



QUESTION TIME
OF THE
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
FOR THE
AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

HANSARD

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Questions without notice
Government—heritage policy

MR COE: I very much encourage an answer to my questions! My question is to the Minister for Environment and Heritage. What additional work or what tasks will the additional staff member in the heritage team be undertaking?

MR GENTLEMAN: I thank Mr Coe for his question. It is an important one with the city moving to an improved and increased population across the ACT. These staff will be able to assist the heritage team in looking at decisions on DAs and nominations into the future. I am very pleased to be able to support EPSDD in doing that particular work.

MR COE: Minister, will the additional staff member or additional staff resources in the heritage unit be working to address a backlog in nominations to the heritage register?

MR GENTLEMAN: Mr Coe touches on a very important point and that is that the staff in EPSDD, whether they be in the development application process team or indeed work in assisting heritage nomination decisions, work as a whole team. This government has resourced EPSDD with extra staff to work through the DA process but also through the heritage applications. So I am very pleased to be able to see that work proceed. Of course the council has looked at more nominations most recently and has reduced the list of heritage nominations for decision.

MS LAWDER: Minister, why then did your answer to question on notice E-19508 say that the funding for a full-time equivalent would “not relate to nominations of a place or object to the ACT Heritage Register”?

MR GENTLEMAN: As I said, they work as a whole team, whether they are working particularly on nominations or working on decisions for DA that need heritage aspects looked at. The extra staff that we have provided for the directorate will help to assist the whole team in dealing with that work.

Domestic and family violence—family safety levy

MS LE COUTEUR: My question is to the Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence and relates to a response that Minister Stephen-Smith provided to questions in question time yesterday, when she indicated that funding for legal aid’s provision of family violence support would come from a different bucket of money. Minister, can you advise us exactly which bucket of money that funding will come from?

MS BERRY: The whole purpose of the family safety levy is to provide funding for innovation, to trial new ways to address this complex and complicated issue of domestic and family violence. Through the review work that has been happening around the implementation of the domestic and family violence levy, a change to the way that legal aid was funded was decided—

Ms Le Couteur: A point of order.

MADAM SPEAKER: Resume your seat, minister.

Ms Le Couteur: I am not asking what the family safety levy is for. We have been through that at length. I am asking: where is this bucket of money?

MADAM SPEAKER: Minister, to that point of the question.

MS BERRY: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Yes, we have been through the domestic and family violence levy at length, and it is important to note that that was where the funding for legal aid was originally sourced from. The decision has been made that that will not be the funding source for legal aid in the future, and the government will make a decision on that in due course.

MS LE COUTEUR: I note that my original question was not answered. I note the prioritisation of innovative projects to be funded by the family safety levy, but can you advise us what will happen if one of these innovative programs has been evaluated and found to be effective? Does that mean it will then be regarded as no longer innovative so it will not be funded by the levy?

MS BERRY: The funding that is decided on—where the levy goes towards innovation—is done in co-design with the domestic and family violence sector on working out different ways to challenge new ideas to address this situation. Some of those new ideas, such as the justice health partnership which is currently occurring in health settings and community and family centres to provide access to legal support and legal advice in a safe place for women and children, are a way that we can pilot how that works within our own health settings, within our child and family centres, and then ask what are the future options around making sure that that service can continue. That is the whole purpose of the levy. I look forward to continuing to work with the sector in challenging ways to bring innovation in addressing these important issues.

MR COE: Is the balance of the fund quarantined somewhere or has it simply gone into consolidated revenue?

MS BERRY: The family safety levy has its own line item. It is shown separately in the budget papers. It is very clear, open and transparent for everyone to see where the funding is going. The funding will be provided, as I said, for innovation in addressing domestic and family violence.

Education—future strategy

MR PETERSSON: My question is to the Minister for Education and Early Childhood Development. Minister, why does the future of education first implementation plan have such a strong focus on teachers?

MS BERRY: As the Assembly has already discussed today, there is no doubt about the significance of teachers in student learning outcomes. Because of this the quality of ACT teaching is a key to the effective implementation of the reforms arising from

the future of education strategy. The future of education first implementation plan provides a systematic induction program for new teachers that ensures that consolidated planned, professional supports are in place the moment that they arrive in the classroom.

By ensuring that new teachers get the best start to their careers, students will benefit from improved teacher practice. Teachers will feel supported in their practice and wellbeing, and schools will increase the impact of their teachers and their leadership teams. Support for new teachers will also lead into universal professional learning and support strategies that unfold over all career stages and are replicated across numerous school sites.

