



Debates

WEEKLY HANSARD

Legislative Assembly for the ACT

TENTH ASSEMBLY

10 FEBRUARY 2021

www.hansard.act.gov.au

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Wednesday, 10 February 2021

MADAM SPEAKER (Ms Burch) (10.00): Members:

Dhawura nguna, dhawura Ngunnawal.
Yanggu ngalawiri, dhunimanyin Ngunnawalwari dhawurawari.
Nginggada Dindi dhawura Ngunnaawalbun yindjumaralidjinyin.

The words I have just spoken are in the language of the traditional custodians and translate to:

This is Ngunnawal country.
Today we are gathering on Ngunnawal country.
We always pay respect to Elders, female and male, and Ngunnawal country.

Members, I ask you to stand in silence and pray or reflect on our responsibilities to the people of the Australian Capital Territory.

Petition

The following petition was lodged for presentation:

Planning—Giralang shops—petition 4-21

By Ms Orr, from 584 residents:

To the Speaker and members of the Legislative Assembly for the Australian Territory

The residents and supporters of Giralang note that:

- The local shops in Giralang have sat unused and in a state of semi-development for 15 years;
- Progress has been made with the developer settling the legal action against them and gaining approval for a Development Application;
- Over that last 12 months however progress to build the shops has stalled with no supermarket secured and the development taken off the sales market;
- The developer, who is ultimately responsible under the lease for progressing the shops, has provided only one update to the community in this time, which provided no clear indication of what happens next.

As such, the residents of Giralang hereby petition the ACT Legislative Assembly to:

- Seek a full update from the developer on any progress and when we can see action on delivering our shops.

Pursuant to standing order 99A, the petition, having more than 500 signatories, was referred to the Standing Committee on Planning, Transport and City Services.

The Clerk having announced that the terms of the petition would be recorded in Hansard and referred to the appropriate ministers for response pursuant to standing order 100, the petition was received.

Motion to take note of petition

MADAM SPEAKER: Pursuant to standing order 98A, I propose the question:

That the petition so lodged be noted.

MS ORR (Yerrabi) (10.02): I rise to speak to a petition which I have sponsored on behalf of Paul Calvert and the Giralang community. This year will mark the 16th year that the Giralang community has been without shops in their suburb. When I was growing up in Giralang, the shops near the school included a hairdresser, a Vietnamese restaurant, a baker, a newsagency, a supermarket, a tavern, a VHS video store and a fish and chip shop. It was a great little community hub within walking distance of every residence in the suburb.

Since the shops were vacated by those tenants, they have sat bare, been demolished and currently sit in a state of initial but not completed build. This is after years of court cases, stop-starts on the building, and the promise in 2018 of an approved DA for a new development. This could once again be a great community hub and a convenient facility for the community. This is particularly important, as many of the residents of Giralang are getting older but want to be able to age in place.

Since this petition started, we have heard from what feels like all of Giralang, and they are unanimous that they want something to happen. The community has not had an update from the developer in close to a year, and in that update the developer noted he could not secure a supermarket, the deposits for the apartments would be handed back and a rethink of the development would have to happen. Since then no further update has come to the community, despite being requested many times.

The community just wants to know what is happening, which is why 585 residents and supporters have signed this physical petition and 321 have signed online, making a total of 906 signatures, which is a number equal to almost a third of Giralang residents, and almost every household. I note that almost every signature is from a Giralang resident, with a few family members who grew up there having been put in for good measure.

I want to thank Paul for putting together this petition, and everyone who has signed it. I would like particularly to acknowledge the residents who got their neighbours and friends to sign. I ask that whichever committee to which this petition is referred inquire into the issue and ask the questions that the Giralang community wants answers to.

MS CASTLEY (Yerrabi) (10.04): I thank Ms Orr for kicking off this petition. As a former resident of Giralang, I completely understand the frustrations of the community, and would welcome any help in this area to get the site cleaned up and restore some order in the area.

MR BRADDOCK (Yerrabi) (10.05): I also thank Ms Orr for bringing this petition to the notice of the Assembly. Giralang, as Ms Orr mentioned, has gone without shops for 16 years—a vital centre of community activity. The ability to simply go and pick up a carton of milk is also what is required. I look forward to working with all of the parties in this chamber to see whether we can resolve this issue.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Housing—strategy

Ministerial statement

MS BERRY (Ginninderra—Deputy Chief Minister, Minister for Early Childhood Development, Minister for Education and Youth Affairs, Minister for Housing and Suburban Development, Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence, Minister for Sport and Recreation and Minister for Women) (10.05): I rise today to provide the second annual update on the ACT Housing Strategy to the Assembly.

The government’s continued progress against the actions under the ACT Housing Strategy demonstrates the important work that is happening to provide housing for all Canberrans. In addition to this ministerial statement, today I released the annual report card for the second year of the strategy’s implementation. The year 2 report card monitors, evaluates and tracks the progress of the targeted actions within the strategy.

The ACT Housing Strategy, which was released in October 2018, reflects local voices, with thousands of contributions from people across the Canberra community who generously shared their experiences and expertise. The strategy outlines a road map put in place for housing assistance in the ACT over the course of a decade, acknowledging the varying and complex challenges that exist in the ACT housing market that need to be addressed and overcome to deliver for the community.

This past year has certainly been complex, as a result of the COVID-19 public health emergency. However, it is clear that, through the ambitious goals and actions within the strategy, the ACT government has put in place strong and meaningful policy interventions across the housing assistance continuum.

Throughout the last year, it has been more evident than ever that having a secure place to call your own is vital for our health and security. During this time, our homes are what have enabled us to protect ourselves and our families from the full impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic as everyone was asked to be physically distanced.

The ACT Housing Strategy’s vision to “encourage and promote a housing market that meets the diverse and changing needs of the Canberra community, and enables a sustainable supply of housing for individuals and families at all income levels” is all the more significant, as the economic impacts of the pandemic have been experienced by many in our community.

The Canberra community has stuck together; and, working together with sector partners, we have continued this work throughout the COVID-19 emergency to get to

our new normal. Together we have been able to quickly respond to review services, prioritise and, in some cases, reallocate resources. While COVID-19 has interrupted service provision for some planned initiatives under the strategy, new responses to the pandemic have contributed to the delivery of other actions.

The report card which I released today shows steady progress across all goals throughout the strategy's second year of implementation. The strategy includes a total of 74 short-term, medium-term, ongoing and annual actions, which have all now commenced.

Progress against the strategy's 67 short-term, medium-term and ongoing actions can be summarised as follows: 14 have now been completed; four actions within this year 2 report card are categorised as "in development"; a further 33 actions are "progressing"; and the remaining 16 actions are categorised as "continuing". The strategy also includes seven annual actions, of which four are "completed", and another three actions have progressed since the release of the first report card.

One of the key actions completed in the second year of the ACT Housing Strategy was the continued commitment to the release of land for affordable, community and public housing. For 2019-20, the government set a target of releasing 628 dedicated public, community and affordable homes. This target is made up of 60 new public housing properties, 80 new community housing properties and 488 individual properties dedicated to affordable home purchase to eligible low-income households. For the last year, the target was exceeded by releasing 680 dwellings for public, community and affordable housing.

In the second year of the strategy's implementation, the government has strengthened community services to help those who need assistance to access housing. In addition to the ongoing program of work, in response to COVID-19, new measures, such as funding to the ACT specialist homelessness sector, were added to support people facing homelessness or domestic and family violence.

As part of this targeted response to COVID-19, the government worked closely with service providers in the specialist homelessness sector to understand the types of additional support needed for them to continue to deliver essential services. This included establishing three working groups with representatives from government and the community sector—one focusing on women's support and services, one on rough sleepers, and another on congregate-shared living accommodation providers. Through these working groups a better understanding was gained of where the pressure points for the sector were and where they were expected to be.

Responding to the feedback from these groups, the government provided \$832,000 in accommodation support funding. This funding was allocated to provide both emergency and long-term accommodation for men, women and children who faced the challenge of physical distancing in shelters, self-isolation and potential quarantine when needed.

The ACT government provided a rent relief package, where rent relief, to a value of approximately \$2.2 million, was provided to over 600 properties rented to community

organisations through Housing ACT's housing assistance asset program to provide assistance to the community housing sector and its tenants. In addition, the government provided funding to CatholicCare and Argyle Housing to establish and operate MacKillop House and the Winter Lodge to provide supported accommodation for men, women and children experiencing homelessness. Over the last year, over 350 individuals and families got help through these new and expanded programs and funding, including extra support for OneLink services.

The 2020-21 budget extends funding for a further two years to these services that have been so critical during the pandemic. The \$2.6 million investment from the budget will keep the doors of Mackillop House and the Winter Lodge open and expand the Axial Housing program to provide up to 40 homes for chronic rough sleepers and support them to sustain permanent housing. This funding will also extend the operation of the Early Morning Centre in Civic to seven days a week, boost funding for services and accommodation support through OneLink and provide funding to ACT Shelter for ongoing systemic advocacy for the sector.

It was great to stand a few weeks ago with the Chief Minister, Minister Vassarotti and these fantastic services to make these funding commitments. I look forward to continuing the work with Minister Vassarotti in her new role as Minister for Homelessness and Housing Services. I know that she is passionate about these issues and I know that there is a lot that we can achieve as a government under the ACT Housing Strategy for people in need of secure and affordable housing.

These are only a few of the many examples of targeted housing assistance which this government has provided to people in our community who needed it during this difficult time. The year 2 report card details many other measures which have been progressed. Given the challenging past year, the sector and community responses, particularly around people sleeping rough and experiencing homelessness, have been remarkable.

Another action that is progressing, which was announced last year, is looking into build to rent, shared equity and alternative housing models that aim to reduce the costs of renting or buying a home, and the suitability of these models for the ACT.

Measures to reduce the up-front cost and finance by Canberrans looking to purchase their first home are key to addressing long-term housing affordability. I am proud to be part of a government, led by the Chief Minister, which has seen the elimination of these costs, like stamp duty, for first homebuyers. As set out in the parliamentary and governing agreement, the ACT government has a number of initiatives to continue under the ACT Housing Strategy to create more affordable housing for Canberrans who need it.

The most significant action in reducing homelessness and increasing social housing assistance is the government's ongoing commitment to grow and renew public housing. To achieve this continued growth, the government will deliver a total of 400 additional public housing dwellings by 2025, while renewing a further 1,000 properties that better suit the diverse and accessibility needs of public housing tenants.

The ACT has the highest ratio of public housing in the country, more than double the national average. The ACT government has significantly increased one of the largest per capita investments in public housing in Australia. Over the 10 years to 2025 the ACT government will have invested more than \$1 billion in public housing. I hope to see other states and territories and the federal government match that kind of commitment.

In conclusion, the Housing Strategy has completed a number of milestones since being released two years ago; but this is a marathon, not a sprint, and we must continue to remove the barriers to achieve the five goals of the strategy. I am confident that, working together with the sector, we can continue delivering on this strategy into the future so that all Canberrans can access safe, secure and affordable housing. I present the following papers:

ACT Housing Strategy—

Year 2 Report Card, dated November 2020.

Ministerial statement, 10 February 2021.

I move:

That the Assembly take note of the statement.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Planning and Development Amendment Bill 2021

Mr Gentleman, pursuant to notice, presented the bill, its explanatory statement and a Human Rights Act compatibility statement.

Title read by Clerk.

MR GENTLEMAN (Brindabella—Manager of Government Business, Minister for Corrections, Minister for Industrial Relations and Workplace Safety, Minister for Planning and Land Management and Minister for Police and Emergency Services) (10.15): I move:

That this bill be agreed to in principle.

Today I introduce the Planning and Development Amendment Bill 2021. This bill delivers on tripartite commitments made during the 2020 election campaign opposing the development of major waste facilities in Fyshwick. The ACT Labor Party, the ACT Greens and the Canberra Liberals all committed to opposing major waste facilities in Fyshwick.

Following the election, the ACT Labor Party and the ACT Greens certified this commitment in the parliamentary and governing agreement for the ACT government and committed to facilitate the outcomes contained in the ACT government's waste strategy to locate waste processing facilities in Hume. The bill I present today

introduces a ban on the development of new waste facilities and the expansion of existing waste facilities in Fyshwick.

The bill contains amendments to the Planning and Development Act 2007 to prevent the independent planning and land authority from accepting prohibited waste facility development applications and requires the authority to refuse any DAs for prohibited facilities which it has already received. The bill does not affect existing waste facilities in Fyshwick that do not wish to increase the size of their operations.

Given the features of the ACT's leasehold and planning approvals system, the government has had to take the step of introducing legislation to ensure that development proposals for waste facilities in Fyshwick do not proceed. The ACT government has decided that large-scale waste facilities, including those processing red bin waste, are not suitable for operating in Fyshwick.

This ban will have the effect of preventing two current proposals for waste facilities in Fyshwick from proceeding. Capital Recycling Solutions had proposed to build a materials recovery facility on Ipswich Street, Fyshwick, to process household waste, handling up to 300,000 tonnes of waste per year. Hi-Quality Group had proposed developing an integrated resource recovery facility on Tennant Street, Fyshwick, to handle about 1.1 million tonnes of waste a year.

If they had been able to proceed, the CRS and Hi-Quality developments would be game changers for Fyshwick, and the government considers that waste facilities of this size are not appropriate for Fyshwick. By way of comparison, the Hi-Quality proposal would process 35 times more waste than the next largest existing waste business in Fyshwick, and the CRS proposal is for a facility processing 10 times more waste.

Given the scale of these proposals, there are various impacts to consider—including environmental impacts, impacts on amenity for surrounding businesses and their customers, the impacts on residents in nearby suburbs and traffic impacts—from the proposed facilities. The ACT government has closely scrutinised the outcomes of the environmental impact assessments of both proposals.

The government is also concerned about the potential for large-scale importation of waste from other jurisdictions for processing in the territory, which is in contravention of the proximity principle for waste management. While the legislation will have an immediate impact by stopping the known proposals from going ahead, it will also prevent future waste proposals in Fyshwick. However, the bill includes an ability to make regulations which will allow for the government to carve out sites, or classes of facilities, from the ban.

The ACT government is currently undertaking policy work, looking at planning and waste policy matters, to determine what types of waste facilities may be able to be established and operate in Fyshwick in the future. Following the outcomes of this policy work, I expect to be making regulations in the coming months which will provide certainty to small to medium waste operators about their future in Fyshwick. The policy work will also include looking more broadly at the waste infrastructure

needs of the territory into the future, and the most suitable locations to see new facilities developed.

The government will continue to work with private waste companies to deliver the ACT government's waste strategy and identify appropriate land to establish required facilities. The move by the ACT government today is not anti-business. We consider this decision to be about protecting the existing businesses in Fyshwick, many of which have been undergoing a transformation in recent years.

While it is still appropriate for many industrial uses to continue in Fyshwick, I note that Fyshwick continues to evolve, with many retail and light commercial businesses establishing there with strong customer followings. The move to ban waste facilities will protect these businesses and the surrounding residential suburbs from the negative impacts which could be realised from such large-scale facilities. I commend the bill to the Assembly.

Debate (on motion by **Mr Hanson**) adjourned to the next sitting.

Government Procurement (Secure Local Jobs) Code 2020 Motion to disallow

MR CAIN (Ginninderra) (10.21):

That Disallowable Instrument DI2020-278, being the Government Procurement (Secure Local Jobs) Code 2020, be disallowed.

I move this motion of disallowance, as there is a risk that the amendments to the previous code are inconsistent with commonwealth law and remain ambiguous in their interpretation. Documents released under FOI—freedom of information—have revealed that the previous Minister for Government Services and Procurement was briefed last year that the changes to section 15 may conflict with commonwealth legislation.

