAKER: Members, I have got it—

Opposition members interjecting—

MADAM SPEAKER: I have got it, thank you. Mr Gentleman, we had this—

Opposition members interjecting—

MADAM SPEAKER: Members, please! If there was quiet, I would be able to get to Mr Gentleman and remind him of the conversation we had yesterday, but the rabble noise—

Ms Lawder interjecting—

MADAM SPEAKER: There is no pointing. Ms Lawder, if your side was quiet and behaved, he would have been brought to order.

Mr Hanson interjecting—

MADAM SPEAKER: You are warned, Mr Hanson. Mr Gentleman, when you are

referring to people, do so by their proper title. We had this little exchange yesterday. In future, Mr Tony Abbott, thank you.

Asbestos—government information

MR PARTON: My question is to the Minister for Employment and Workplace Safety. In an answer to Select Committee on Estimates 2019-20 question taken on notice 375 you advised that no non-disclosure agreements were signed by owners of Mr Fluffy homes; however, an article in the *Canberra Times* on 19 July 2017 reported that at least one owner was asked to sign a non-disclosure agreement. Minister, did you mislead the Assembly in your answer to that question?

MS STEPHEN-SMITH: I thank Mr Parton for the question. I certainly did not intentionally mislead. I will double-check the information that was provided, the date of that response to the question on notice, the date of the information in the *Canberra Times* and whether that information in the *Canberra Times* is in fact accurate. If I do need to correct the record, I will of course come back to the Assembly and do so.

MR PARTON: Minister, how can Canberrans have confidence and trust in your leadership or this government when you are potentially providing inaccurate information as part of official Assembly processes, and how many non-disclosure agreements were signed?

MS STEPHEN-SMITH: I have already indicated to Mr Parton that I will go and check both the information that I was provided and also the information that has been provided by the *Canberra Times* and whether that information is accurate. Of course, in relation to matter like this, ministers rely on the information that is provided to them by their directorates, and the accuracy of that information. I will have to go back to the directorate and check that that information was accurate at the time that I signed that response to the question on notice and check again the advice that is in the *Canberra Times*.

MR WALL: Minister, was it standard practice for non-disclosure agreements to be signed with the owners of Mr Fluffy properties, and what was the reason for such agreements being entered into?

MS STEPHEN-SMITH: I thank Mr Wall for the supplementary. Given that my response to a question on notice was that no non-disclosure agreements had been signed, it is clearly not standard practice.

Multicultural affairs—support program

MR GUPTA: My question is to the Minister for Multicultural Affairs. Minister, can you please update the Assembly on the progress of the integrated welcome to Canberra support service announced in June?

MR STEEL: I thank Mr Gupta for his question. Earlier this year the government announced a suite of new services to support recently arrived migrants, refugees and asylum seekers moving to Canberra, called the integrated welcome to Canberra support service. These new support services align with the ACT government's vision

for an accessible, inclusive and cohesive Canberra and will meet one of the priority actions from the ACT multicultural summit held late last year. They form part of the actions under our ACT multicultural framework second action plan that I tabled in the Assembly in May.

They will complement and enhance existing ACT government and ACT community settlement programs and are intended to ensure that services meet the current and evolving needs of people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds arriving in and making Canberra their home. Tenders to deliver this service closed a few weeks ago, and I look forward to the successful tenderer being announced very soon. It is expected that delivery of the program will commence by the end of October this year.

I am excited to know that this new service is so close to commencing. As I am sure members can appreciate, it is practical support like this that can turn around what has the potential to be quite an overwhelming time for newly arrived Canberrans. We want to make sure that their experience in getting access to services is seamless and supportive. This new service will enhance Canberra as a welcoming and inclusive city where everyone feels a sense of belonging.

MR GUPTA: Minister, under this initiative, how will new Canberrans be able to access information about our city and the services available to them?

MR STEEL: I thank Mr Gupta for his supplementary. The integrated welcome to Canberra support service is designed to deliver three key services to help newly arrived Canberrans feel at home in our great city.

A welcome to Canberra pack will be developed that will contain key settlement information about the range of services available across the territory and how to access them, to assist new Canberrans to feel welcome and to positively establish a life in our city. The information provided in the pack will be delivered in both digital and hardcopy formats and include direct links and contacts to get new Canberrans in touch with the people and services that can help them.

The second service in the suite will be a welcoming navigator support service to provide ongoing assistance and advocacy tailored to an individual's needs. The navigator will help recently arrived migrants and refugees to find housing and rental support; access health services and trauma counselling; gain employment and navigate the ACT's legal system; and connect with other services, including commonwealth government services like Centrelink, My Aged Care and the NDIS.