The ACT government is investing in strategies to support continual professional learning, which will lead to greater student learning outcomes. This work will include deepened pedagogical and curriculum expertise, cohesive and systemic professional learning and an increase in coaching, mentoring and instructional leadership opportunities for teachers and school leaders. The ACT government recognises and values school leaders as education specialists.

The implementation plan will also strengthen school leadership capabilities across the education system, and it will do this through work to develop, attract and retain high quality school leaders, strengthen collaborative relationships to effectively meet student needs and ensure that school leader wellbeing underpins high quality educational leadership in every school.

MR PETTERSSON: Minister, what are the practical strategies that will support teachers to deliver a high quality education?

MS BERRY: The implementation plan includes three priorities that support teachers. The first priority is a best start in a career of learning. Under this priority, the government will build on an affiliated schools program with the University of Canberra, including joint research, school-based pre-service teacher clinics, and a comprehensive mentoring training program.

Thirty masters of education scholarships will be provided each year to teachers from early childhood, primary school, high school, college and education support office, as well as specialist settings. Coordinated professional experience places will also be delivered to enhance placements and make sure they are matched to the developmental needs of the pre-service teachers, something that the passage of the TQI bill this morning will support.

The second priority is thriving in a career of learning. Under this priority, the government will increase the number of highly accomplished and lead certified teachers alongside other initiatives to strengthen school leadership and create the culture, structures and conditions needed for positive student outcomes. The government will also develop a whole-of-jurisdiction workforce plan to make sure that there are specialist teachers, including language teachers, available to schools.

The third priority is supporting leaders in a career of learning. Under this priority, the ACT government will introduce a revised principal career structure and ensure that

both newly appointed and experienced principals have access to many development opportunities. The principal health and wellbeing plan will be implemented to ensure that principals can meet the complexities that they face every day.

School leaders will also be supported to respond to complex student needs by scoping a complex student needs team, supporting learning, supporting assistance to complete a certificate four in education support and provide legal assistance for students experiencing vulnerability.

MS ORR: Minister, what other strategies in the implementation plan will have a direct impact on student outcomes?

MS BERRY: The implementation plan provides a cohesive set of actions that seek to ensure that all students, regardless of background or vulnerability, feel welcome, respected, supported and valued in their school community, and that the right things are in place to address individual student needs. Through this plan the ACT government is building upon targeted efforts to address enduring barriers to inclusive education, such as the positive behaviours for learning framework, student resource allocation and digital solutions.

The plan also focuses on ensuring that schools are safe and inclusive through collaboration between schools, students, families and the community sector, as well as other government agencies. Inclusive learning environments are also focused on through contemporary infrastructure and personalised learning programs, reflecting the expectations of the ACT community.

The ACT government recognises students as individuals with their own path, based on their developing interests, knowledge and skills. This plan supports teachers to ensure that all students are appropriately engaged, challenged and extended by designing classroom activities to meet students' individual learning needs. The plan includes strategies to involve students as decision-makers in their learning. A student voice will allow students to have a say about how things are done and pathways that are most suited to their goals.

The plan also includes strategies to focus the education system on what matters most in achieving student outcomes. This includes aligning legislation, resources, organisational structures, public accountability and reporting and teaching tools, along with data and IT, with the aim of pursuing educational equity. The full implementation plan can be accessed on the Education Directorate website.

Government—heritage policy

MS LAWDER: My question is to the Minister for the Environment and Heritage. Minister, nearly half of all nominations of places or objects to the heritage register have waited decades to be assessed. This morning's *Canberra Times* reported that the president of the Canberra & District Historical Society said that this backlog "implies the government has put a very low priority on heritage". Minister, why has this government put such a very low priority on heritage?

MR GENTLEMAN: I thank Ms Lawder for the question. It is not the case at all. In

fact, we have invested in more staff for EPSDD in each of our budgets over the past couple of years. I remind the Assembly that the Canberra Liberals have voted against those resources.

The work that the Heritage Council do is very important. They do that work in best practice to prioritise heritage nominations for assessments based on a range of factors, including imminent threat, thematic representation and pressures from development or other works. When we talk about those numbers, since reaching a peak of 320 nominations in 2008, 232 decisions have been made, resulting in a current nomination list of 88. We are now seeing only 10 or fewer nominations each year.