A ministerial brief to the minister in September last year, which was released, on my request, to an FOI query has, as its first recommendation, that there remains a risk that the proposed changes to section 15 of the Secure Local Jobs Code may conflict with the Fair Work Act. Discussions that my office has had, both internally and externally, indicate that there is some ambiguity and unclarity about the meaning of the changes to section 15 in this code. I am sure that all of us here recognise that a key role of this Assembly in serving the community is to pass law that is clear, unambiguous and certainly does not pose a significant risk of conflicting with commonwealth legislation.

The risk here lies in the potential for organisations to seek clarity over the terms included in section 15, particularly regarding the involvement of unions in the collective bargaining process where none of the employees of an organisation are members of a union. Litigation of this type would be lengthy and ultimately expensive for both local organisations and Canberra's taxpayers. At best, these amendments are unnecessary and include language that is unclear and could easily be misconstrued.

I urge the Assembly to disallow this instrument and give the minister's office the opportunity to reflect on the ambiguities and the potential for risky litigation that the passage of this disallowable instrument would bring and to get it right so that businesses, employees and employer groups are not wondering what a very significant code means to them and how it impacts their bargaining negotiations.

MR GENTLEMAN (Brindabella—Manager of Government Business, Minister for Corrections, Minister for Industrial Relations and Workplace Safety, Minister for Planning and Land Management and Minister for Police and Emergency Services) (10.25): The government opposes the motion before us. Let me be very clear: the Secure Local Jobs Code is an instrumental reform which we are very proud of. The Secure Local Jobs Code package of measures has strengthened the government's procurement practices to improve ethical and labour standards in business.

It is important to be clear that this is not, fundamentally, a piece of legislation regulating working conditions. The code does not regulate employers in the way that the Fair Work Act does. The requirements under the Secure Local Jobs Code were introduced by the government to create a fairer procurement process for ethical employees and to hold to account businesses' procurement processes which do not meet the industrial and legal obligations. This legislation ensures that public money is spent in accordance with the values and expectations of this community.

If we are to be an equitable and inclusive jurisdiction, it is incumbent on us to ensure that our procurement processes provide secure local jobs. If industry had a perfect record of ethical procurement and treating workers fairly, we would have no need for a Secure Local Jobs Code. The reality is that some businesses choose profit over ethical standards, and this community expects that public funds will be used ethically.

The Secure Local Jobs Code sets out the government's expectations on workplace standards for our service providers, including: pay and employment conditions; insurance, tax and superannuation; health and safety, including training and instructors; and collective bargaining, freedom of association and representation rights.

Under the code, businesses tendering for government work in the construction, cleaning, security or traffic management sectors and businesses tendering for ACT government contract work worth over \$200,000 that is predominantly for labour need to meet workplace standards as outlined by the Secure Local Jobs Code. In order to tender for territory-funded work, these businesses must have a Secure Local Jobs Code certificate and must also complete a labour relations training and workplace equity plan if the value of the work is more than \$25,000.

As of 9 February 2021, 1,842 businesses hold a secure local jobs code certificate. This figure demonstrates that the code has been well received by employers and that thousands of employees have received the benefits of working under the Secure Local Jobs Code.

Following operational experience over the 12 months of the code and feedback from stakeholders seeking clarity on how to comply with their obligations under the code,

amendments to the Secure Local Jobs Code were undertaken. These amendments to the code, which took effect in September 2020, were informed by both operational experience gathered since the commencement of the code in January 2019 and feedback from industry stakeholders.

This experience and feedback helped identify opportunities for enhancement to the Secure Local Jobs Code, which are: to support a clarity of obligations for both code certified entities and other stakeholders, including employee representatives; enhancements to the compliance and enforcement framework; and opportunities for further education on compliance obligations to support government and businesses to comply with the code.

The Secure Local Jobs Code Advisory Council, whose membership includes both employee representatives and industry representatives, has a role to advise me about matters relating to the operations of the code. The advisory council provided comment and input during the development of the proposed amendments which are being opposed by Mr Cain. Feedback from the advisory council members was actively sought to inform the former minister's decision. I have met with the advisory council and all members have reiterated their support for the code to me and their desire to see safe and secure local jobs in the ACT.

The *Canberra Times* earlier this week may have described this opposition as new and progressive, but the truth is that we see the same thing time after time from the Liberal Party attempting to undermine worker protections and the right to safe and secure local jobs. There is a clear difference in the values in this chamber today. The government stands for working people. Fair pay and conditions for workers is a basic expectation of our procurement process.

As we speak, Mr Cain's Liberal mates on the hill are trying to pass legislation to weaken worker rights and protections. It is disappointing that one of Mr Cain's first actions in this place is to try to do the same. Disappointing but not surprising. This is what the Liberal Party does. This is who they are. Their priority is not secure employment and fair pay for workers. That is why the government cannot support efforts to overturn the Secure Local Jobs Code.

This motion shows nothing has changed. The Canberra Liberals remain as conservative as ever. Conversely, this government has once again demonstrated our commitment to safe and secure local jobs. Yesterday the Chief Minister announced a significant improvement in the ACT jobs market despite the ongoing impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. This shows that our commitment to secure local jobs is good for the economy, good for businesses and good for workers. This is because having a fair and equitable city ensures that everyone benefits.

The code helps us to ensure equity and protects the rights of workers. By supporting this motion, the Canberra Liberals are showing that they do not support the right to collectively bargain and they do not support workers.

As we work to recover from the worst ever economic impact to our city, it is more important than ever to do this by supporting employees and backing equity. If

anything, we should be strengthening the code and its enforcement. Unlike the Canberra Liberals, we will always stand up for workers, and I will always stand up for workers. I am proud of the Secure Local Jobs Code and urge the Assembly to reject this attack on hardworking Canberrans.

MR BRADDOCK (Yerrabi) (10.32): The Secure Local Jobs Code was put in place to support the awarding of territory-funded work to businesses that meet the highest ethical and labour standards across their business. The Greens supported this bill when it was first put forward, and we support it for the same reasons now. The Greens believe that everyone has a right to meaningful, secure, paid employment. We affirm that workplaces must be inclusive and free from discrimination and harassment, and we maintain that job insecurity, unemployment and underemployment further entrench inequality in our society.

The Secure Local Jobs Code has been put in place to ensure better outcomes for workers in businesses and organisations that tender for territory-funded work by using the government's purchasing power to uphold workplace standards and create a level playing field.

We know that overwhelming evidence shows that insecure work is a social determinant of poor mental and physical health. We have seen this play out with tragic effects both nationally and internationally in the COVID pandemic. We know that insecure work is a problem for renters, as fluctuating incomes make financial management difficult. We know that similar industry-based codes, for example in the cleaning sector, have resulted in drastic improvements to worker and community safety.

The Greens have been vocal in their support for the right to be a member of a union and/or collectively bargain, collectively withhold labour, and collectively organise in the workplace. We believe that those rights are essential to achieving a sustainable and democratic future. It is for these reasons—protecting workers' rights, health and safety—that the Greens will not support this motion today.

MR CAIN (Ginninderra) (10.33), in reply: It is disappointing that it seems that the minister and the member for Yerrabi have predicted what I was going to be speaking about because they have addressed nothing of what I actually spoke about—that is, this law is unclear in its application, and potentially inconsistent with commonwealth legislation. I have not made one statement about the merits or otherwise of the code. I have not drawn any references to the unions in terms of their approach to workplace negotiations. My concern is that the community is about to be delivered an instrument that is unclear and likely to lead to costly litigation. That should be a priority of this Assembly.

Irrespective of whether we agree on the policy on this or that, we should all be committed to making sure that the community gets legislation that is clear and does not pose the risk of costly court disputes. I think that the speeches in reply were written way before either member knew what I was actually going to say, and that is pretty disappointing, quite frankly. My concern, as the minister was alerted to last

year, is that this is potentially inconsistent with commonwealth legislation, and this is an opportunity for the now minister to get this right.

By disallowing this instrument, the code does not disappear, as the minister would be aware. The previous code would continue to be in force. This motion is not an anti-code motion; it is not an anti-union motion. I have been a member of the union myself and recognise the contributions that they make to enterprise negotiations. I urge the Assembly to allow the minister to go back to the 2019 code and ensure that its drafting will not create ambiguities and certainly not raise the prospect of being inconsistent with commonwealth law.

Question put:

That the motion be agreed to.

The Assembly voted—

Ayes 8

Mr Cain
Ms Castley
Mr Coe
Mr Hanson
Mrs Jones
Mrs Kikkert
Ms Lawder
Mr Parton

Noes 15

Ms Berry
Mr Braddock
Ms Burch
Ms Cheyne
Ms Clay
Ms Davidson
Mr Davis
Mr Gentleman
Ms Orr
Dr Paterson
Mr Pettersson
Mr Rattenbury
Mr Steel
Ms Stephen-Smith
Ms Vassarotti

Question resolved in the negative.

Education and Community Inclusion—Standing Committee Statement by chair

MR PETTERSSON (Yerrabi) (10.41): Pursuant to standing order 246A, I wish to make a statement on behalf of the Standing Committee on Education and Community Inclusion. At its private meeting on 2 February 2021, the committee resolved to conduct an inquiry into infrastructure management in ACT schools. At that meeting the committee agreed to the following terms of reference for the inquiry:

1. The Standing Committee on Education and Community Inclusion resolves to inquire into and report on the management of ACT school infrastructure, with particular reference to:
 - a) the management of hazardous substances and materials in schools;
 - b) planning for the ongoing maintenance of school facilities, including the process to identify and address current and future infrastructure needs in schools;
 - c) the management of capacity issues in schools, including the use of temporary facilities for schools running above capacity and the plans for schools running below capacity;

- d) the adequacy of heating and cooling systems in schools;
 - e) the demand for sporting facilities on school grounds and measures to address this demand;
 - f) classroom design;
 - g) the environmental sustainability of school infrastructure and facilities;
 - h) the adequacy of parking and bike storage facilities;
 - i) accessibility for students and staff with disabilities;
 - j) accessibility of school facilities by local communities;
 - k) any other relevant matters.
2. The Committee will report to the Assembly on or before the last sitting day of 2021.

The committee called for public submissions on 3 February, with a closing date of 1 May 2021. The committee intends to hold public hearings from April 2021.

COVID-19 Emergency Response Legislation Amendment Bill 2020 (No 3)

Debate resumed from 2 December 2020, on motion by **Mr Barr**:

That this bill be agreed to in principle.

MS LEE (Kurrajong—Leader of the Opposition) (10.43): This bill is the fourth in the series of COVID-19 bills, and the primary purpose of this bill is to extend a number of existing COVID-19 legislation measures adopted through the COVID-19 Emergency Response Act 2020 and the COVID-19 Emergency Response Legislation Amendment Act 2020.

It is important to note that the bill extends measures necessary for responding to the pandemic that are due to expire and need to continue. It is also important to note, however, that the measures to be extended are temporary. The bill amends 16 acts and repeals two measures under the Crimes (Sentence Administration) Act 2005 that are no longer required.

When the original act was introduced, little did any of us realise that almost 12 months later we would need to extend, yet again, the emergency measures first introduced in March 2020. The statistics of the impact of the virus around the world are frightening, and we can be exceptionally grateful that we live in a country where all governments, at all levels, recognised the need to act and did so swiftly last year.

The measures that have been taken here in the ACT are, by and large—and by many interstate comparisons—sensible and practical, and the Canberra Liberals supported many of them. That said, we have not been pain free in the ACT and there are many businesses that have been affected and have suffered, and some may never come back. Travel businesses and tourist destinations have struggled. The ACT tourism industry

is a major economic driver for our city. We have lost major annual events—Summernats, Floriade, the Royal Canberra Show, national and regional wine shows and the National Folk Festival, to name just a few. With respect to our hospitality sector, which relies very heavily on the Monday to Friday office foot traffic for custom, some businesses have gone or are teetering on closure. Acknowledging that the ACT has not been immune from economic pressures, it was disappointing that the ACT Labor-Greens government offered one of the leanest assistance packages of all the state offerings and took their time to announce any relief.

I place on the record the Canberra Liberals' appreciation of those who have been at the front line of delivering tests and crucial health services and of people who have worked in supermarkets, hardware stores, takeaway food shops, service stations and pharmacies, even when the risks were not fully known. I also put on the record our appreciation of all Canberrans who have undertaken testing so that we can be confident in our COVID-free status.

I also thank everyone at the ACT Health Directorate for the monthly reporting that was established in the first of these COVID bills. They have been informative and a valuable record of how the ACT has progressed through 2020 and beyond. On that basis, it is the view not only of the Canberra Liberals but also of the Standing Committee on Economy and Gender and Economic Equality that these monthly reports should continue for at least the next full 12 months.

There is still much uncertainty in our community about the ongoing impacts of the pandemic this year, and the government has a duty to keep Canberrans updated regularly about what is going on. As we have seen over the progression of the pandemic, much can change overnight. A month is a long time in the history of this pandemic and quarterly reporting is a lifetime. Now that the COVID-19 Emergency Health Committee is not being convened, it is especially pertinent that we continue to have monthly updates.

Reports are currently required after each month that a COVID-19 declaration is in force. This bill amends the reporting periods so that reports will be made each quarter whilst the declaration is in force. In his speech, the Chief Minister suggested that quarterly reporting reflected the practical reality of zero monthly reports most of the time so far. Given that, it is surely not an onerous task to continue to report monthly to at least give effect to a full year's record of monthly reports and, if nothing else, to give peace of mind to the Canberra community.

I note that the Chief Minister has advised the Standing Committee on Economy and Gender and Economic Equality that he does not agree with the committee that monthly reporting should be retained. The Canberra Liberals disagree with his view on this. I will move the amendment in the detail stage, but I certainly hope that the ACT Greens will live up to their rhetoric about doing things in the new normal way and not just blindly support their political partner. I urge them to support that amendment.

My amendment gives effect to retaining the status quo with respect to supporting Legislative Assembly scrutiny of the emergency response measures—a sensible and

necessary step in our ongoing response to the pandemic. Having regular updates on a monthly basis is important to keep our community up to date with how their community leaders are dealing with the pandemic and acknowledges that things can move quickly in a pandemic. I urge all members in this chamber to support the amendment.

MR RATTENBURY (Kurrajong—Attorney-General, Minister for Consumer Affairs, Minister for Gaming and Minister for Water, Energy and Emissions Reduction) (10.49): I rise to support the COVID-19 Emergency Response Legislation Amendment Bill 2020 (No 3). The bill is the latest in a series of bills that the Legislative Assembly has considered to support our response to the COVID-19 pandemic as an Assembly and as a community.

The majority of the provisions of the bill will extend the measures adopted in the COVID-19 Emergency Response Act 2020 and the COVID-19 Emergency Response Legislation Amendment Act 2020. The extension of these measures will ensure that they remain available for the duration of the pandemic. The ongoing availability of these measures will allow the ACT government and its operational areas to respond quickly to changes in the COVID-19 situation in the ACT. It will also allow businesses and community members to engage with government and the justice system in ways that are appropriate in the circumstances.

The Greens support this bill. We think that we are still in a period where there are risks and impacts flowing from the pandemic and the public health emergency declarations. We have seen in recent times that those things can change quickly.

We also recognise that there is some work to be done—and that work is already underway through the course of this year—to look at whether measures that have come in during the pandemic response may become permanent measures or whether some of them should be ended. Across the spectrum of things that have been changed during this period, some have proved to be good changes to practice, whether they are business practice or practices of government agencies and the like. That is a discussion that this Assembly will need to have down the line, but that is not what we are considering today. Today we are considering more the short-term amendments.