Finally, a biannual welcome to Canberra forum will be held to enable new Canberrans to connect and link with other community members, services and organisations.

MRS JONES: Minister, as part of the integrated support service which languages precisely will be available, both the translation information and available interpreters?

MR STEEL: We have gone out to the community to ask them to tender for this program. We will be looking to hear from those organisations that work regularly with people newly arrived in Canberra.

Mrs Jones: Point of order.

MR STEEL: They will be targeting their services at languages of those particular cohorts.

MADAM SPEAKER: Minister, resume your seat; there is a point of order.

Mrs Jones: As to relevance, Madam Speaker, the question was precisely which languages. The same non-answer was given in estimates and—

MADAM SPEAKER: Mrs Jones, I am not reflecting on what was said in estimates, but—

Mrs Jones: No, fair enough. But the point I am making is that the question about precisely which languages cannot be answered by saying a range of community groups will be consulted. Which languages?

MADAM SPEAKER: Mrs Jones, resume your seat. I think that goes to answering the question. Minister.

MR STEEL: The distrust of the Canberra Liberals of the community organisations that will be tendering for the service is extraordinary.

Opposition members interjecting—

MR STEEL: These are organisation that have been working with newly arrived migrants and refugees for decades in our city. They understand well the needs of these services. When they tender for those services they will be able to target the work—

Opposition members interjecting—

MADAM SPEAKER: Resume your seat, minister.

Mrs Jones: A point of order, Madam Speaker, the minister still has not been relevant to the question of which languages will be provided by the service.

MADAM SPEAKER: Mrs Jones, you have raised that as a point of order; I have said the answer—

Mrs Jones: But it still has not been addressed. He now has 35 seconds to go.

MADAM SPEAKER: Mrs Jones, resume your seat. The minister is referring to me. He is covering your answer because he is talking about his dialogue with the community to resolve what languages will be offered and how they will be provided.

MR STEEL: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Of course these organisations will come forward—

Mrs Dunne: A point of order, Madam Speaker, I seek your guidance. I may have

misheard, but I think that Minister Steel said the members of the opposition were untrustworthy. If that is the case—

MADAM SPEAKER: I did not hear that, Mrs Dunne.

Mrs Dunne: I am not sure I heard all the words accurately and I am open to being corrected, but if the minister said that the members of the opposition were untrustworthy I ask him to withdraw because it is unparliamentary.

MADAM SPEAKER: I did not hear it. I am happy to look at *Hansard*, but there was a lot of noise. Minister, do you have light to shed on that?

MR STEEL: If I suggested it I withdraw it, Madam Speaker. We—

Mrs Jones: Your time's up.

MR STEEL: These are—

Mrs Jones: Time's up.

MADAM SPEAKER: Minister, your time has expired.

MR STEEL: Well, if you do not want to hear the answer that is fine. (*Time expired.*)

Municipal services—Fyshwick

MR WALL: My question is to the Minister for Transport and City Services. Minister, a number of commercial property owners in Fyshwick have raised concerns with me about the lack of maintenance of footpaths, driveways and car parks located on territory-owned land adjacent to their properties. Potholes and cracked footpaths, amongst other issues, pose safety hazards not only to customers but also to staff who work at these premises. Minister, on average, businesses in Fyshwick contribute \$23,800 or more each financial year in commercial rates. Given the excessive commercial rates charged by your government to property owners in Fyshwick, why are basic maintenance and repairs on territory land in the area and adjacent to these premises not being undertaken?

MR STEEL: I thank Mr Wall for his question. I am very happy to hear about the specific issues that are arising in Fyshwick. If he wants to write to me, he can, or the businesses themselves can get in touch with me directly. I am happy to look at those issues. The government continues to work to maintain the substantial 3,000-kilometre and more roads and footpaths across the ACT. If there are issues that come to light I am happy to look at addressing those.

MR WALL: Minister, why is it incumbent upon leaseholders to raise concerns with the opposition and then put pressure on you as the minister in order to get things addressed?

MR STEEL: Every road is different. Some roads receive more stress than others. Some have more water on them than others or have more sunlight than others and

may deteriorate at a faster rate. But overall we aim to achieve the five per cent target for road resurfacing throughout the year. It is something that we work on. It is a good standard and we have done that.

I want to address the fact that it has been raised by the opposition. They claimed that our government had cut the road resurfacing program. That was a misreading of the figures. In fact what we have done is invest more in road maintenance—

Mr Coe: When have you reached five per cent? Tell me when you have reached five per cent.