I do not think it will be too long before we get to the end of the list. If we look at the period for this year, 2018-19, there were six nominations accepted, and three of those were dismissed. The trend is coming down on nominations. That is because Canberra is still a young city. People have identified earlier heritage aspects of the city. Those were nominated in the early days. The other thing to think about is that as these nominations come forward, on a number of occasions there will be a nomination perhaps for an object or a building and a secondary nomination for a part of that object or building. Some of these nominations are to do with the one structure, for example. The Heritage Council need to go through and have a look at all of those.

The extra resources that we are providing will assist EPSDD in providing the resources to the Heritage Council to make the nominations and decisions.

MS LAWDER: Minister, how will providing additional resources for planning and development proposals as per your answer to question on notice E-19508 assist with clearing the backlog of nominations to the ACT heritage register?

MR GENTLEMAN: As I said in answer to the previous question, EPSDD work as a whole team. Whilst they have dedicated officers in certain areas, the extra relief that we are providing in resources and staffing means that that frees up other resources in the directorate to help out in heritage work.

MISS C BURCH: Minister, how can Canberrans trust you to manage the ACT heritage portfolio given the low priority that you have given to it thus far?

MR GENTLEMAN: I do not accept the premise in that question. In fact it is this side of the chamber that is providing resources for the Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate and heritage. The other side of the chamber voted against the budget.

Waste—recycling

MS ORR: My question is to the minister for city services. Minister, can you outline what steps the ACT government is taking to encourage more Canberrans to recycle?

MR STEEL: I thank Ms Orr for her question and for her passion and advocacy for waste reduction. Canberrans are excellent recyclers and, for the most part, do the right thing. Our government is committed to encouraging greater waste diversion and better re-use and recycling of materials that would otherwise go into landfill.

We now have 70,000 households that have taken up a green bin, with very low contamination rates. We have funded the next step to develop a food waste avoidance campaign and plan for a food organics collection service in the coming years. Our container deposit scheme continues to perform well, with over 31 million containers now collected under the scheme thus far.

In order to expand our excellent recycling record, I was very pleased to launch the recycle right campaign, alongside the Canberra Region Joint Organisation and mayors from neighbouring local governments, helping to reduce contamination in our recycling stream so that those products can then go on to be manufactured into other high-grade products, with some very clear and simple messages.

Canberra is a hub for the whole region, and greater cooperation on waste avoidance, waste reduction and recycling benefits Canberra and our broader region. It is something that our government will continue to work on.

MS ORR: Minister, what are the key messages of the recycle right campaign?

MR STEEL: There are six key messages of the recycle right campaign. The first is keep it simple. This means that you can only recycle hard plastic bottles and containers, glass bottles and jars, steel and aluminium cans, and paper and cardboard in your recycle bin. The second is keep out soft plastics. They cannot be recycled through our MRF. They can be dropped off at a recycle collection point at our major supermarket providers. The third is keep out small items. Nothing smaller than a credit card can go in your recycle bin. It simply cannot be sorted to be recycled.

The fourth is keep it safe. Make sure that you are keeping things like hoses out of your recycle bin because they can get caught up in the plant at the materials recovery centre. The fifth is keep it clean. Make sure that you are not putting in containers that are dirty and might contaminate other material in the bin, like paper and cardboard. And last is keep it loose. Make sure that what you put into your yellow bin is separate and loose so that it can be sorted and then go on to be recycled.

MS CODY: Minister, how does expanding the container deposit scheme improve recycling and waste reduction in the ACT?

MR STEEL: I thank Ms Cody for her supplementary. As I mentioned, 31 million containers have now been collected under the container deposit scheme. The CDS targets beverage containers, which are most commonly found in the litter stream. It encourages recovery, reuse and recycling of these containers with a 10c refund as an incentive. Being able to collect containers in that way through the CDS ensures that a cleaner waste stream is provided. This makes it much easier for these products to be sold on to resource markets.

We are currently making it easier for people to return their containers. Just over a week ago, I visited the Phillip CDS depot where a new Australian-designed reverse ATM has been installed. New to the ACT, this technology sorts through beverage containers with a significant efficiency rate, halving the time it takes to return containers. It provides an instant cash refund for people using the terminal as well.

I was very lucky to be joined by Brindabella Christian College student James, who has so far collected 25,000 containers from his community, mostly by doorknocking some of his neighbours and getting them to save the bottles for him and his friends. He and other users were highly impressed with the new technology now being trialled at Phillip. We will continue to roll out more points throughout the ACT, and potentially this new technology as well.