The bill will make amendments to a number of measures in three of my portfolios, so I will speak about those measures as part of this discussion. Firstly, in my portfolio as Attorney-General, the bill will amend the Associations Incorporation Act; the Bail Act; the Crimes Act; the Crimes (Sentencing) Act; the Evidence (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act; the Family Violence Act; the Personal Violence Act; and the Supreme Court Act. The bill will also amend measures in the Retirement Villages Act, which falls within my portfolio as the Minister for Consumer Affairs. Lastly, the bill will make a technical amendment to a measure in the Gaming Machine Regulation, which sits within my portfolio as the Minister for Gaming. I would like to provide the Assembly with a little more detail about these amendments.

A COVID-19 measure in the Associations Incorporation Act authorises the general meetings and special general meetings of an association to be held using alternative methods of communication and allows the use of proxy arrangements. This measure is

due to expire on 8 April. The bill includes an amendment to extend the expiry date by six months, to 8 October this year. The six-month extension will give sufficient time for associations to amend their rules to cater for special meeting arrangements that will be needed in the future.

Similarly, the bill includes an amendment for a six-month extension of another measure in the Associations Incorporation Act, giving power to the Registrar-General to allow extensions of prescribed periods of time for compliance with certain requirements under the act, such as the timing for the review or audit of an association's accounts. This recognises the potential for the usual compliance time frames to be disrupted by the impact of COVID-19.

The bill includes an amendment to extend the expiry period of a measure in the Bail Act, which allows a person to give an undertaking to appear in court by audiovisual link. This measure is due to expire on 8 April this year and will be extended to expire 12 months after a COVID-19 declaration ends. This amendment will continue to support court operations by allowing the court to limit the number of people at the court, where possible. This will assist the court to maintain appropriate numbers of people at the courthouse, supporting its safe and effective operation during the pandemic.

A COVID-19 measure in the Crimes Act allows sworn warrants to be applied for and transmitted electronically. This measure will expire when the COVID-19 declaration ends, currently 17 February this year. The bill will extend the expiry period to 12 months after a COVID-19 declaration, as extended, ends. This amendment will continue to support ACT Policing operations by implementing an alternative COVID-19 safe procedure.

The bill includes amendments to extend the expiry period of two measures in the Crimes (Sentencing) Act, both of which are due to expire on 8 April 2021. The first allows an offender to give an undertaking before the court as an alternative to signing an undertaking to comply with the offender's good behaviour obligations. This amendment will also be extended to expire 12 months after a COVID-19 declaration ends so that it can continue to support court operations, again by allowing the court to limit the number of people at the court, where possible. The second measure allows the court to request an intensive correction order assessment report as part of a pre-sentence report. This amendment will be extended to expire 12 months after a COVID-19 declaration ends, to limit the unnecessary exposure of offenders to court and corrections staff.

A measure in the Evidence (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act is due to expire when the COVID-19 declaration ends, which is currently 17 February. This measure allows the executive to make a regulation to permit the use of pre-recorded evidence for all witnesses during the pandemic. In the event of significant disruption to court operations as a result of the pandemic, this measure will support court operations. The bill will extend the expiry of the provision for this measure to 12 months after a COVID-19 declaration ends.

The bill also includes amendments to extend the expiry date for measures in the Family Violence Act and the Personal Violence Act. These measures extend general interim orders that are due, or likely, to expire during the pandemic, for up to six months; allow appearances at a proceeding to be undertaken by audiovisual means during the pandemic; allow consent to be given by audiovisual means during the pandemic; and allow an acknowledgement to be given in writing or before the court, and to be recorded by the court, during the pandemic. These measures are due to expire on 8 April. The bill will extend the expiry date of these measures, to expire 12 months after a COVID-19 declaration ends. These amendments will continue to support court operations and access to justice by allowing the court to reduce the number of people at the court, where possible, to maintain safe practices.

The COVID-19 measure in section 68B of the Supreme Court Act allows a person accused of committing an offence that is normally able to be tried only by jury, to elect to be tried by a judge alone during the “COVID-19 emergency period”. In the act, the “COVID-19 emergency period” was defined to end on 31 December 2020 but could be extended by regulation. The COVID-19 emergency period was extended by regulation until 31 March 2021. The bill includes an amendment to the definition of “COVID-19 emergency period” to end on 30 June 2021. The amendment will prolong the availability of this measure to assist in reducing the risk of COVID-19 impacts on court listing arrangements. A factor relevant to continuing this measure is the impact of physical distancing requirements in the courts, which means that each jury trial requires the use of two courtrooms. This has the potential to result in delays in trials and the consequent delay to affording justice to both the accused and the victim. Extending this measure until 30 June will continue to provide for the option of judge-alone trials to reduce this risk.

The bill includes amendments to extend the expiry date of a number of COVID-19 measures in the Retirement Villages Act, which ensure that meetings of residents of retirement villages and meetings with retirement village operators can continue to be held during the pandemic. These measures are due to expire on 8 April 2021 and will be extended to 12 months after a COVID-19 emergency.

The expiry period of two COVID-19 measures in the Retirement Villages Act will not be extended and will expire on 8 April 2021 because these measures will not be needed past this point, including because operators have put in place alternative ways of meeting their obligations in relation to certain requirements under the act.

Finally, the bill includes a minor technical amendment to the Gaming Machine Regulation, as I alluded to earlier.

Madam Speaker, I would like to conclude by reiterating that the amendments in this bill relating to legislation in my portfolio are necessary to support the ACT government’s continuing commitment to serve the people of Canberra and to ensure that they continue to have effective access to the justice system in a safe way. I commend the bill to the Assembly.

MR BARR (Kurrajong—Chief Minister, Treasurer, Minister for Climate Action, Minister for Economic Development and Minister for Tourism) (10.59), in reply: I thank members for their contribution to the debate. The COVID-19 Emergency Response Legislation Amendment Bill 2020 (No 3) is an important piece of legislation that will assist the government and the community to continue to navigate through this pandemic.

The measures in this bill were first adopted, as speakers have alluded to, in April and May last year, not long after the first COVID cases were detected in Australia, and almost a year later, it is clear that the pandemic is not yet over.

Over the holiday period, the Avalon cluster in Sydney affected many family plans. In the New Year, we have seen more transmissible strains of the virus, in a shorthanded way described as the UK or South African variants, being detected in hotel quarantine in a number of states, forcing lockdowns—relatively short and sharp so far, but they are obviously of concern. All of these events remind us that the pandemic persists and that the ACT must remain vigilant to ensure that we continue to protect each other from the virus.

This bill reflects the government's commitment to keep the territory functioning during these uncertain times. It focuses on extending the expiry of non-health-related measures that were adopted under the original Emergency Response Act and the Emergency Response Legislation Amendment Act. Some of these measures, I remind colleagues, are due to expire on 8 April this year. So it is prudent to extend these measures because we need to be able to function in a COVID-safe way whilst the pandemic remains.

Through the legislation the extension of these measure will, in most cases, be tied to the duration of the COVID-19 emergency declaration. The provisions establishing most of the measures will remain in the ACT legislation until 12 months after the COVID-19 declaration, as extended, was last in force. However, generally, the measures will be available for use only when an emergency declaration is in force.

Extending the availability of these measures means that government operations in areas such as the courts, policing, the prison, the Sentence Administration Board and schools will continue to be well placed to respond to the pandemic by changing their operational procedures, where that is considered necessary.

Other amendments in the bill concern technical matters, such as amendments to the Gaming Machine Regulations, and the repeal of two measures in the Crimes (Sentence Administration) Act.

Section 3 of the COVID-19 Emergency Response Act sets out reporting requirements for COVID-19 measures under the Emergency Response Act and the COVID-19 Emergency Response Legislation Amendment Act.

As has been discussed in the in-principle debate, the amendment that the bill introduces would change the reporting period from monthly to quarterly, meaning that

the minister responsible for a specific COVID-19 measure will be required to prepare a quarterly report and present that to the Assembly one month after the end of the quarter.

Of the initial 71 measures established in April 2020, 11 measures were technical amendments, rather than substantive measures capable of being reported against; four measures did not have ongoing measurable impacts; and one measure was repealed. Of the remaining 55 measures, in the November 2020 reporting period, 24 measures have not been used and eight measures could not be reported on due to the lack of data available.

The government appreciates the consideration of this issue by the standing committee. I have responded, as Ms Lee indicated in her comments, to the chairs of both the Standing Committee on Economy and Gender and Economic Equality and the Scrutiny Committee, explaining why the government considers that the proposed change to reporting arrangements is, indeed, proportionate and appropriate.

Quarterly reporting will enable the Assembly to monitor the use of these measures to identify trends over a longer reporting period. Quarterly reporting would not compromise Assembly scrutiny. Proposed quarterly reporting also aligns with the length of time that a public health emergency declaration may be extended by the Minister for Health under the Public Health Act.

To respond directly to Ms Lee's observations, the shift to quarterly reporting supports the ability of the ACT Public Service to focus resources where they are most needed as the government works towards recovery planning. The other side of politics are always keen for red tape reduction and a more efficient government. This is that in action. That they are going to oppose it—

Ms Lee: Is it? Or is it a lack of transparency?

MR BARR: It certainly is red tape reduction in action. Having public servants prepare nil monthly reports, month on month, is a waste of their time. It should be focused on recovery planning and what is most important now. That is the government's view.

The bill also includes a provision to amend section 3A of the COVID-19 Emergency Response Act. Section 3A concerns the presentation requirements of subordinate laws and disallowable instruments made under a power given under a COVID-19 measure. Currently, section 3A requires that these subordinate laws and disallowable instruments must be presented to the Legislative Assembly within the first sitting day after the instrument is notified on the Legislation Register.

If a subordinate law or disallowable instrument is not notified within this time frame, it is taken to be repealed and the process of creating and enacting an instrument would have to be repeated.

This bill seeks to amend this requirement to allow for such subordinate laws or disallowable instruments to be presented within two sitting days after notification.

This amendment will reduce the risk that an instrument will be repealed due to administrative oversight in the context of a highly restricted time frame.

COVID-19 has posed unprecedented challenges here, in Australia and around the world. Along with the exemplary effort of the Canberra community, the ACT government's measures so far have proved highly successful in containing the outbreak in the ACT.

The government's priority is protecting and creating local jobs, directly through the Jobs for Canberrans Fund, and more broadly through our Jobs and Economic Recovery Plan.

We established the Jobs for Canberrans Fund and have injected nearly \$30 million into that fund to create secure and meaningful job opportunities for those who need it the most. This included providing employment opportunities for people in casual or semiskilled work who had lost their jobs during the pandemic or had been significantly impacted due to COVID-19. We targeted this with a particular focus on people who fell through the cracks, who were ignored, overlooked or not considered worthy by the Commonwealth's JobKeeper and JobSeeker schemes.

The return of domestic tourism, as has been discussed in this debate, is of course a key pillar of our economic recovery. Around 90 per cent of our city's visitors are from the Australian market.

Late last year I announced that the government will continue its support for Canberrans and businesses as we recover from the effects of the pandemic, by extending a range of measures that were due to finish at the end of the calendar year.

Included in this is an extension of residential tenancy relief measures until 30 June 2021, to ensure that residential landlords and tenants still being affected by the pandemic continue to be supported. Commercial tenancies relief was also extended to 31 January 2021 to align with the current end date of the National Cabinet mandatory code of conduct.

As the budget figures have indicated, and the latest economic data, the recovery of private sector activity in the ACT is ongoing. It is stronger than in the rest of the country but there is still a way to go, and that will continue through 2021.

An extra \$63 million will help the ACT stay on top of the COVID-19 pandemic, with funding contained in yesterday's budget including a rollout of vaccines for our region. The ACT will take responsibility for areas of regional New South Wales, in addition to residents within our own territory, as part of the national rollout schedule.

The amendments in this bill support the ACT government's continuing commitment to keeping Canberra safe. I can reconfirm that if there is any significant emergency response needed—if any of the measures are used—the government will make that very clear publicly, through the media, and I will notify the Leader of the Opposition if any of these powers are exercised as soon as that is practicable, so that the Leader

of the Opposition, the Assembly and the community are aware in close to real time of any action and the reason for it.

Clearly the government will be making large public announcements about the use of the powers that are contained within the legislation in any event, as has been the case over the last 11 months.

I thank the Attorney-General and his directorate for the work in preparing this legislation. I would also like to thank the Minister for Corrections, the Minister for Health, the Minister for Education and Youth Affairs, the Minister for Gaming, the Minister for Consumer Affairs and the Minister for Families and Community Services, and their respective directorates, for their contributions to this bill. I commend it to the Assembly.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Bill agreed to in principle.

Detail stage

Bill, by leave, taken as a whole.

MS LEE (Kurrajong-Leader of the Opposition) (11.10), by leave: I move amendments Nos 1 to 3 circulated in my name together [*see schedule 1 at page 428*]. I understand my amendments will not be getting the support from the Labor and Greens, which is disappointing to say the least. The Chief Minister has said that one of the reasons he will not be supporting the amendments is that the bill reduces red tape and that the amendments would be a waste of public servants' time. We only have his word on that. We are asking on behalf of the Canberra community for some transparency.

We know that these are extraordinary times; the Chief Minister has admitted that these are extraordinary times. He has said himself that the pandemic is ongoing. He cannot have it both ways—on the one hand say, “Hey, the pandemic is still going; I’m going to get all my political mileage out of this,” and on the other hand say, “No, it’s not important to give transparency and ongoing accountability and scrutiny to the Canberra public.” This smacks of hypocrisy.

What the Chief Minister must remember is that it is not just the Canberra Liberals who saw a problem with this. Let me quote from the scrutiny of bills committee’s comments on this bill:

Given the significant potential rights impacts that many of these measures may have, the committee is concerned over the decreased frequency of reporting.

That is a direct quote from the Assembly’s scrutiny of bills committee, and we have both spoken about the concerns raised by the Standing Committee on Economy and Gender and Economic Equality. These are not just concerns raised by the Canberra Liberals that the Chief Minister should just be throwing off. It is about seeking

transparency; it is about giving the Canberra public what they need to ensure that their community leaders are taking the appropriate actions in dealing with this pandemic.

I commend my amendments to the Assembly.

MR BARR (Kurrajong—Chief Minister, Treasurer, Minister for Climate Action, Minister for Economic Development and Minister for Tourism) (11.13): I have touched upon the government's views on this matter, and I want to reiterate that if any of the powers are used, there will be a great degree of public engagement on that question because there is massive media interest and a great deal of community interest. We have delivered more press conferences on COVID than any other issue in the 16 years that I have been in this place. It is almost a daily affair. There were various points during the pandemic when either the Minister for Health or I were standing in front of the media every single day. So there has been no lack of transparency in relation to the government's responses to the pandemic and that will, of course, continue.

What we are talking about here is paperwork flowing through month after month with zero reporting. If a measure is used, it is publicised; there is reporting. I have given the undertaking that if we use a measure, it will be very clearly advised to the community, the media and the Leader of the Opposition. That is what the government will do—it will not tie up bureaucrats in month after month of zero reporting requirements. This is a better use of government resources. That is cutting red tape and that is getting on with the economic recovery. That is what we are focused on and that is what we will be doing.

I table the government response to the Standing Committee on Economy and Gender and Economic Equality report for the benefit of members and indicate that we will not be supporting Ms Lee's amendments:

Economy and Gender and Economic Equality—Standing Committee—
Report 1—*Inquiry into COVID-19 Emergency Response Legislation Amendment
Bill 2020 (No 3)*—Government response, dated 8 February 2021.

MR RATTENBURY (Kurrajong—Attorney-General, Minister for Consumer Affairs, Minister for Gaming and Minister for Water, Energy and Emissions Reduction) (11.15): We need to be clear that we are not talking about taking reporting away; there will still be reporting on a quarterly basis. The Greens supported this amendment when the Liberal Party brought the amendments through nearly 12 months ago. We agree that there should be transparency; we are now having a semantic debate about how often there should be reporting.