MADAM SPEAKER: Mr Coe, enough.

MR STEEL: and we are making a very significant effort to make sure that we have roads that are in good condition for road users. But if there are specific roads that need to be brought to our attention then please bring them to my attention in detail.

MS LAWDER: Minister, why are commercial ratepayers being forced to remediate basic infrastructure issues on territory land because of a lack of action on your part?

MR STEEL: I thank the member for her question. I am very happy to look at what we can do to improve those roads. You just raised it with me now. You have not provided the detail. I am happy to receive that detail, whether it is from you or from the businesses.

Clubs—government support

MS ORR: My question is to the Attorney-General. Minister, what new support is the government providing to help our local clubs stay strong and community focused?

MR RAMSAY: I thank Ms Orr for the question. Throughout this term, the government has been absolutely committed to supporting our local clubs. We have lived up to that commitment through fresh policy approaches and substantial financial incentives. We are supporting our local clubs to remain sustainable, diverse and community focused.

We know that clubs offer important cultural, sporting and recreational opportunities for Canberrans. They are not just places to gamble, and they are not just hospitality businesses with concessions. Our clubs are here to serve their members, their workers and their communities.

This year, we delivered a new regulatory model for community contributions. This means that clubs and the organisations they support will have more transparent rules for ensuring that gaming machine revenue gets to the charities and the community groups that need it most. We have worked closely with clubs to achieve that reform. Many of our clubs already recognise that reliance on poker machine revenue is not sustainable and welcome the government's support to diversify their business models.

In order to support our clubs, we delivered a 50 per cent gaming tax rebate for small and medium clubs, alongside a \$10,000 grant program earlier this term. This year we

are doing even more. As in previous efforts, small and medium clubs are our focus. They will have priority in accessing the government's new diversification support fund, which will pay for advice and for assistance that the clubs are looking for to develop new business models. We have also established a small clubs liaison service inside Access Canberra, which is there to ensure that they have all of the information that they need and direct access to support.

This government is committed to supporting our local clubs. We will stay hard at work on delivering that commitment.

MS ORR: Minister, can you tell the Assembly more about how the small clubs liaison officer service will support clubs?

MR RAMSAY: I thank Ms Orr for the supplementary question. This new small clubs liaison officer service was an election commitment. It was promised in ACT Labor's supporting local community clubs policy. Two other key supports promised in that policy—a \$10,000 grant and a 50 per cent tax rebate for every small and medium club—have been in place since 2017. The small clubs liaison will operate on the principle of no wrong door. That means that there will be a single point of contact for information or advice.

This new initiative provides a single point of contact for small or medium-sized clubs. Small and medium clubs can use the service to access information or advice regarding diversification, regulatory, legislative and administrative issues. If the liaison officer cannot answer a question immediately or provide that advice in the first instance, they will source the information or they will provide a point of contact for a subject matter expert.

Smaller clubs face unique challenges in the evolving business and regulatory environment. The support that this provides will help them to take the best advantage of emerging business opportunities. It will also make it even easier to engage with the ACT government. All of this support will help those clubs focus on their members and on the community organisations that they support. This government will keep working with them to make sure that they keep providing cultural, sporting and recreational services to their members and to their neighbours.

MR PETTERSSON: Minister, how will the community contributions reforms that you mentioned helped to deliver more support for sport, recreation and cultural events?

MR RAMSAY: I thank Mr Pettersson for the supplementary question. Throughout this process of reform the government has put community benefits first and foremost. Our community contributions scheme is a central part of that policy. Community contributions reflect the obligations of those who have the privilege of operating gaming machines to give back directly to their communities. They are required to do this in ways that go beyond using revenue from gaming machines to serve their own members.

This government knows that many community groups have formed relationships with clubs that are supportive, and we want the community contributions scheme to keep

on working for those groups. We also want it to reach even more people who are in need of support.

That is why we engage clearly and strongly with clubs and with community groups to reform the scheme. It is now more transparent, it gives clearer guidance to clubs and, most importantly, it supports them to give even more support to those who need it most. As a whole, our policy approach to gaming shows that we are committed to ensuring the maximum possible benefits for those who need the help most.

We will keep working collaboratively with clubs and with the community to deliver on our promises and to do it in a way that promotes a sustainable, diverse and even more community-focused club sector.

Mr Barr: Madam Speaker, I will not invoke the Parton rule, but I will ask that all further questions be placed on the notice paper.