Planning—Ginninderra Estate

MRS KIKKERT: My question is to the Minister for Planning and Land Management. Minister, massive steel towers for a new 330,000-volt transmission line are being erected only 16 metres away from metal residential fences in the Ginninderra Estate. In addition, the environmental impact statement identified these towers as high risk for visual pollution, even after mitigation. Consultation for this project occurred before most homes in this estate were built and occupied. Minister, why was approval given for these towers to be built only 16 metres away from residents' fences?

MR GENTLEMAN: I thank Mrs Kikkert for her question. It is an important one as we move forward and as Canberra's population increases and we look to other areas to provide housing for the ACT. These towers are built to a national code across Australia. Approval would sit with us and also with the commonwealth in regard to the placement of those particular towers. All of that work needs to go forward to ensure that they are constructed appropriately. Then, in regard to the design for residential areas around or amongst the towers, that goes through an environmental process with our directorates as well, and the community is involved in that process.

MRS KIKKERT: Minister, is the ACT government going against the national code when Transgrid guidelines state that fences within 20 metres pose a safety risk? Minister, have you warned residents in Ginninderra Estate about the safety risk created by having a 330,000-volt transmission line so close to their homes and fences? If not, why not?

MR GENTLEMAN: I have not been briefed on any of this by residents in regard to high voltage power lines across the ACT. I will take the detail of the question on notice, though, and come back if I have any more information.

MR PARTON: Minister, did you warn those who purchased blocks in the Ginninderra Estate of the high risk of visual pollution identified in this project's environmental impact statement; if not, why not?

MR GENTLEMAN: I do not recall providing any advice to residents purchasing in that estate. It might have been prior to my time. However, I will have a look at the record and ask the directorate if they have provided any advice to residents, and come back to the chamber with more detail.

Australian National University—legal practice course

MR PARTON: My question is to the Attorney-General. Attorney, recently it was

announced that the ANU will disband the school of legal practice and cease the course that permits graduating lawyers to become qualified to practise, the GDLP. This decision has been criticised by the profession, including the ACT Law Society, by legal academics and by the National Tertiary Education Union. Attorney, was the government consulted on or informed of this decision, and what is the government's position on the announcement?

MR RAMSAY: I thank Mr Parton for the important question and for his interest in the importance of our strong legal profession here in the ACT being well educated, well trained and well equipped for the work that they do. The decision that was made by the ANU was entirely a decision for the ANU, and I understand that it was simply an internal decision of the ANU. There was no consultation with the government in relation to that. We look forward to continuing to work with the ANU, with other institutions and with the legal profession here to ensure the ongoing high quality of the legal profession that we have here in the ACT.

MR PARTON: Attorney, is the government consulting with other institutions for replacement courses to allow graduating lawyers within the ACT to become eligible to practise?

MR RAMSAY: Educational offerings that are the equivalent of what has been provided by the ANU are a matter for those tertiary educational institutions. I will continue to work with the legal profession in relation to that.

MR WALL: Attorney, what alternatives are or will be available for students wishing to qualify for practice as a lawyer in the ACT? Are you satisfied that there will be sufficient capacity?

MR RAMSAY: As I said, the decisions that may be available in the future will be decisions that will be made by tertiary institutions, and there are a number of those. I will continue to work with the legal profession, who have expressed their view on this, to ensure that the ongoing work of the educational institutions, and the ongoing work of the legal profession, is high. I do note that of course it is not that there has been a withdrawal of the undergraduate training for people who are seeking to receive a bachelor of law or its equivalent. There are a number of those already provided here in the ACT and beyond.

Mr Coe: Madam Speaker, I have a point of order on being directly relevant. My colleague was asking the chief law officer of the ACT what alternatives are or will be available to students wishing to qualify for practice as a lawyer in the ACT. This surely is a very important question for the chief law officer, and to date he has not answered it.

MADAM SPEAKER: The time has expired or the clock has been set, but I believe that he answered it by saying that there was a range of opportunities elsewhere and he is continuing dialogue with the sector.

ACT Health—SPIRE project

MS CODY: My question is to the Minister for Health. Minister, can you please

update the Assembly on the progress of SPIRE?

MS STEPHEN-SMITH: I thank Ms Cody for her question and her interest in the SPIRE project, which is the largest investment in healthcare infrastructure in the history of self-government. I am very pleased to confirm that substantial progress is being made on the SPIRE project. It remains on track for construction to be completed in 2023-24.