We need to also be clear that resources are not endless and that we are keen to strike the right balance between providing the accountability to the Assembly, being clear with the community about what is happening and also ensuring that we can focus the public service resources where they need to be focused—whether that is on getting the vaccine rollout right, working with the community and other recovery measures. There is a balance to be struck here. There is a clear undertaking from the Chief Minister that if there is any use of the powers, it will be made very clear publicly and

will be provided to the Leader of the Opposition. We are able to strike the right balance here between being clear and transparent and getting our public services resources focused where we need them. The Greens will not be supporting Ms Lee's amendment.

Question put:

That the amendments be agreed to.

The Assembly voted—

Ayes 9

Noes 16

Mr Cain
Ms Castley
Mr Coe
Mr Hanson
Mrs Jones
Mrs Kikkert
Ms Lawder
Ms Lee
Mr Parton

Mr Barr
Ms Berry
Mr Braddock
Ms Burch
Ms Cheyne
Ms Clay
Ms Davidson
Mr Davis
Mr Gentleman

Ms Orr
Dr Paterson
Mr Pettersson
Mr Rattenbury
Mr Steel
Ms Stephen-Smith
Ms Vassarotti

Amendments negatived.

Bill, as a whole, agreed to.

Bill agreed to.

Gungahlin—town centre

MS ORR (Yerrabi) (11.22): I move:

That this Assembly:

(1) notes that:

- (a) the development of Gungahlin Town Centre is a matter of note to the residents of Gungahlin;
- (b) unlike other more established town centres, Gungahlin is relatively young and has been developed from its earliest days with the ambition of being a genuine mixed-use precinct; and
- (c) there is great opportunity to guide the remaining development of the town centre to ensure more recent learnings from practice in the ACT and other jurisdictions are applied to future developments; and

(2) calls on the ACT Government to support the further development of the Gungahlin region and town centre by:

- (a) implementing best practice mixed-use development through the planning framework, and allowing for:
 - (i) specific requirements to achieve a balanced diversity of uses within mixed-use developments including community uses;

- (ii) specific requirements to achieve a higher level of commercial and business uses and subsequent activity within mixed-use developments;
 - (iii) providing for requirements for commercial fitouts that enable the easy establishment of varied business and commercial activity without the need for significant modification or retrofitting;
 - (iv) clear design principles that link development activity with achieving active precincts and vibrant street level activity; and
 - (v) traffic flow around the town centre;
- (b) ensuring current sales of development sites incorporate the requirements to support best practice mixed-use developments;
 - (c) implementing best practice mixed-use developments processes and regulations that are used to inform Draft Variation 364 and the Territory Plan; and
 - (d) engage with the Gungahlin Town Centre community on mixed-use developments in their town centre.

I rise today to draw attention to a topic that is a matter of great discussion within my electorate of Yerrabi: the development of the Gungahlin town centre. The Gungahlin town centre is the newest town centre in the ACT and one that has grown a lot from its humble beginning as one supermarket, a sandwich shop and the Raiders club. Today, we have clothing stores, cafes, restaurants, office spaces, supermarkets, chemists, a hotel, the best empanadas in Canberra—and the list goes on. Light rail has come to the town centre and a cinema complex is under construction. ACT Labor has committed to build a community and arts centre in consultation with the community, bringing even more life to our town centre.

As our town centre has grown, the development and planning settings that have given rise to it have been a heavily debated topic. Ours is the first town centre to be developed since self-government and presents a shift away from the development traditions of the ACT's other town centres. One benefit we have had is the benefit of learning through past practice. In the traditional model of town centre development used in Canberra, residential development has been minimal or even discouraged. The outcome has been town centres that thrive during business hours but falter at other times. The model also fails to realise the benefits of living close to work. Gungahlin town centre has from the start had a focus on mixed-use development, including a notable residential component, with the objective of overcoming, from the start, some of the challenges faced in other town centres.

For non-residential activity, the traditional approach to town centre development has seen a large federal commonwealth public service department located within the town centre. We have seen this in Woden with the health department; Belconnen with home affairs and the Bureau of Statistics; Tuggeranong with the department of social services; and the city with the tax department, among others.

As the first town centre developed since self-government, Gungahlin has been overlooked by many successive federal governments, with no large federal public

service employer having moved into the town centre. This is disappointing given that the original plan for Canberra focused on having town centres to support active communities where people would not have far to travel for everything they needed, a planning policy which has been supported by successive planning strategies both before and after self-government. Without that large anchor tenant, our town centre has not had the same head start that other town centres have benefited from and even continue to benefit from.

While we have seen some non-residential development come to the town centre, most of the development has been mixed use, with a strong ratio of residential to commercial. Continuing on this path, and without this anchor tenant, there is a feeling in the community that the balance between the residential uses and the non-residential uses in our town centre's mixed-use development is not quite hitting the mark. This feeling is being compounded at present, as we are increasingly seeing buildings and proposals for buildings which focus on residential, with only small commercial offerings in more recently developed parts of the town centre.

If we are to fully realise the town centre as envisioned in the original intent and aspired to by the community, there needs to be a commercial approach to the development proposals in our town centre: a commercial lead where we know what economic activity we want to attract, we know what companies want to locate to our town centre, and we build rather than retrofit for this activity so that there is no reason for it not to come to our town centre.

The current approach and mechanisms in the planning space have not produced the outcomes that the community aspires to. While it will be argued by many that there is no demand for commercial in Gungahlin town centre at present, if we build the town centre based on current demand, without futureproofing, we will build out the opportunity in the future.

If we do not protect the public interest and development continues the way it is until all the space in the town centre is used up, we will end up with very little commercial space and almost exclusively retail and residential buildings in the town centre, with no opportunity to harness future demand that arises—not to mention that very few mixed-use developments done by private industry are reserving any space for community facilities.

A failure to intervene now because the market is not providing the results that we seek will lead to problems and poorer outcomes down the track for our community. The outcome that we are facing is in fundamental opposition to the planning intent. Given that the federal government is not helping the situation, we need to use the levers that we have to intervene.

That is what this motion is about. I would like to state for the record that mixed-use development has a lot of potential in what it can, as a built form, deliver to our community. Think of it this way. Under single-use land planning, when we set out to develop an area, we would have a mix of land uses or activities in a defined geographical area. Consider just about any suburb in Canberra. We would have residential; we would have commercial in the form of local shops; we would have a

school; there would be recreation areas with parks and sports ovals; and perhaps there would even be community health facilities or a community hall. This variety would be within the suburb, providing for a range of opportunities and services to meet the community's needs.

The downside to single-use land planning is that all these activities are very dispersed and the critical mass to support them does not always eventuate. The dispersal of activities also creates a transport task that creates a lot of traffic that then has a detrimental impact on the environment and does not support high-frequency public transport.

Mixed-use development is, in part, an answer to the experience of single-use land planning and its downsides. The concept is fairly straightforward insofar as you take a lot of uses that would usually be separated and that are spread out over a large geographic area and mix them all together in a smaller geographical area. The outcome is much more what people need closer to where they live and work.

For mixed use to be that, it must be a genuine and balanced mix of a range of urban activities—mixed-use developments where we have three or more activities and no one activity cannibalising the others. We have some good examples of mixed-use precincts in the ACT. One example is New Acton. During the development, the developers made a series of considered and proactive decisions to diversify the range of activities within the precinct, as well as individual buildings. The result is a dynamic urban area that supports activity all days of the week, during the day and evening, for a range of interests and needs.

Unfortunately, this is something that we have struggled to fully realise in development to date in Gungahlin. In place of buildings that provide a range of uses where no one is concentrated to the detriment of others, we have seen a trend for first-level commercial and then many levels of residential. The commercial parts of the buildings have been built, for the most part, without a clear tenant in mind, leading to many sites with hard fit-outs that need to be retrofitted with varying levels of success, to support businesses that may be interested in locating in the space. To fully realise the aspirations of our community for its town centre, we need to change the trend to make sure that we have the spaces for the businesses and jobs that we seek to have located in our town centre.

Never has there been more opportunity to realise what mixed-use development can achieve. As Canberra grows, it is also diversifying away from being fully reliant on the federal public service as the main employer. The APS will remain the biggest employer and central to the city, but opportunities are diversifying.

Part of the strategic objective spelled out in yesterday's budget is to leverage Canberra's competitive advantages in the tertiary education, space, defence, cybersecurity, advanced technology and manufacturing, and renewable energy sectors to support economic growth. We need to encourage these and other industries to set up in Gungahlin as well. Planning systems are a great lever to do this.

We have seen throughout 2020 that there are many ways to undertake office-based work. Many of us have a renewed appreciation of what it means to work from home. Some people enjoy it; others do not like it. A lot of people saw the advantages of being able to work from home some of the time. Much of the benefit has to do with the lack of commute when one is working from home, and potentially also the relaxed dress code.

Having truly mixed-use development allows for reducing commute times while still going to the office and enjoying the social benefits that that brings. It allows for a better work-life balance. The learnings from our experiences with different flexible arrangements for office-based work allow for the exploration of differently built formats in the town centre. The time is right to explore these.

With some thought and strategy, we can encourage this sort of diversification, and even explore some new opportunities not imagined a year ago in the Gungahlin town centre; but there needs to be the appropriate planning levers in place to ensure that the building stock is there now and into the future. I commend the motion to the Assembly.

MS CASTLEY (Yerrabi) (11.31): The Canberra Liberals welcome the opportunity to once again discuss planning issues in Gungahlin. The residents of Canberra, particularly Yerrabi, deserve a town centre that functions properly. What Gungahlin needs, perhaps more than anything else, is more jobs in the Gungahlin town centre. Whilst we support today's motion in principle, I am not convinced that today's motion will have any impact on the viability of Gungahlin.

It is great that the federal government is moving Defence Housing Australia to the town centre. The move will bring more weekday activity to the centre. We need the ACT government to properly prioritise making our town centres function as they were originally intended to.

Of course, given that this Labor government is older than the majority of the town centre, Labor has had every opportunity to get it right. Despite two decades in power, a quick glance through past notice papers and *Hansard* shows that calls to improve planning in Gungahlin have been a regular discussion point in this chamber.

The Gungahlin Community Council has been a strong voice, advocating for better planning and better outcomes, particularly in the town centre. As part of their advocacy and representation in the lead-up to the 2020 election, halting the loss of town centre commercial space to mixed residential and actively attracting more employers to Gungahlin were amongst the council's top priorities.

While discussing the council, I would like to thank the volunteers, who do a wonderful job serving our community. They are president Peter Elford, vice-president Henley Samuel, treasurer Darron Marks, secretary Sharee Schultz, public officer Kevin Cox, and general committee members Prasad Tipirneni, Dr Krishna Nadimpalli, Ralitsa, Shah, Pradeep, and Sunita. They are all such great people.

Throughout my campaign I had the opportunity to speak with thousands of Yerrabi residents. Whether they used the town centre for their shopping, recreation, business or employment, it was pretty clear that what was required to help make Gungahlin town centre more viable was more jobs in Gungahlin.

Canberra is at its best when our town centres are thriving. Whether Labor and the Greens like it or not, we are a decentralised and dispersed centre. The planning of Canberra has allowed us to be a bush capital with suburban blocks of land, served by a series of town centres.

Whilst we need to ensure that Canberrans have choices regarding houses, this government's obsession with building apartments is coming at the expense of other housing types. The government has a somewhat mythical view of mixed-use developments. The theory of it is understandable. A single building has various options, including residential, office and retail. However, in reality, so much of the forced ground-floor retail space in buildings across Canberra remains vacant.

If the proposal before us today is about having more vacant ground-floor units then that would be a suboptimal outcome. On the flip side, if the outcome is that these town centre developments will be entirely residential, that too is not addressing the need for more jobs in Gungahlin. We also know that there is still much more work to be done to ensure that we get the unit titling regime in Canberra right, particularly with regard to mixed-use developments.

As I said earlier, the principle of Ms Orr's motion is correct—that the land use is optimised according to demand and best practice. What we will struggle to do from the floor of the Assembly is make the ACT Labor-Greens government truly prioritise jobs in Gungahlin. I want to see a plan for a significant amount of additional A-grade office space in Gungahlin, with the ACT government actively working to secure a long-term tenant, be it from the ACT or federal government, or the private sector.

The lack of employment opportunities in the Gungahlin town centre has been an ongoing saga all the way back to 2008. This was at the time that the town centre planning study realised that the issue of increasing employment in Gungahlin town centre was at the forefront of residents' wish lists. Yet here we are, 13 years later, and residents still hold the same concerns. It is time for this government finally to take genuine action in securing jobs for the Gungahlin town centre.

MR BRADDOCK (Yerrabi) (11.36): Thank you for the opportunity to discuss something that is very close to my heart, and, I am sure, that of many members in this chamber—the future of Gungahlin. For too long, Gungahlin residents have noted with concern the outcomes of the planning process in the Gungahlin town centre. Simply, we must do better. We need better zoning, better mixed-use developments, better ideas and better implementation. This message has been repeated and consistently exclaimed about by local residents.

The town centre planning refresh was initiated in 2016 in direct response to community concerns. The community's feedback in the Gungahlin community survey

of 2019 revealed that over 50 per cent of residents wanted no more residential apartments in the town centre.

My experience on the campaign trail in the 2016 and 2020 election campaigns brought me into contact with numerous residents who were concerned about the make-up of the town centre. The Gungahlin Community Council, a body that I had the honour of serving on previously as secretary, has tirelessly advocated for more employment opportunities in the district to reduce the number of residents who need to commute each and every day outside their district.

Unfortunately, Gungahlin's lived experience has not lived up to what the intention was. In the town plan, precinct 2B was intended as an office park, providing employment for thousands of Gungahlin residents. There are now towering apartment buildings that incorporate one level of commercial space, topped off with residential apartments. Residents do not want to see the same results in Gungahlin town centre east. It is for this reason that I enthusiastically support Ms Castley's proposed amendment that makes specific mention of employment in the town centre.

The motion refers to draft variation 364, which I am compelled to speak about today. Its interim effect has expired and I, for one, will not mourn its passing. As the Gungahlin Community Council stated about the draft variation, it "entrenches the notion of Gungahlin as a dormitory district with a small employment base and limited services". Any return of DV364 that sells the people of Gungahlin short is not acceptable. The town plan must explicitly set out a vision for Gungahlin as a major hub for employment, shopping, social activities and public transport, particularly serving the suburbs within the Gungahlin district, to have my support.

I recognise that the likelihood of a major employer such as a large federal department moving into the Gungahlin town centre is very low. We need to accept the reality of that. But that does not mean we should send up the white flag. That does not mean we flog off the land for apartment towers, for as much as we can get, to balance the budget, moving on and washing our hands of Gungahlin. That is selling Gungahlin short.

I will support continued efforts to secure a large employer to move into the town centre, but it is also now time to be innovative. Gungahlinites have spoken repeatedly, consistently and emphatically about what they want for the town centre. We now need to listen to them again, because we need their vision and their ideas on how we can increase employment opportunities in the town centre, whilst simultaneously providing services badly needed in the Gungahlin district. This is a conversation I will be having with Gungahlin residents. To this end, I will be hosting an event at the Celebrate Gungahlin Festival at the end of March to do just that.

We need new and innovative ideas to create a town centre that works for the residents of Gungahlin. For example, the Gungahlin district is devoid of an aged-care facility. What is preventing us from creating an aged-care facility in Gungahlin town centre east, creating employment opportunities for staff, allowing Gungahlin residents to remain close to their local communities and allowing families to remain easily

connected? I provide this suggestion merely to highlight how we need to approach the problem with innovative thinking in order to create a town centre to be proud of.

Another part of the solution is to make mixed-use developments better, which is at the core of Ms Orr's motion and which I also support. We need to improve the quality of mixed-use developments to increase the level of community spaces, have flexible fit-outs, increase job creation space within mixed-use developments, and create active precincts rather than isolated monstrosities.

The current model of mixed-use developments will establish a dormitory town centre, with a smattering of retail offerings on the ground floor. This motion calls for us to improve how we can make mixed-use developments work better for residents, businesses and the community. Mixed-use development is one part of the answer and may need to be improved.

Mr Assistant Speaker, I seek leave to move my amendments together.

Leave granted.

MR BRADDOCK: I move:

Insert:

- (1) New clause: "(1) (d) all parties in the Assembly during the 2020 election campaign committed to build a large community centre in the Gungahlin Town Centre;"
- (2) New clause: "(2) (a) (vi) the creation of an entertainment precinct so as to enable a night time economy without impacting residents;"

I am seeking to amend the motion by adding two clauses. The first reflects the commitments made by all three parties present here in the Assembly during the 2020 election campaign for a large community space in the town centre. Such a facility, available for a variety of community groups, will provide a sorely needed venue contributing to the social and community fabric of Gungahlin. This amendment is to affirm this Assembly's commitment to this being built for the people of Gungahlin.

My second amendment recognises the importance of good design in allowing for an entertainment district, to create more economic opportunities within the Gungahlin town centre in a way that does not impact on the amenities of residents. Designated entertainment precincts protect venues and residents. New apartments and hotels would have to include noise insulation, residents would be informed before they move in, and venues would have to meet realistic noise limits.

MR PETTERSSON (Yerrabi) (11.43): I rise to support the motion moved by my Yerrabi colleague Ms Orr about Gungahlin town centre. I will say this as plainly as I can—Gungahlin is at risk of becoming a permanent commuter district. Unlike other town centres like Woden, Tuggeranong and Belconnen, there are limited employment opportunities in Gungahlin town centre. Yes, I know about the ACT government building. Yes, I know about Mitchell, and, yes, I know that DHA is moving in soon. But they are not enough for the entire district of Gungahlin.

Despite significant space being allocated towards commercial development in the past, there has been a lack of actual results in Gungahlin. As a result, we just see more and more apartment buildings instead of real employment opportunities. During the work week Gungahlin town centre can be a ghost town. Every morning a large proportion of Gungahlin's population commute out of the area, and in the evening they all commute home. Our roads become clogged during peak hour. Light rail and other public transport are even busier than usual.

The very jarring experience I think most Gungahlin residents can relate to is watching light rail vehicles trundle north up Northbourne Avenue at 8.30 in the morning completely empty, or sitting in bumper-to-bumper traffic and seeing that the road going the other way, into Gungahlin, is completely empty. Having to commute these long journeys, either by car or by public transport, has been shown time and again to reduce people's quality of life. The livability of Canberra is being negatively impacted by Gungahlin's status as a commuter district. My constituents can easily spend half an hour sitting in traffic to work and experience the same on the way back home. It can often take several minutes just to get through one intersection near the town centre, and even longer as you hit congestion heading into the city.

We want people to be spending time with their loved ones, close to home, being active outdoors, living the life they want, not being stuck in traffic trying to get to a job some place distant. If you walk around Gungahlin during the day you can see empty cafes, quiet shops and empty trams. The town centre is not lively and invigorating like residents want. And the businesses that are open, mainly hospitality and retail, often struggle without the regular customers that other town centres have.

Without any major employment hubs in the area these businesses rely on weekend trading and the kids from Gungahlin College to keep things ticking over. When you compare this to the activity in other town centres, it is a stark contrast. In and around Gungahlin town centre, apartments have been built more rapidly than in almost any other part of Canberra. People have flocked to Gungahlin as they jump at the opportunity to live on the north side. The new light rail route, the country-town main-street feel of Hibberson Street, and the proximity to amazing nature reserves like Mulligans Flat all draw people in.

Unfortunately, at the same time, commercial development has not followed. We are yet to see any major employers move businesses or public service departments to the area. Supporting businesses and industries to take up commercial opportunities in Gungahlin would not only improve the lives of Gungahlin residents but also improve business at our local cafes, restaurants and shops. I do not think that many people in this place would disagree that the role of government is to shape communities. I am of the school of thought that, when our communities need help, the government should step up. We have waited a long time for the market to invest in Gungahlin. We have even been waiting on the commonwealth government to deliver the agency they promised. In the meantime, time is ticking away and we are still waiting for the revitalisation and reinvigoration of the town centre.

I believe the government needs to intervene to address this unique set of problems that has been created in Gungahlin, and it needs to do so quickly. In other parts of the city decisions have been made to incentivise investment, including peppercorn leases and other subsidies. The government needs to step up and ensure that future developments are suited to commercial and business opportunities. Gungahlin is crying out for investment from business, and we need government to jumpstart the process. The ACT government has shown that it is prepared to lead the way, constructing Winyu House. Maybe it is time for the ACT government to consider moving even more public service jobs to Gungahlin.

This is one of the most important community issues affecting my constituents. The residents of Gungahlin want the opportunity to work in their community. They want access to the same options that other residents around Canberra have. Repeatedly I am told of the traffic in and out of Gungahlin during peak hours, the emptiness of light rail during the day, the seemingly endless building of more and more residential apartment buildings, the deserted town centre during weekdays and the struggles of small business owners who are desperate for patrons in their cafes and shops.

The government has a role to step up and deliver on the town centre model that was promised to the residents of Gungahlin by providing them with options to work and live in the same community. When we look more broadly at other town centres around the ACT some clear trends emerge, in my opinion, that make some of them more successful than Gungahlin. Whilst Gungahlin is new—and I want to acknowledge that—Gungahlin already has a thriving industrial district in Mitchell. But that district is detached and removed from the town centre, unlike what you will see in Woden and Belconnen.

We need to facilitate growing industries—industries of the future, like digital technologies—to invest in and create jobs and employment opportunities in the heart of our community. Gungahlin was connected to the NBN very quickly. We should have been able to seize the opportunities that came with it. We should incentivise higher education providers to build and invest in facilities in the Gungahlin area, to educate and train our future workforce and, in themselves, provide jobs.

Previously, the ACT government has offered peppercorn leases to higher education providers. This is a good thing. Next time let us have an eye to ensuring that these opportunities go to where they are really needed. We also need to guarantee that in the future, when decisions are made about the town centre, the requirements will mean that developments are prepared for commercial and business tenants. We need to make sure that commercial fit-outs in these new developments allow for businesses to be easily established without the need for retrofitting. This is particularly a problem along Flemington Road.

We need to focus our attention on ensuring that street-level activity is vibrant and engaging. We need to work together with Gungahlin community to ensure that this future planning creates the town centre that we need. Relying on federal public service departments to move their operations to Gungahlin clearly is not working, and that is what, sadly, most of the conversation has been focused on. The federal

government are, sadly, continuing their program of decentralising the APS. So, relying on these departments is not a viable strategy for gaining business employment opportunities in the area.

As Gungahlin's quick expansion and development begins to slow, it is clear to me that there is still a lot of work to be done in the town centre to ensure that Gungahlin becomes the bustling community hub that was promised. Business investment will improve opportunities for employment closer to home, but to attract this investment we need to get our planning right. Once we build apartment blocks on all of the available land in the town centre, it is too late. This is an important issue for Gungahlin residents, and I am very grateful that my colleague Ms Orr has brought it to the attention of the Assembly.

MR GENTLEMAN (Brindabella—Manager of Government Business, Minister for Corrections, Minister for Industrial Relations and Workplace Safety, Minister for Planning and Land Management and Minister for Police and Emergency Services) (11.51): I thank Ms Orr for raising this important matter regarding the Gungahlin town centre and noting the ambition and opportunity of this relatively young district.

Gungahlin is still very much growing and evolving. The Gungahlin district population is estimated to reach approximately 82,500 this year, an increase of over 6,000 residents from 2017. Several of its suburbs are still under development and one further suburb, Kenny, is to be developed in the coming years. The town centre has also continued to grow and evolve. Envisaged as a lower scale urban village when development commenced in the 1990s, the centre has grown rapidly, attracting new residents, businesses, and investment. It has also been transformed with the development of light rail.

Planning for Gungahlin and Canberra is an ongoing process. We are continually looking at lessons and innovations from within Canberra and other cities to apply to get positive development outcomes in our city. Several initiatives introduced by this government, including the planning review and reform project, the National Capital Design Review Panel and a strategic approach to community facilities, go directly to the issues raised in Ms Orr's motion.

Gungahlin has experienced high demand for and growth of residential development within the town centre, compared to office development. We want Gungahlin, like other parts of Canberra, to represent best practice planning and design and to provide for growth into the future, with the ability to adapt to changes in the market, technology design, and community. With approximately one-third of the town centre yet to be developed, we are taking opportunities where we can review and refresh planning frameworks to facilitate and support appropriate development for the centre, and responding to government policy of the day, while reflecting community expectations.

Canberrans are seeking housing choices in locations that provide good access to existing employment, services, and social and urban infrastructure. The Planning Strategy identifies the importance town centres play in accommodating an increased urban population, which in turn creates opportunities for great mixed-use

development in appropriate locations, while maintaining and enhancing the liveliness and amenity of these areas.

The motion calls on us to support the further development of the Gungahlin region and town centre by implementing best practice mixed-use development through the planning framework. Best practice development will come from a best practice planning system.

I am firmly of the view that our planning system needs to be more outcomes focused. I said this back in 2015 in the Statement of Planning Intent and continue to hold this view. This is a major pillar of our current ACT planning system review and reform project work: to move the planning system from being rather prescriptive to much more outcomes and performance focused. The Planning Strategy already has a clear direction to enhance the diversity and resilience of our centres to meet the needs of the community, support economic viability and improve livability.

While I completely agree that the Gungahlin town centre needs to be a diverse area in the service it provides, and to be attractive and livable for Gungahlin residents, this diversity will be achieved not by continually introducing more regulations and specific requirements but by establishing a planning framework that facilitates and encourages diverse investment.

The motion also refers to a higher level of commercial and business use in the mixed-use development. The ACT government has shown its commitment to employment in the Gungahlin town centre by relocating around 600 of our own employees at Winyu House. The government has also set aside land for large federal government departments, which still has not been taken up.

The ACT government continues to be disappointed that the federal Liberal government has not shown the same commitment to Canberra and its town centres. We have seen the Liberals cut too many jobs and relocate the jobs that are left out of Canberra. While I am pleased that Defence Housing is moving to Gungahlin, we would still like to see a bigger department.

Draft variation 364 proposes to allow residential uses in parts of Gungahlin east that were previously reserved for offices. It also proposes a new provision to allow future community facilities to be located closer to public transport and to be integrated with mixed-use urban development. However, what we have heard from the community, including through Ms Orr's motion today, shows that there is more work to be done on draft variation 364, and I do want to ensure that development in the Gungahlin town centre has the right mix of commercial and residential uses.

Building design and fit-out is also critical to ensuring that the commercial mix can adapt and change as the population grows. The ACT government will work towards having the right level of flexibility to encourage good design outcomes. As part of the ACT planning system review and reform project, we are looking at districts and identifying valued character elements and aspirations for areas and how the planning system can best protect and enhance these. This strategic planning will assist in

establishing guidance and outcomes for development in districts and for areas of growth and change.

As noted, the approach that we are taking with the planning and review and reform project will respond to, as the motion referenced, clear design principles for active precincts. We agree and recognise the critical contribution that good design makes in creating vibrant precincts that take account of all occupants.

A key objective of the ACT planning system review and reform project, reiterated in the Tenth Legislative Assembly parliamentary and governing agreement, is to improve built form and public realm outcomes across the territory. As noted earlier, we continue to consider best practice for planning and design and look to other jurisdictions to find examples that might be relevant. As part of the planning system review and reform project, we have already undertaken an examination of some international and national planning systems for lessons and best practice examples.

I also note that the National Capital Design Review Panel, established by the ACT government in partnership with the National Capital Authority, is a positive initiative that provides consistent city-wide design review for major developments and redevelopments across Canberra. Design and review is an effective and cost-effective way to enhance the design quality of development proposals, including buildings, public infrastructure and the public domain. The intent of the Design Review Panel is to support each development proposal realising its full potential through independent peer review, for the benefit of the ACT community.

I completely agree with Ms Orr that the local community needs to be engaged on development in the town centre. We will continue to engage with Gungahlin residents on the decisions that affect them, particularly as the planning review and reform project progresses.

In conclusion, I endorse Ms Orr's motion that the long-term viability of our town centres is connected to the ongoing review and ability to respond to industry, community, change and best practice. I thank Ms Orr for her ongoing advocacy for her local community. While Gungahlin may be young, there is a lot of opportunity to be a lively exemplar of development and community.

Amendments agreed to.

MS CASTLEY (Yerrabi) (11.59), by leave: I move the amendment circulated in my name:

After (2) "centre"

Insert "ensuring that there are additional employment opportunities in Gungahlin by,"

Amendment agreed to.

MS ORR (Yerrabi) (12.00): In closing, I am very happy to support both the amendments today and very happy with the debate that we have had, where we can

see from a tripartisan point of view that all the members for Yerrabi want to see the town centre continue to flourish and grow.

How we get there is a bit, I think, debatable. But I think we are on the right path in bringing everyone together. I look forward to working with my colleagues in the ministry, on the backbench and in opposition to make sure that we are doing everything we can for our town centre now and into the future.

Original question, as amended, resolved in the affirmative.

Sitting suspended from 12.01 to 2.00 pm.

Questions without notice **ACT public service—integrity**

MS LEE: My question is to the Chief Minister. I refer to the ACT Integrity Commission's 2019-20 annual report, which identified "conflicts of interest", "records management" and "undeclared relationships and associations" as potential corruption trends within the ACT public service. The report found that public servants involved in major procurement decisions were "rarely required" to declare that they did not have a conflict of interest, and that conflicts of interest were "poorly understood and regularly mismanaged". Chief Minister, to combat these potential corruption trends, will you order your directorate and agencies to make conflict of interest declarations a mandatory component of any key decision-making process?

MR BARR: I have no problem with that in principle. There is already a process within the ACT public service, and obviously part of the role of the Integrity Commission that we all supported was an educative process. I am pleased that the commission has drawn this matter to the attention of the Assembly and I have no problem with the direction of action that it outlined. I believe it is already largely in place, but if we need to do more, I am happy to do so.

MS LEE: Chief Minister, what action will you take to ensure that conflicts of interest are no longer "poorly understood and regularly mismanaged"?

MR BARR: We put in place the Integrity Commission, voted for it, provided resources for it and continue a process of it supporting agencies to undertake their tasks on behalf of the people of Canberra with the utmost integrity. Every member of this place is obliged by personal leadership to focus on integrity. We have members of this place who are on the committee that provides oversight. We have standards. We have a very extensive process. I thank the Leader of the Opposition for raising it. We are very happy to do what more we can to stamp out any corruption in the ACT public sector.

MRS JONES: Chief Minister, what exactly was missing that created the situation in which conflicts of interest under your watch have been "poorly understood and regularly mismanaged"?

MR BARR: I do not believe that is necessarily the case, but, as I indicated in my response to the previous questions, I have no problem with taking on board the advice of the Integrity Commission. That is why they were established and why one of their fundamental roles was around education. It was not just about phone taps and all that sort of stuff; it was about education and improving processes throughout the ACT public sector. I draw this to the attention of the Assembly. I am very happy to pursue it.

ACT public service—integrity

MRS JONES: My question is to the Chief Minister. I refer to the ACT Integrity Commission's 2019-20 annual report, which states that the commission has identified current and emerging corruption vulnerabilities and how that might manifest in corrupt conduct. Chief Minister, what action will you take to address both these current and emerging corruption vulnerabilities?

MR BARR: The actions that have already been undertaken within the public sector, within this place, including many areas of reform.

Mrs Jones: What?

MR BARR: Well, we have a Commissioner for Standards, as we found out this week. I take these matters seriously, and we will act on the areas that the Integrity Commission has highlighted. But also, importantly, as I mentioned in response to the previous questions, a key part of its role—and what I hope to be the number one part of its role—is education and engagement with public sector agencies to prevent corruption in the first place.