As I have said, this project represents the ACT government's largest ever investment in healthcare infrastructure. It will substantially transform the ACT's healthcare system for the better. It is a complex project requiring considerable planning and consultation with clinical and stakeholder groups, including consumers, to ensure that we that deliver the best possible outcomes for the Canberra community.

There are now ten people dedicated to the project in the Major Projects Canberra team. That team is supported by other senior staff within Major Projects Canberra, including the chief projects officers, communications and governance staff. In turn, they are supported by advisory teams who have joined, or will shortly join, the project. Health planning, legal and commercial advisors are all in the process of being appointed. The procurement process for design consultants will commence in the next few weeks.

Add to that the many staff in Canberra Health Services involved in the project, and it is clear that substantial resources are actively engaged in delivering this very important project. Enabling works are currently an area of focus, particularly the movement of service areas to enable demolition on the site for the project, after which the SPIRE project's main construction works will commence.

In addition, work is under way to update models of care and functional briefs in consultation with CHS clinicians to ensure that we are providing the facilities that clinicians need to deliver health services for our community now and into the future.

MS CODY: Minister, what will SPIRE deliver for the Canberra community?

MS STEPHEN-SMITH: I thank Ms Cody for the supplementary. As our city continues to grow, so, too, does demand for health services. Territory-wide health services planning undertaken by the ACT Health Directorate aims to ensure that the healthcare needs of Canberrans are met today and into the future. An important part of this planning is the assessment and provision of infrastructure that will allow Canberra Health Services to continue to fulfil its goal of providing quality health care when and where it is needed.

As I mentioned, the SPIRE project is the largest healthcare infrastructure project being undertaken in the ACT. It will deliver a state-of-the-art emergency, surgical and critical healthcare facility on the Canberra Hospital campus. The SPIRE project will transform the Canberra Hospital campus and enhance the delivery of hospital-based health care in a modern and purpose-built facility. It will anchor future hospital campus planning and developments.

The SPIRE project will deliver 148 inpatient beds, including 60 intensive care unit

beds and 24 coronary care unit beds; 22 operating theatres; 114 emergency treatment spaces; 55 day-surgery beds; integrated radiology and medical imaging facilities; 12 ambulance bays; a 10-bed short-stay mental health unit; two cardiac catheterisation laboratories; and patient, carer and staff spaces for respite, learning and meeting. Existing critical operations such as the helipad and emergency services area at the Canberra Hospital will continue to function during the build, uninterrupted by the SPIRE project.

The Health Directorate has also commenced work for the expansion of the Centenary Hospital for Women and Children. With these two projects underway, a Canberra Hospital master plan is being developed to help inform future development on the campus to serve the Canberra community.

MS CHEYNE: Minister, how is the government managing demand for health services prior to SPIRE's completion?

MS STEPHEN-SMITH: I thank Ms Cheyne for the supplementary question. Of course, there are many ways in which the government is managing demand for health services that we have talked about in this place over the past few weeks and, indeed, months. I have outlined a number of these over the past few sitting weeks, including our increased investment in doctors and nurses, the timely care strategy, our nurse-led walk-in centres, and the University of Canberra Hospital.

The timely care strategy aims to improve patient care delivery, access to services across Canberra Health Services and patient flow processes. Canberra Health Services is continuously identifying and incorporating change to improve communication and decision-making processes, as well as implementing several projects to refresh and refocus systems and processes using a whole-of-hospital approach.

For example, CHS manages periods of high demand in the cardiac care unit by utilising territory-wide services. A cardiologist has introduced day procedures for low-risk angiograms and stenting to limit the number of patients who require an overnight bed in the CCU. These patients are cared for in the catheter laboratory day ward prior to discharge.

CHS is also in the process of developing an intensive care unit escalation policy to address periods of excessive demand, as well as managing demand by utilising additional appropriate treatment spaces in the post-anaesthetic care unit.

The network of walk-in centres across the territory is assisting by reducing demand on our hospital system. The network will be increased to five by late 2020. They provide treatment for one-off episodic care for minor injury and illnesses, as well as health advice and information.

We have much anecdotal evidence about the fact that the walk-in centres divert people from the emergency department. Indeed just on Tuesday I was talking to someone whose family member had developed pneumonia and required care outside normal GP hours. They were accurately diagnosed by a nurse practitioner, who was able to prescribe antibiotics and provide other advice about care. *(Time expired.)*

Woden community centre—parking

MR WALL: My question is to the Minister for Transport and City Services. Minister, how do you propose to protect the Woden Early Childhood Centre's current parking and drop-off arrangements from a less secure relocation of drop-off points should the Hindmarsh development next door proceed?

MR STEEL: I thank Mr Wall for his question and I note that that proposal's notification period recently closed and that proposal will be assessed by ACTPLA. Of course ACTPLA will have regard to parking matters. At this point in time the Woden community centre building is actually owned by the CIT, not Property Group which is in my portfolio. It will shortly be transferred to Property Group. We are certainly aware of the concerns of the early childhood centre, and that is something that no doubt will be raised through the planning process which is underway.

MR WALL: Minister, have you, any other minister or representatives of your departments met with the Woden Early Childhood Centre about this issue and, if so, when?

MR STEEL: I have written in relation to this to the Woden Early Childhood Centre and I am happy to come back on notice to provide any advice in relation to that. But, as I said, the planning process is underway and as part of the planning we will consider the traffic impacts on neighbouring services and the community. So I am confident in that process going ahead. That is a process that is ongoing, so if those discussions have not been had there is still an opportunity, I am sure, for that to occur. But, as I said also in my first answer, this is actually a building that is owned by the CIT, not Property Group. It will be transferred and at that point it will become the responsibility of Property Group.

MISS C BURCH: Minister, have you met with families from the Woden Early Childhood Centre, and what arrangements will you put in place to protect children and their families from disadvantage during the building process?

MR STEEL: It is too early to pre-empt the outcomes of the planning process that is underway. I have not met with families from the early childhood centre. It is not a centre that is in my portfolio. But I am certainly aware of the concerns that have been raised in relation to traffic, and I have raised that with Property Group. No doubt they will be communicating that through the planning process that is taking place and that should take place in accordance with legislation.

Hospitals—emergency department performance

MISS C BURCH: My question is to the Minister for Health. Minister, on 12 August 2019, in answer to an estimates question taken on notice and tabled in the Assembly after question time on 20 August, which asked how our emergency departments performed against their target in the fourth quarter of 2018-19, you said, "The fourth quarter performance is not likely to be significantly different compared to quarter 3, given the early flu season." Yet, in question time on 20 August, you took on notice a question on the same subject. Minister, why did your knowledge on this issue decline between 12 August and 20 August?

MS STEPHEN-SMITH: I thank Miss Burch for the question. I cannot recall the specific detail of the question I was asked on 20 August. As members will be well aware, I have a practice of taking questions on notice when I do not have the specific detail in front of me. I do not know if the question asked on that day was the exact same question I was asked on notice. I took that question on notice, and that is my practice when I do not have the information in front of me, or in my head.

MISS C BURCH: Minister, how did ED performance rate against targets in the third quarter of 2018-19?

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

MS LAWDER: Minister, what advice have you been given about how ED performance is trending so far in the first quarter of 2019-20?

MS STEPHEN-SMITH: I thank Ms Lawder for the supplementary question. The advice I have received is very similar to the response to the question on notice: that there will not be a significant change in performance as a result of the seasonal impacts that we have seen expected in this quarter. The question I was previously asked I interpreted as being more specific. As a general response to that question, the expectation is that the performance would be about the same. That is my understanding. If that is incorrect, I will obviously come back to the Assembly with further information.

Arts—Belconnen Arts Centre

MS CHEYNE: My question is to the Minister for the Arts and Cultural Events. Can the minister please update the Assembly on the progress of the expansion of Belconnen Arts Centre?

MR RAMSAY: I thank Ms Cheyne for her question, especially given her strong and dedicated history at the Belconnen Arts Centre. The stage 2 expansion of the Belconnen Arts Centre was a \$15 million election commitment of the government. The funding was announced in the 2017-18 budget. I was pleased to turn the sod at the establishment of the building site in December 2018, and construction commenced officially on 10 January 2019.

As the building occupier and operator, Belconnen Arts Centre Incorporated has been absolutely instrumental in project development which is being delivered by PBS Building. PBS Building is taking a highly collaborative and innovative approach to the build to minimise the impact on the centre's operations while the BAC management has devised flexible and clever ways to continue delivering its extensive arts programs despite the inevitable disruptions that are on site.

Works in the existing building are underway, including the expansion of the administration office and the comms room. PBS is taking a sustainable approach to managing waste and recycling on site, with a very strong focus on recycling and not over-ordering materials. The building design will achieve the same high standards of accessibility that were established in stage 1.