MRS JONES: Why are there current and emerging corruption vulnerabilities? What exactly has been done since this report to change that circumstance?

MR BARR: Presumably there will always be emerging corruption possibilities. It is a constantly evolving area. World history would demonstrate that, going back to the formation of any communities with some form of governance structure. We will continue to work closely with the Integrity Commission and respond to issues as they emerge. Technology clearly plays a part here in preventing corruption and also, potentially, in allowing that to occur. We will need to pay close attention to that.

MS LEE: Chief Minister, why have you and your predecessors failed to adequately address current and emerging corruption vulnerabilities within your government? Is your admission that it may always exist an admission that you are not capable of getting it stamped out?

MR BARR: No and no. What an absurd question.

Drugs—pill testing

MR DAVIS: My question is to the Minister for Health and relates to the proposed fixed site pill testing pilot. Noting the government's commitment in the last Assembly

to open a static pill testing site, Minister, can you give an update to the Assembly on where this important initiative is up to?

MS STEPHEN-SMITH: I thank Mr Davis for his question. We did, indeed, in response to a motion in the Assembly, make a commitment that we would explore the establishment of a trial static pill testing site in the city. We continue to support an evidence-based harm minimisation approach to drug policy. Pill testing has been shown to be an effective tool in reducing the possible harms associated with drug taking.

The government has been exploring establishing a pill testing facility pilot in the city entertainment area during this summer and re-established the pill testing working group in order to do so. Following the initial work by the pill testing working group, which got to work pretty quickly after the Assembly resolution, it was clear that there were a range of logistical and legal issues that had to be worked through prior to the establishment of any pilot.

The government continues to work towards the introduction of a pilot fixed site pill testing service in 2021, building on the Australia-first success of the pill testing sites at trials at the Groovin the Moo festivals in 2018 and 2019. The ACT Health Directorate is working with relevant stakeholders, including ACT Policing and the ACT Government Analytical Laboratory to work through those logistical and legal issues prior to the commencement of any service.

I would note that ACT Policing has consistently shown a commitment to harm minimisation initiatives and has always actively engaged with the government and other stakeholders on pill testing measures. While there are a number of legal considerations to work through, ACT Policing is actively participating in these discussions about a potential pill testing facility in the city. The government is also working with Pill Testing Australia, who obviously are experts in this field and strong advocates. They are working to provide technical and logistical advice regarding the establishment of the pilot as soon as possible.

MR DAVIS: Minister, specifically what date, at the latest, can Canberrans expect the pilot project to commence?

MS STEPHEN-SMITH: I thank Mr Davis for the supplementary, but of course I am not able to provide a specific date because we do need to work through some of those logistical and legal issues—which, I would say, were flagged at the time that the Assembly passed its resolution. The commitment on the government’s part was to work to see if we could establish a trial of a fixed site pill testing facility over summer. That has not been possible, but the work is ongoing across government, with the collaboration of ACT Policing and with the collaboration of and close working relationship with Pill Testing Australia. We will continue that work to seek to get this facility up and running in 2021, but I cannot give Mr Davis a specific date in relation to that at this point in time.

All members in this place are very welcome to seek further briefing from officials in relation to any matter. Should Mr Davis want to get a briefing from officials about the

detail of the work that is happening through the pill testing working group, I would welcome an approach from him to my office for that briefing.

MS CLAY: Minister, which organisations are you working with to ensure that this important pilot is underway as soon as possible?

MS STEPHEN-SMITH: I thank Ms Clay for the question and refer her to my previous answers.

Schools—modular learning centres

MR HANSON: My question is to the Minister for Education and Youth Affairs. Minister, the budget for the Education Directorate for 2020-21 has approximately \$17 million in infrastructure spending for modular learning centres. Minister, can you explain exactly what a modular learning centre is and how many modular learning centres this \$17 million represents?

MS BERRY: For Mr Hanson's information, and to advise the Assembly, modular learning centres are transportable classrooms that have about a 15 to 20-year life. They are highly modern, sustainable and environmentally friendly classrooms. They are double-glazed and have heating and cooling. They provide additional support to schools for classes to be conducted in when school capacities increase. Transportable classrooms are an efficient way to provide extra space to schools as demographics in various areas change. Because they are transportable, they can be used on more than one site. Once a site's situation changes, they can be used at other schools. There are approximately 17 transportable classrooms.

MR HANSON: Minister, how many students across the ACT are already being taught in modular learning centres?

MS BERRY: I will have to get some advice on that and bring that back.

MR CAIN: Minister, will the modular learning centres be temporary or permanent?

MS BERRY: They are generally temporary, as I have just described. But these are not a new thing. Modular or transportable classrooms have been used across the ACT and across the country for longer than this government has been here in the ACT. I recall older primary schools, when I was a child, where transportable classrooms were used when demographics changed and schools needed to expand for a while. Those transportable classrooms could then be used elsewhere. Occasionally, they do need to be more permanent. They are built to be transportable, but, because of the high-quality build of these classrooms, they can be semi-permanent classrooms in schools as well.

Public housing—disruptive behaviour

MR PARTON: My question is to the Minister for Homelessness and Housing Services. Minister, Monday's *Canberra Times* reported the ongoing a terrible living situation at the Condamine Court public housing complex in Turner. Residents have

reported that the complex has become littered with blood, used syringes, squatters and threatening graffiti over the past year. Residents have also documented almost daily instances of verbal abuse and physical violence. Minister, will you direct Housing ACT resources to immediately address the situation at Condamine Court for the safety of all its tenants?

MS VASSAROTTI: Thank you, Mr Parton, for the question. Managing antisocial and illegal activity across the ACT is a process that occurs across the community. It is not only a public housing issue, but we are aware of some challenges in some public housing complexes. I am aware of an alleged assault that happened on the grounds of a Housing ACT complex recently.

Unfortunately, I am unable to make comments on the individual circumstances. What I can say is that incidents such as this fall within the jurisdiction of ACT Policing, and in cases where there is an issue of safety to a public housing tenant and they are at risk, Housing ACT will take appropriate action.

Mr Hanson: Madam Speaker, a point of order on relevance, my understanding of Mr Parton's question is that he was asking specifically whether additional resources would be allocated to Condamine Court. I ask the minister to be directly relevant to that issue.

MADAM SPEAKER: There is no point of order. The question also included conditions in housing services, and the minister is on the policy area. You have time left, Ms Vassarotti.

MS VASSAROTTI: I was just getting to the question in relation to specific work that is happening by Housing ACT. There is a program called the Connecting Communities strategy, which was a pilot project through 2019 and 2020 and is now operating across complexes in the ACT, including the complex that was identified by Mr Parton.

This strategy aims to reduce theft and antisocial behaviour and complaints, creating a sense of community across tenant engagement and participation and ensuring that tenants and local community members have access to support and development in their neighbourhood. We can also confirm that the tenancy manager is regularly on site. *(Time expired)*.

MR PARTON: Minister, even given your short time in the role, how has the government allowed the situation at Condamine Court to deteriorate so badly, especially given the Greens' rhetoric on providing quality—quality—public housing?

MS VASSAROTTI: As I was noting, in terms of the Connecting Communities strategy, it has been operating since 2019 and as an ongoing program since 2020. COVID-19 created some challenges, particularly around being on site, so there were some elements of the project that were reduced, but they are now operating.

Housing ACT is also working really closely on monitoring maintenance around the complex, particularly with program facilities management. We encourage tenants to

contact the facilities management for any maintenance issues. If there are issues of safety, it is appropriate that they contact ACT Policing.

MS LEE: Minister, is it still your position that residents are to contact ACT Policing, given that they have indicated a fear of doing so?

MS VASSAROTTI: As a matter of course, absolutely. In terms of ongoing issues tenants should be working with their ACT tenancy manager. In relation to sites that are having significant issues, there is regular engagement on site by those tenancy managers as well.

Budget—climate action

MS ORR: My question is to the Chief Minister. Chief Minister, can you outline what the 2020-21 budget investment in climate action programs and policies will mean for Canberra households?

MR BARR: I thank Ms Orr for the question. It is about a \$307 million commitment, with a desire to make a significant difference in terms of emissions reduction and cost of living benefits for households, and to support thousands of jobs in the territory economy. There is \$150 million towards the Sustainable Household Scheme fund to offer zero interest loans for a range of new technologies to assist households in reducing their cost of living and their emissions. The Big Canberra Battery will also allow households to feed in excess generated energy for the community's benefit. It can, of course, serve a number of purposes, including improving grid stability and earning money for the territory.

We are looking to waive registration fees for newly purchased zero emission vehicles for the first two years of registration. That begins in May this year. There is also a \$50 million vulnerable household energy support initiative to improve building efficiency and sustainability for social and public housing, low income owner-occupiers and poorly performing rental properties to reduce energy bills and to make those houses more pleasant and livable for tenants.

MS ORR: Chief Minister, how will these policies help the ACT to reach a zero emissions future?

MR BARR: They are important next steps in the ACT's endeavours to phase out fossil fuel use and achieve zero net emissions by 2045 at the latest. We have also been successful in reaching our 2020 renewable electricity goals of 100 per cent renewable electricity, and we have reduced net emissions by 40 per cent. The purpose here is to target the big emitting sectors, transport and gas use, whilst helping households with the transition.

We also know that the revolution in motoring is coming, and coming quicker than many people would think. Zero emission vehicles will be the only vehicles produced in many of the world's major vehicle manufacturing plants by 2030. We are endeavouring to install 50 additional publicly accessible charging stations across Canberra over the coming years. With the availability of no-interest loans, the

registration fee waivers and the installation of charging points, we believe that the ACT will well and truly surpass the commonwealth's woefully low target of having 26 per cent zero emission vehicles as part of total vehicle sales by 2030. The commonwealth's target of 26 per cent of all new vehicle sales by 2030 is incredibly low by global standards. Again, I think it will fall to the states and territories—across the political divide, fortunately, amongst the states and territories—to drive the zero emission vehicle revolution.

MR PETTERSSON: Chief Minister, how will these policies support the creation of jobs for the future here in the territory?

MR BARR: The range of policies that we took to the election that have been funded in the budget are expected to create around 2,000 additional jobs in the territory. That will contribute to the ACT government's objective of growing the territory's employment base to over 250,000 by 2025. By investing in a number of these industries, and by supporting these industries via that investment, we will see significant opportunity to do three things: create jobs; reduce emissions; and reduce household cost of living. They are three very worthy goals for our city—goals that the government is determined to deliver.

Environment—electric vehicle charging stations

MS CLAY: My question is to the Minister for Climate Action and it relates to EV charging. Chief Minister, I just bought an EV, but I cannot charge it in the government-provided car park in the new government office building because there are not any sockets. Have you got plans to install EV charging in more spaces in the new government office building, and will you ensure that, going forward, all government major projects appropriately accommodate EVs?

MR BARR: I understand that there are some power points in that level 1 basement. They would be standard household ones, not the fast charging EV ones. But we will certainly have a look at it. I would say that the biggest priority in terms of the 50 charging points is that they would be publicly accessible for everyone, not just behind the gate for MLAs. So in looking at where an EV charging point or points could be made in that public car park we would probably look outside the MLA compound, frankly. But we will have a look. I am happy to see what can be done there. In relation to your vehicle, Ms Clay, it might be that the shuffling of the car parking spots might see you near a charging point. I do believe that there are some power points down there.

MS CLAY: Will residents be able to access the \$150 million Sustainable Household Scheme to install electric vehicle charging at their residences in standalone homes and in apartment buildings? What we are finding with EVs is that it is great to have public charging, but most people just want to charge it where they park their car, which is going to be at their home or at their work.

MR BARR: That is a pretty sensible suggestion. I am happy to look at that.

MR BRADDOCK: Minister, what is your government doing to ensure that all apartment buildings that are built, going forward, will be EV ready, with capability for separately metered electric vehicle charging for residents?

MR BARR: It is a good point. It certainly needs some further work. Part of that is regulatory, on the planning side, and another part, frankly, is the practical reality of the grid and capacity within certain parts of the city. That is something we are going to have to look at in the location of the public charging facilities in terms of what is available, what extra infrastructure may need to be installed. I think it is also relevant in the context of the distributed Big Canberra Battery as to where we may be able to augment the electricity network to align with EV charging opportunities, both private and public.

Land—sales

MR COE: I have a question for the Minister for Housing and Suburban Development. What plans does the ACT government have to ensure that there are adequate land supplies to keep pace with demand, particularly in 2022 and 2023?

MS BERRY: The ACT government provides an indicative land release program, through the minister for planning, to ensure that there is adequate land supply. Adequate land supply has been provided in the ACT for many years now. Last year, during COVID, whilst there was a slight pause, understandably, in housing purchases and housing construction, the land supply program provided opportunities for people to purchase land and have land available across the shelf, which has not been the case for a very long time in the ACT. That is the case now, and that land supply pipeline will continue.

We still have land available in Taylor. There is land to be released again in Whitlam in the middle of this year. Denman Prospect will soon be releasing more land in its project, as a private developer. Kenny will be coming online. Ginninderry also has land available for purchase for public housing, for community housing and for affordable housing.

MR COE: Minister, for this financial year, what portion of SLA land sales have attracted support from the commonwealth government through the HomeBuilder scheme—particularly SLA land, not Ginninderry?

MS BERRY: That is a good question and it is something that I have been asking the SLA to keep me updated on—people who have purchased land, and whether they have purchased land as a result of the ACT government's actions around stamp duty or whether that has been as a result of the federal government's HomeBuilder package.

I do not have the detailed breakdown of that at the moment. As you would understand, people are purchasing and buying blocks and homes every day, so that figure changes. What I can commit to is the number as of today and provide that information to the Assembly. I will break that down to include the number of people who decided to purchase land as a result of the ACT government's changes to stamp duty.

MR PARTON: Minister, can you add to that, for this financial year, what portion of SLA land sales have attracted stamp duty concessions from the ACT government, for this financial year?

MS BERRY: So you want me to wait till July?

MR PARTON: It is the same question as Alistair's but just referring to stamp duty concessions from the ACT government, rather than the commonwealth government through the HomeBuilder scheme. It is the same question for this financial year. What portion of SLA land sales have attracted stamp duty concessions from the ACT government to date?

MS BERRY: Yes, I can do that. Thank you for clarifying.

Health—walk-in centres

MR PETTERSSON: My question is to the Minister for Health. Minister, could you please advise the Assembly what funding is included in the budget for new walk-in health centres?

MS STEPHEN-SMITH: I thank Mr Pettersson for the question and for his interest in future new walk-in health centres across Canberra. Our walk-in health centres continue to build on our commitment to providing health care to Canberrans closer to home, when and where they need it. Walk-in health centres will introduce appointment-based services in the community, alongside access to immediate care. It is really about expanding and coordinating our existing network of five walk-in centres, our network of community health centres and these new centres into an integrated community care set of facilities that will also integrate with primary care.

The 2020-21 budget provides \$2 million to undertake feasibility for four new walk-in health centres over 2020-21 and 2021-22. This feasibility work will assess which appointment-based services would be best suited to each walk-in health centre across south Tuggeranong, north Gungahlin, west Belconnen and the inner south. These services will be focused on providing preventive care and advice, early intervention and the management of chronic illnesses. The new walk-in health centres will also explore better models of integration with primary health and community-based non-government organisations—something that I know our non-government organisations and primary health sector partners have welcomed and are keen to be involved with.

We are also providing just over \$750,000 to open the first new walk-in health centre in Coombs, to open in July 2021. This centre will pilot an alternative model of care, integrating services with general practice, with a focus on maternal child and family health care—services that we believe will be in demand in the growing area of Molonglo Valley. This will be a theme of all walk-in health centres—providing the services that the community needs, informed by data and working with the community.