I can advise that the concrete slabs are poured, the structural steel frame is going up, and we expect to see the main roof on by early September. Some of the areas, including the main gallery, the cafe and some back-of-house spaces are already roofed, and they have heating and cooling systems going in and internal walls are underway.

I very much look forward to the new facility's opening to the community in early 2020.

MS CHEYNE: Minister, what benefits is the ACT government's investment in stage 2 going to bring to the local community?

MR RAMSAY: I thank Ms Cheyne for the supplementary question. When the expansion of the Belconnen Arts Centre is complete the centre will have doubled in size. The expansion will include a flexible theatre space, a new dance and rehearsal studio, new gallery spaces, resident company offices, a cafe and catering facilities. This will transform the Belconnen Arts Centre into a true multi-arts hub, with purpose built spaces for the development and the performance of dance, theatre and music, as well as an ongoing commitment to the visual arts and a host of other creative activities.

In recognition of the increasing size and capacity of the BAC the government allocated in last year's budget an additional \$700,000 over two years to support innovative approaches to exhibitions and public programming during and immediately following the construction of stage 2. I can report that the BAC is still hosting some stunning and well-attended exhibitions, highly professional dance performances and a huge variety of arts workshops even during this tricky time of transition.

The expansion of the BAC will be of significant benefit to Belconnen and also to the broader arts sector across Canberra. The centre is an important key arts organisation and provides exhibition, performance and workshop and rehearsal space for Canberra artists across a wide range of media and art forms. Its community programs are also global best practice for inclusiveness and accessibility.

The completion of the facility will allow the BAC to continue to grow to meet unmet demand for rehearsal, performance, exhibition and event space and will provide an important community hub for the growing Belconnen town centre.

MR GUPTA: Can the minister please advise how the stage 2 expansion will connect to other government investments in Belconnen?

MR RAMSAY: I thank Mr Gupta for the supplementary question. The Belconnen Arts Centre sits at a key lakefront location in the Belconnen town centre on Lake Ginninderra, which is itself a hugely popular area for walking, cycling and other forms of recreation and exercise. Until now there has been a missing link in the otherwise excellent shared path that runs all the way around the shoreline, which means that runners, walkers and cyclists need to take an awkward detour up to the crowded Emu Bank footpath.

I am pleased that in the 2018-19 budget the ACT government announced that there would be funding for a new boardwalk that will join up the shared path where it

currently ends to the east of the BAC with the public parkland at Emu Inlet to the north. That is the area where Floriade in the Suburbs will soon be held in Belconnen. This will allow full, seamless circumnavigation of the lake on a shared path for recreational use and will better integrate the BAC with the adjacent commercial precinct, which includes restaurants, bars, cafes and wellness services. It will provide a defined and attractive water's edge in harmony with the arts centre's expansion and aesthetic.

artsACT is working closely with Transport Canberra and City Services on the design of the foreshore path link. Preliminary design is being finalised, detailed design is expected to commence towards the end of 2019 and construction is anticipated to begin in early 2020.

Gungahlin—policing resources

MR MILLIGAN: My question is to the Minister for Police and Emergency Services. I refer to a number of recent incidences of crime in my electorate of Yerrabi and in particular the incident of a woman wielding a knife and going around properties in Moncrieff yesterday. Minister, what additional resources do the police in Gungahlin need in order to reduce the rate of crime in the area?

MR GENTLEMAN: I thank Mr Milligan for his question. It is an important question as we see our city grow. This government is investing most readily in our police resources right across the ACT. This will also assist, of course, in Gungahlin.

In regard to crime trends, I am pleased to announce that the number of offences reported over the past number of years has been decreasing. We have seen offences from 1 July 2018 to 30 June 2019 decrease by 5.9 per cent when compared to the previous financial year. Offences that relate to theft are down 12.5 per cent and motor vehicle theft is down 18.5 per cent. Offences against the person, which is what Mr Milligan goes to, have seen a slight increase and we have seen decreases in alcohol related offences by 9.4 per cent.

The crime trends are trending down and that is because of the extra resources that we are providing for ACT police. I am incredibly proud of the excellent work they do across the territory, whether it is in Gungahlin or other parts of the territory, working with our ACT community.

MR MILLIGAN: Minister, should residents of Moncrieff feel safe given the current level of police resources in the Gungahlin region?

MR GENTLEMAN: Canberra is a safe city. We have seen that in survey results both locally and nationally. We know that people in Canberra feel safe. I would say that the extra investment that we are putting into ACT policing—more than \$30 million—will ensure safety for Canberra residents into the future. The opportunity that we are now presenting to allow ACT Policing to upgrade their police service model will mean better interaction between frontline police officers and the community.

MR COE: Minister, what specific measures are you putting in place to tackle crime in Moncrieff and Taylor in particular?

MR GENTLEMAN: As I said we are investing strongly in ACT Policing right across the territory. That includes the suburbs that Mr Coe has just mentioned. It allows police now to free up resources as they go forward with this extra resource, to ensure the safety of all Canberrans.

Mr Coe: A point of order.

MADAM SPEAKER: A point of order?

Mr Coe: It is on relevance. I asked about the specific measures that he was putting in place for Taylor and Moncrieff. He spoke about some general measures across Canberra, not about specific measures for those two suburbs.

MADAM SPEAKER: I think increased funding may have been a response on those two suburbs benefitting. Do you have anything else to add, minister?

Mr Gentleman: No.

Tuggeranong—government support

MR GUPTA: My question is to Minister Gentleman and relates to all his portfolio responsibilities. Minister, what support has the government provided to Tuggeranong and surrounding regions in the ACT?

MR GENTLEMAN: I thank Mr Gupta for the question. One of the greatest privileges of being a minister is being able to make decisions that benefit all of Canberra, and being able to see the difference that these decisions make in my local area is even more pleasing.

The healthy waterways project has funded seven new stormwater assets in Tuggeranong. Four rain gardens, a wetland, a pond and channel restoration will help intercept sediment before it gets to Lake Tuggeranong. This will improve the quality of the water in Lake Tuggeranong, something that I know local Tuggeranong residents have been wanting to see for a long time. The stormwater assets are full of plants, and the areas contain lawns, paths and benches, so they will also be parks for our local residents. I have also funded the Southern ACT Catchment Group to provide public education on what Tuggeranong householders can do to keep our local waterways clean.

We are replanting some 500,000 trees in the Ingledene forest, which will both improve the environment and provide outdoor recreation space for Tuggeranong residents who enjoy trail walking, mountain bike riding and orienteering.

In my Police and Emergency Services portfolio we have seen upgrades or new stations for all of our emergency services: the Tuggeranong ESA station, the South Tuggeranong Fire & Rescue station, the Greenway ambulance station, the Tuggeranong State Emergency Service station and the Kambah non-emergency patient transport service.

MR GUPTA: How has this supported local groups and jobs in Tuggeranong?

MR GENTLEMAN: I thank Mr Gupta for his strong interest in creating jobs across the ACT. I am strongly committed to jobs in all of Canberra, with recent budgets funding more police, more firefighters and more paramedics. This government is protecting our services from cutbacks.

We can see the results of investment in my local area in Tuggeranong. Our investment in environmental benefits like forests and waterways are a clear example of how protecting our environment and providing secure local jobs can go hand-in-hand. Many of the stormwater assets were constructed by local Canberra companies, so local businesses and workers have benefited from this investment. Replanting of Ingledene forest will create an estimated 20 new jobs for the region. The emergency services facilities have allowed our local Tuggeranong emergency services personnel to protect the people of Tuggeranong in purpose-built facilities.

I am also committed to assisting our local groups to help the community. The funding to our catchment groups, including in southern ACT, provided support when the federal government stopped providing assistance. I have secured additional parking to assist members of the Tuggeranong 55 Plus Club to be able to participate in group activities.

MR PETTERSSON: Minister, how are you helping the Tuggeranong region to develop?

MR GENTLEMAN: In addition to the jobs and opportunities across the Tuggeranong region, in my planning portfolio I have implemented the Tuggeranong master plan, bringing more people and more businesses to the Tuggeranong town centre. Planning policy is critical to creating inclusive and connected communities.

Implementing the master plan included rezoning parcels of land and changing building heights to encourage development and redevelopment, which we can see now in the town centre. It also included measures to protect views and vistas of the distant hills and mountains and identified new landscape areas, pedestrian connections and roads through the town centre. New residential development is being released along the foreshore in other key areas of the town centre. We can now see how the master plan has made a positive contribution to the development of the town centre.

Greenway was one of Canberra's fastest growing suburbs in 2017-18. Attracting jobs and people does not happen by accident, it happens by careful design. Creating a compact and efficient Canberra means creative urban infill in all Canberra, including on the south side. The development in the Tuggeranong town centre means that more people are living closer to jobs and closer to services like the Tuggeranong walk-in centre.

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