MR PETTERSSON: Minister, could you please update the Assembly on the introduction of an imaging service to the Weston Creek Walk-in Centre?

MS STEPHEN-SMITH: I thank Mr Pettersson for his supplementary. I am very excited by this announcement of the introduction of an imaging service at Weston Creek Walk-in Centre. As we begin to introduce walk-in health centres to the community, we are also continuing to assess and develop the existing walk-in centres model of care, looking at how we can continue to build on the capability of the current network of five walk-in centres.

In order to expand the scope of walk-in centres, Canberra Health Services has been analysing relevant data, including service activity data, population-based needs and workforce modelling, to support the safe and sustainable expansion of service scope. Based on this work, the 2020-21 budget provides \$10.9 million, which includes \$5.7 million for capital, for a new medical imaging outpatient service at Weston Creek Walk-in Centre. The expanded service will provide community access to commonly required diagnostic medical imaging services, including ultrasound, X-ray and computer tomography, commonly known as CT.

The proposed model of care will provide a service to outpatients in an accessible location separate from Canberra Hospital or Calvary hospital, and will also take referrals from other walk-in centres across Canberra. The project will get underway shortly, with phased operations expected to commence in 2022. The new imaging service will help to reduce community wait times for outpatient medical imaging, while also enabling more efficient scan times for emergency and inpatients at Canberra Hospital. This will see our community able to access more healthcare services closer to home and, importantly, away from our busy hospital campuses.

DR PATERSON: Minister, how will the walk-in centres improve health outcomes for Canberrans?

MS STEPHEN-SMITH: I thank Dr Paterson for her question. I am always pleased, as I am sure members, at least on this side, are always pleased, to hear people's positive experiences of visiting our existing walk-in centres and our existing community health centres that already provide excellent care to people when and where they need it. The walk-in health centres will further expand our capacity to provide care closer to home in a positive environment, supported by friendly and professional staff.

The role of existing walk-in centres in the community and the new walk-in health centres is one of the key focus areas of the territory-wide health services plan, which will establish a framework for community-based health services in the ACT. Current walk-in centres and health centres will continue to support a shift from hospital-based care to community-based care, providing care closer to home, according to population growth and the health needs of our community.

As highlighted by the Coombs walk-in health centre, which will provide, as I said earlier, maternal, child and family health care, each health centre's services will be

guided by which services are most appropriate to each region. That will be determined in consultation with the community. They may provide preventive services, such as healthy eating or oral health. They may focus on providing early intervention and/or integrative care for managing chronic conditions such as arthritis, heart disease or respiratory conditions, alongside and integrated with and supported by our primary care and non-government organisation partners.

I look forward to working with residents of the inner south, south Tuggeranong, west Belconnen and north Gungahlin as we develop each of the distinct models of care for their walk-in health centres.

Municipal services—abandoned vehicles

MS LAWDER: My question is to the Minister for Transport and City Services. In a media release about abandoned vehicles, from June 2019, you said that “the new provisions will allow for clearly abandoned vehicles to be removed more quickly and more efficiently”. Abandoned vehicles are of great interest and concern to residents when they are abandoned near them. Minister, can you explain why, instead of meeting your 100 per cent target of removing abandoned vehicles on unleased land within nine calendar days, your government achieved a mere 61 per cent, according to the annual report?

MR STEEL: I thank Ms Lawder for her question. Yes, she is right: the issue of abandoned vehicles in our community is of concern. It is one of the reasons why we brought forward the amendments to the Litter Act to see the removal of these vehicles as soon as possible. Of course, there are a range of circumstances that involve abandoned vehicles. Some of those involve the police. I am happy to come back, on notice, with some of the reasons why we have not been able to achieve the target, as Ms Lawder has outlined. One thing I do know is that if there is a police investigation, that vehicle may be used in evidence in relation to that investigation and that may result in a vehicle not being removed until police have been able to deal with the vehicle. If there is a specific circumstance that Ms Lawder is referring to, I am also happy to look into that as well.

MS LAWDER: Minister, is the result of 61 per cent for the removal of abandoned vehicles on unleased land within nine calendar days what you describe as “more quickly and more efficiently”?

MR STEEL: These laws enable us to go about removing those vehicles without necessarily having contacted the owner, ensuring that those vehicles are removed. Subsequently the owner could pick up the vehicle, potentially at a charge, once it is impounded. Those laws have only been in place for a short time. There will be a period of bedding down whilst both Transport Canberra and City Services and other relevant agencies work with that legislation to try and improve the rates of removal within the target period.

MR CAIN: Minister, when will the government reach its target of 100 per cent?

MR STEEL: As soon as we can, working with the agencies that we are required to work with, as well as the legislation, and potentially the investigations that are being undertaken with ACT Policing.

Gungahlin—multipurpose centre

MR BRADDOCK: My question is to the minister responsible for the community multipurpose centre in Gungahlin. Chief Minister, will community groups and non-government organisations and service providers—for example, the Police Community Youth Club—have the opportunity to be part of this project?

MR BARR: Yes. We intend to consult widely on the needs for the facility.

MR BRADDOCK: When and how will the local community groups and service organisations be able to provide input into this project's requirements?

MR BARR: I will take the detail on notice in terms of times and dates and various engagement formats, but I would hope that would include a mixture of online and face-to-face engagement and that that can start sooner rather than later.

MR DAVIS: Chief Minister, when, at the latest, can the people of Gungahlin expect the facility to open?

MR BARR: That is a difficult one to answer. It depends, of course, on the results of the consultation and the scoping and design of the facility. I would hope it would be in this parliamentary term, but that requires the successful completion of the engagement process around the detailed design of the centre; an approved development application, there being no environmental or other issues in relation to the site; the procurement of the project going well and there being a great deal of interest in building it; and then the construction meeting all of its scheduled time frames.

Each of those processes, obviously, will be worked through. All going well—subject to the usual caveats of pandemics, earthquakes, floods, supply line challenges, workforces getting sick and any number of things that can and do happen from time to time—the desire would be to get this project underway this term and get it finished as soon as possible.

Legislative Assembly—women's caucus

MRS KIKKERT: My question is to the Minister for Women. On 3 December 2020 you formed a women's caucus across party lines with Labor and Greens women MLAs to provide an opportunity for women with diverse backgrounds and expertise to come together.

Mr Parton: What a great idea.

MRS KIKKERT: Yes. In the media release about the formation of this caucus you welcomed the opportunity to meet with Liberal women MLAs, though they were not invited to join the caucus.

Mr Parton: What?

MRS KIKKERT: Yes. Presumably many women in the ACT voted for Liberal women MLAs because they share more closely their values, beliefs and philosophies. Would, then, the women's caucus not be more effective and representative with the inclusion of Liberal women MLAs?

MS BERRY: If I can assist Mrs Kikkert to understand, the women's caucus is a government policy caucus which contains Labor and Greens—

Members interjecting—

MS BERRY: Madam Speaker, it might not be interesting for some of the men in this room, but it actually is interesting for women, and I want to provide this advice.

MADAM SPEAKER: Ignore the interjections where you can, Minister.

Mr Hanson interjecting—

MADAM SPEAKER: Mr Hanson!

MS BERRY: So now we are clear; that is good. Regarding the second part to the question, about women members of the Liberal Party, of course they can engage with me at any time, and I am always open to conversations with the Canberra Liberals about ideas on how we can support women and girls to be anything they want to be, without any barriers in their place.

I congratulate Madam Speaker for forming a parliamentary women's group, which is the very place for members of the Assembly across all political parties to engage in conversations on women and improving the lives of women and girls in our city. The caucus is a government members' caucus for discussing government policy.

MRS KIKKERT: Minister, do you, then, recognise the Greens as part of the government and not the crossbench? If not, why were the Liberal women MLAs not invited?

Mr Braddock: On a point of order, Madam Speaker, what is the relevance of that question to the original question about a women's caucus?

Members interjecting—

MADAM SPEAKER: Members! There is no point of order; it is within the scope of the original question. Ms Berry, you have the floor.

MS BERRY: I was just trying to remember what the question was about, but I think I have got it. Yes, members of the Greens political party signed and are part of the parliamentary and governing agreement, and three members of the Greens party sit in cabinet. So, yes, they are part of the government.

MS LAWDER: Is the women's caucus already failing in its goal of advancing full participation of women and girls in all aspects of our society by excluding Liberal women MLAs?

Members interjecting—

MADAM SPEAKER: Members! Mr Hanson and Mr Barr, you can take your humour outside, please.

Members interjecting—

MADAM SPEAKER: Members on both sides, we have had our fun. Ms Lawder, you have asked your question. Ms Berry will answer, please.

MS BERRY: I refer the member to my first answer.

Courts—backlogs

MR CAIN: Madam Speaker, my question is to the Attorney-General. Minister, the Productivity Commission's *Report on Government Services 2021* identified a backlog of criminal cases in the ACT Supreme Court of 34.9 per cent over the 12-month time frame to 30 June last year, the second highest in Australia. Minister, please explain why Canberra's court clearance rates were so poor.

MR RATTENBURY: There are a number of factors and these are included in discussions I have been having, as the incoming Attorney-General, with both the Chief Justice and the Chief Magistrate to make sure that we are having cases heard in our courts as efficiently as possible. Of course, we have gone through 2020, which, as in most jurisdictions, had some delaying impact, although I think our courts did extremely well in continuing to work during that period. But there are pressures there. I will continue to work with the judiciary to ensure that they are running our cases as efficiently as possible.

MR CAIN: Minister, COVID had an effect on only four out of the 12 months of the reporting period. Please explain why court clearance rates were so poor over the first eight months of the financial year.

MR RATTENBURY: Clearly, the courts were very busy; that is why they had a lot of—

Mr Hanson interjecting—

MADAM SPEAKER: Mr Hanson, your colleague is on her feet.

Mr Hanson interjecting—

MADAM SPEAKER: Mr Hanson, you are warned!

MS CASTLEY: Minister, what measures is the government taking to improve the court clearance rates for Canberrans?

MR RATTENBURY: As indicated in my first answer, I am having a discussion with the judiciary about these matters. The government has recently—

Mr Hanson interjecting—

MADAM SPEAKER: You are on a warning, Mr Hanson.

Mrs Jones: That was yesterday, wasn't it?

MADAM SPEAKER: No. No-one heard because he was too busy gibbering when Ms Castley was on her feet, trying to ask the question.

Mr Hanson: I did not hear it; I apologise.

Mr Parton: Does the siren count if no-one heard it?

MADAM SPEAKER: You are warned now.

MR RATTENBURY: Sorry, Madam Speaker; I have forgotten Ms Castley's specific question.

Mrs Jones: What measures?

MR RATTENBURY: What measures, yes.

Opposition members interjecting—

MADAM SPEAKER: Members, you may think this is funny, but it is question time, when you are supposed to hold the government to account. You have asked a quite serious question about criminal cases and a slow court performance. I would have thought that did not need to be laughed at.

Mrs Jones: That was not being laughed at.

MADAM SPEAKER: Now you can join the warned list, Mrs Jones. Mr Rattenbury, do you choose to answer?

MR RATTENBURY: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Before I was interjected on, I was indicating that, having become the Attorney-General quite recently, I have spoken to the leaders of the judiciary about these matters. The government has undertaken to look at additional resources for the courts, including, for example, appointing a full-time coroner. These are the matters that I am considering now and that I will look at through the budget process. There has also been the recent appointment of a magistrate to fill the vacancy created by Magistrate Bernadette Boss taking up a national role. I am very pleased that she has taken up that role.

We are working with the courts to make sure that they have adequate resources to do the job they need to do. The government has also spent significant money on building a new court building in recent years. Members will be well aware of that. (*Time expired.*)

Gungahlin—swimming pool

MS CASTLEY: My question is to the Minister for Sport and Recreation. Minister, yesterday's budget referred to "repairing Gungahlin Leisure Centre", which opened just six years ago and cost \$28 million but has been closed for almost one year. The budget did not reveal how much it would cost to fix the pool, and there was no time line about when that would be done. Canberra Swimming Club's membership is down 25 per cent and their 200 squad swimmers have lost their home pool and are crammed into the Olympic pool. Minister, why won't your Labor-Greens government tell the community how much of their money you will take to fix this mess?

MS BERRY: I thank Ms Castley for the question. I know and understand the frustration of the Gungahlin community and members in this place about the closure of Gungahlin pool. There are significant issues around the tiling and membrane which need to be repaired.

But of course making sure that the tender process has appropriate governance around it—making sure that the price is not put out there, so that the tender process can be conducted appropriately—is the best way to ensure that the tender meets the needs of the community and resolves the issues at the Gungahlin pool as soon as possible. Part of that tender process will be about time frames. As soon as the time frames are known then we can let the community and members of the Assembly know.

I have to say I am as frustrated as anyone else in this place, and the Gungahlin community, about the pool closure. I have asked the directorate on a number of occasions, almost weekly, about getting this pool opened as soon as possible. I will have advice and more details about the pool by Monday next week, which I am happy to share with the members in this place.

MS CASTLEY: Minister, do you agree the Gungahlin pool is a "state-of-the-art facility", as hailed by then sports minister Barr six years ago, or would the description "a white elephant" be more apt?

MS BERRY: It is a state-of-the-art facility, but it does need some repair work done. That is being addressed by the ACT government.

MR COE: Minister, will the pool reopen this year? Will you provide to the Assembly a time line of work that has taken place already regarding assessing the damage and any rectification that has taken place since the pool was closed?

MS BERRY: I will check on the last part of the question, on the time frame and on what information I can provide to the Assembly. I will get some advice on that. I wish I could, today, give a date for when the pool will be reopened, but I just do not have that information with me and I will not know that until after the tender process.

Mr Coe: Point of order. Just for clarification, the first part of the question was about work that has already been done to assess the damage and any rectification work that has already taken place, as opposed to prospective work. Take it on notice.

MADAM SPEAKER: I think Mr Coe was clarifying what you are taking on notice, Ms Berry.

MS BERRY: Yes.

Light rail—stage 2A

DR PATERSON: My question is to the Minister for Transport and City Services. Minister, can you please outline what this government is doing to progress light rail?

MR STEEL: I thank Dr Paterson for her question. It certainly comes at a very exciting time for the light rail project. In the ACT budget yesterday, the ACT government delivered on what we said we would do at the election. We are investing in the infrastructure needed to build a better public transport system by extending the light rail line to Woden.

In the budget, we delivered the funding needed to get on with the design to raise London Circuit. This is changing the current overpass-underpass configuration of the road to create an upgraded intersection of Commonwealth Avenue and London Circuit to support the light rail stage 2A tracks transitioning onto the road and providing improved pedestrian and cycle connections in the southern part of the CBD. We have also committed funding for a feasibility study to investigate the extension of light rail through to Mawson and to assess peak express services, which was part of the parliamentary and governing agreement.

Members would also be aware that the commonwealth government last week provided environmental approval for light rail stage 2A, from the city to Commonwealth Park—a very welcome sign of support for this project from the commonwealth. We are getting on with the detailed design work for stage 2A and we will soon seek formal works approval from the National Capital Authority, and subsequently through the ACT planning and land authority.

The light rail stop in Mitchell is under construction as well, immediately south of the Sandford Street intersection with Flemington Road. The first works were commenced by Canberra Metro on 6 December last year. The new stop is expected to become operational in the second half of this year. We are also continuing to progress the important design and environmental work on light rail stage 2B, from Commonwealth Park to Woden. We are working with the National Capital Authority to ensure that their recently announced Commonwealth Avenue Bridge project is complementary. We are identifying opportunities to minimise disruption. (*Time expired.*)

DR PATERSON: Minister, could you please detail what the benefits of stage 2A are?

MR STEEL: I thank the member for her supplementary question. The stage 2A project will deliver extensive benefits for our city, as the first part of an extension of the light rail line from the city to Woden, and as an extension of stage 1 of light rail as well. The line extension will add 1.7 kilometres of track, with three stops added to the light rail network.

Early estimations suggest that patronage of light rail stage 2A will bring an additional 2,500 to 3,000 passengers per day within the first operating year. The Edinburgh Avenue stop is expected to immediately be one of the most popular stops in the system, providing access to the Australian National University, the courts precinct, and commercial areas on London Circuit and in New Acton.

Stage 2A will bring significant employment opportunities to the territory. Light rail stage 2A and raising London Circuit are together expected to generate more than 1,000 jobs in the construction sector, and many more indirect jobs in other sectors of the ACT economy. This follows the outstanding ACT employment figures from earlier in the week, which are the best in the nation.

Delivering stage 2A is a key part of achieving the ACT's transport strategy, which will help to build a safer, less congested and more sustainable city. This project will build on the success of light rail stage 1.

Aside from being delivered ahead of time and under budget, we have seen sustained popularity through the patronage figures on that project. Canberrans love light rail. I am pleased to announce that new survey results show that 43 per cent of people using light rail never used public transport in the ACT before, showing the power of light rail mass transit in shifting people onto public transport. By extending the line, we want to extend these benefits to other parts of the city and grow public transport patronage further.

MS ORR: Minister, what are the next steps for the stage 2A project?

MR STEEL: I thank Ms Orr for her supplementary and her interest in light rail and the benefits that it has been providing to the Gungahlin region. This is an important project for our city, but from an approvals point of view light rail stage 2 is one of the most complex in the nation's history. As I have previously outlined, stage 2A has been assessed and approved by the commonwealth through the preliminary documentation referral pathway under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act. The next steps are to obtain the required planning approvals, including territory development approval and National Capital Authority works approval, and then commence the procurement and construction of the project. Design and procurement planning activities are continuing, with the focus being given to some more complex areas of the alignment.

The first major physical works to be undertaken on the light rail project will involve raising London Circuit. The ACT government is working towards construction starting as early as this year or early 2022. This is entirely dependent on commonwealth planning approval processes and procurement.

We will continue to engage closely with the community, especially those who will be most impacted during construction. Major Projects Canberra will be seeking input on matters such as construction programs and local industry participation opportunities. This will be done through ACT government portals like the YourSay page, digital media and face-to-face pop-up events. Of course, the government is continuing to progress the design of light rail stage 2B, including the environmental and heritage assessments, through the environmental impact statement consultation with the community over the next 18 months.

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

Supplementary answer to question without notice Municipal services—abandoned vehicles

MR STEEL: In question time Ms Lawder asked me a question about abandoned vehicles in the ACT. I am able to respond with some further detail that I committed to come back on.

Between 1 July 2020 and 31 December 2020, Licensing and Compliance in Transport Canberra and City Services received 1,271 reports of suspected abandoned vehicles. Subsequent investigations resulted in 97 vehicles being declared abandoned, with the remainder resolved through identification and engagement with the owners of the vehicles. Of the 97 vehicles declared abandoned, 59 were removed within nine days and 38 in more than nine days, with the result of 61 per cent which Ms Lawder mentioned. In total, noting that rangers responded to 1,271 reports, having 38 vehicles not meeting the required time frame reflects an efficiency result of 97 per cent.

The delay in the removal of some vehicles was caused by ongoing investigations, the COVID-19 health emergency, staff capacity, and prioritisation of other public safety matters.

The reduction in the number of declared abandoned vehicles that we have seen in this financial year compared with the previous financial year is a result of the 2019 Litter Act amendments which the government introduced and which were passed in the Assembly. We are currently working with staff to build their skills and knowledge with rangers to identify owners of reported abandoned vehicles and also make them accountable for the removal of private vehicles by increased regulatory action. This has been aided by an increased focus on proactively patrolling and identifying suspected abandoned vehicles before they are reported by members of the public. Of course, we also encourage members of the public to report them on Fix My Street.

Paper

Madam Speaker presented the following paper:

Government Responses to Committees in the Ninth Assembly—Schedule, dated 8 February 2021.

Education—financial literacy

MR DAVIS (Brindabella) (3.01): I move:

That this Assembly:

(1) acknowledges that:

- (a) the ACT Government has been consulting with students, the Australian Education Union, the ACT Council of Parents and Citizens Association, and the ACT Principals' Association on the provision of financial literacy education in public schools and the implications of the Financial Services Royal Commission and the Australian Securities and Investments Commission (ASIC) recent report on their review into school banking programs;
- (b) ACT public schools already utilise ASIC's MoneySmart program, including curriculum resources, lesson plans and professional learning, which are highly valued by teachers; and
- (c) the ACT Government has been collaborating with ASIC to ensure students have access to best-practice financial literacy education;

(2) notes the December 2020 release of the ASIC report on its review into school banking programs, finding that:

- (a) school banking programs are used as a key strategic tool by banks and financial institutions to market their products to young children;
- (b) there is no evidence that school banking programs improve the financial literacy or savings habits of children;
- (c) banks and financial institutions use sophisticated marketing techniques through their school banking programs to target young children who are vulnerable consumers; and
- (d) banks and financial institutions make payments to schools to encourage them to get students to participate in school banking programs and in return use school resources and volunteers to market their products to their students;

(3) further notes that:

- (a) during the Future of Education consultations where the ACT Government heard from over 5,000 community members, students said that they want to learn real life skills, including financial skills;
- (b) building financial literacy from childhood is important for long-term social and economic stability and equality;
- (c) the Foundation to Year 10 Australian Curriculum provides for financial literacy education; and
- (d) MoneySmart and the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Report Authority have both developed comprehensive financial education resources for teachers to implement the Australian Curriculum without the need for banking and financial institutions to run school banking; and

(4) calls on the ACT Government to:

- (a) continue to work with students, the ACT Council of Parents and Citizens Association, the Australian Education Union ACT Branch, and the ACT

Principals' Association to develop a plan to deliver quality financial literacy education in public schools; and

- (b) transition away from banks and financial institutions delivering school banking programs in ACT Government schools by the end of the 2020-2021 financial year.

Corporations have no place in our public education system. We need a plan to get the big banks out of our schools and to focus on setting up our younger generations for economic and financial security. We know that educating our children on financial literacy is important for their long-term social and economic stability and equality. That is why I am calling on the government to divest our schools from grubby and, ironically, educationally worthless school-based commercial banking programs.

All children should get high-quality independent financial literacy education from their school, from their parents and from their communities. They are already doing so, without the need for corporate involvement in our public schools. The federal government's MoneySmart program and the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority have both developed financial education resources for teachers to implement the Australian curriculum that are far more comprehensive and up-to-date than the outdated programs run by banking and financial institutions.

We know that Canberra students are hungry for practical life skills, including money management. Our schools are already meeting these needs, with plans to increase the emphasis on and attention to financial skills and an understanding of how money works. This motion calls on the ACT government to continue to work closely with teachers, the Australian Education Union, the parents and citizens association and the ACT Principals Association to develop and continually approve appropriate contemporary financial education in line with the Australian curriculum.

Financial literacy is best taught by teachers who have an active interest in the education of our students. Teachers, not banks, are best placed to actively work with students to teach them how to identify scams and avoid loan shark companies. We need students to learn how to critically engage with the significant risks of "buy now, pay later" schemes like Afterpay and to learn about the pitfalls of car loans. Financial institutions that run and participate in these schemes cannot be trusted to be the ones educating students on these important issues.

In December last year, the Australian Securities and Investments Commission released their much-anticipated report into school banking programs. Through their two-year review, ASIC worked with schools, financial counselling organisations, governments, parents and the big banks to examine the impact of these marketing programs on our students.

The resulting report was damning. Firstly, ASIC found that school banking programs are used as key strategic tools by banks and financial institutions to market their products to young children. To quote ASIC:

Providers do not effectively disclose that school banking programs are linked to a broader customer acquisition strategy. In the absence of this information,

school communities may believe that these programs are purely or largely an altruistic community service offered by the provider rather than a commercial activity.

Secondly, ASIC found that there is no evidence that school banking programs improve the financial literacy or saving habits of our children.

Thirdly, ASIC found that banks and financial institutions use sophisticated marketing techniques through their school banking programs to target vulnerable young children who are vulnerable consumers. To quote ASIC once more:

Providers make use of persuasive advertising strategies to deeply engage participants with their brand. Little consideration is given to the participants' abilities to filter marketing messages.

Fourthly, ASIC found that banks and financial institutions make payments to schools to encourage them to get students to participate in school banking programs and in return use school resources and much-needed school volunteers to market their products to students.

During ASIC's review, the Commonwealth Bank held a 93 per cent share of school banking programs, with over 175,000 students enrolled in their programs across the country. As a result of ASIC's investigation, Bendigo Bank, IMB and South West Credit all decided to voluntarily end their smaller, yet still problematic, school banking programs midway through last year. But by far the biggest bank in the game, the Commonwealth Bank, has retained its overwhelming presence in Australian schools and has continued to invest in retaining its grip on the significant market share of students.

Other states have already taken action on this issue. Just before ASIC's report was released to the public in November last year, the Victorian Labor government moved to remove school banking from their schools almost immediately, from term 1 of this year. To quote the Victorian Minister for Education, James Merlino, "Students deserve high-quality financial literacy, free from commercial interests." I could not agree more with James Merlino.

In the words of Scott Pape, more widely known as the Barefoot Investor, "letting a large multinational bank teach your kids about saving money and spending wisely is like asking Ronald McDonald to teach them about nutrition". This analogy is quite apt, as the Commonwealth Bank also hands out branded plastic toys to students as a reward for their continued customer loyalty.

While I was talking with Glenn Fowler, the Secretary of the Australian Education Union Act Branch, he made similar comments. He put it to me that school banking is the equivalent of multinational fast-food chains running school canteens or, indeed, delivering food studies courses in schools. He said, "The primary interest the big banks have in this is in rusting-on young children as future mortgage holders and credit card users." The Australian Education Union has, for some time—in line with its democratic decision-making processes—been putting the case to government that

so-called financial literacy programs in schools run by big commercial banks are completely inappropriate.

Schools cannot be treated as breeding grounds for future bank customers. We must always be vigilant about the business world seeking to gain access to our children and young people, especially in their places of learning. The Australian Education Union commends us for doing what is right and proper by ending, once and for all, this longstanding, unpalatable, situation.

For all these reasons, in 2018 consumer advocacy group CHOICE awarded their Shonky Award to the Dollarmites program at the Commonwealth Bank. The Shonky Awards are handed out every year by CHOICE to call out and uncover companies that take advantage of their customers. According to CHOICE, they gave this prestigious award to the Dollarmites program because “employing subversive sales tactics under the guise of youth education is a particularly pernicious act”.

Banks and financial institutions like the Commonwealth Bank are not upstanding symbols of financial independence. The Royal Commission into Misconduct in the Banking, Superannuation and Financial Services Industry found that the Commonwealth Bank has charged more fees for no service than any other major bank. It sold insurance to people who were unable to use it and charged fees to dead people. Meanwhile, they are in our schools marketing their products to our kids and signing them up for bank accounts. These childhood bank accounts and the data and relationships that they generate for these banks lead to high-interest personal loans, mortgages and credit cards for young adults.

The most famous of the school banking programs is the aforementioned Commonwealth Bank Dollarmites program. As a kid I had a Dollarmites account, and I am sure many of my fellow members did too. Dollarmites has been running in Australian schools for more than 90 years. The Commonwealth Bank was only fully privatised in the mid-90s under the Keating Labor government. So, for a good while, the Dollarmites program had the responsibility of providing an educational function in our schools, by government, for the public. But by 1991, when it was sold off to private owners for private profit, the Commonwealth Bank well and truly had its grip in our schools.

I understand that people often have a nostalgic connection to the bank they signed up to as a child, but these relationships are one sided. Banks do not care about you; banks do not care about your wellbeing. They care about making money, and they do that by offering high-interest loans, often to people who cannot afford to pay them back. Indeed, our nostalgia is not coincidental; these programs are specifically designed to invoke brand loyalty. Dollarmites is one of the most prolific forms of marketing designed exclusively for children, that we have. As ASIC and CHOICE have both identified, school banking programs are very sophisticated and they are successful at achieving their aims of signing up kids and making them loyal to their products, including those high-interest home loans and credit cards.

A 2017 survey by CHOICE found that 46 per cent of Australians opened their first bank account with the Commonwealth Bank and that 34 per cent of those people still

have those accounts. This means that approximately 3.5 million Australians who opened their first bank account with the Commonwealth Bank remain loyal customers. This branding exercise is such a beautiful piece of marketing that the Dollarmites brand is estimated to be worth \$10 billion.

Until now, the banks have been using our schools to facilitate this marketing to Canberra's students. This is shocking but it is not surprising, given the Commonwealth Bank's powerful grip over the public consciousness and the incentive payments or kickbacks that schools get for volunteering their time, parents' time, and school spaces to this extremely wealthy bank. That is right; the Commonwealth Bank has been playing schools to buy their students' customer loyalty.

I respect the hard work of public school P&Cs, which are interested in and truly dedicated to their students and their school communities. This motion calls on the government to continue to work closely with these important stakeholders and to prepare them for the transition away from school banking. The fact that banks and financial institutions prey on the underfunding of public school facilities to shore up this dodgy business is deeply unethical.

While the short-term gain for a participating school can be really appealing, the long-term cost to our students is much too high, although it is an extremely effective investment on the Commonwealth Bank's part. We owe it to our students to set them up for success in life. That means teaching them to be financially literate—learning how to save and to live within their means. It is not our responsibility, nor is it ethical, to support the development of a lifelong brand loyalty to a private company. I look forward to the Assembly supporting this motion today.

MS BERRY (Ginninderra—Deputy Chief Minister, Minister for Early Childhood Development, Minister for Education and Youth Affairs, Minister for Housing and Suburban Development, Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence, Minister for Sport and Recreation and Minister for Women) (3.13): The government supports Mr Davis's motion, which outlines an important issue that the government has been considering—school banking programs in public schools.

In 2017 the government had a big conversation with the Canberra community about education. Over 16 months we heard from around 5,000 individuals about what they wanted to see in Canberra schools over the next 10 years. Forty-four per cent of those responses were from young people. We also heard from parents, carers, teachers, school staff, community organisations, the Australian Education Union, P&Cs, principals and others. The Future of Education strategy is the culmination of what we heard from the community in that conversation. In those consultations, students told us again and again that they wanted to learn life skills. One student wrote, "We need to be more prepared for the outside world. We need to be taught relevant things. Teach us things that we will use."

One of the things that students identified that they wanted to learn about was money and finances. Understanding money and how it works in the real world is a critical part of our children's learning. At around the same time as we were having the Future of Education consultations, the banking royal commission brought to light the

concerning behaviour of some of our financial institutions. And then, right at the end of last year, ASIC released a report about school banking programs in primary schools. The ASIC report found that providers of school banking programs were unable to demonstrate that these programs improved savings behaviour. It also found that school banking programs failed to disclose their objective of signing up customers as children.

So we know that children want to learn about money, and we know that school banking programs do not provide that learning. Teachers are passionate about preparing students for their lives as adults. Teachers in schools across the ACT access resources to teach financial literacy as part of the Australian curriculum, including resources from ACARA and ASIC. The resources include units of work, interactive activities and e-books to engage and enhance students' critical thinking. The resources are developed for teachers by teachers and are intended to make it easier to teach financial capacity in the classroom.

Teachers in the ACT also access professional learning from ASIC as part of the Moneysmart for Teachers program. The Moneysmart for Teachers program builds teacher knowledge and the confidence to teach financial capability in the classroom. These courses are accredited by the ACT Teacher Quality Institute, which means that they count towards the 20 hours of professional learning that teachers are required to do each year.

In the last 12 months we have seen a significant drop in participation in school banking programs in public schools. Less than 10 per cent of public school students now participate in school banking programs. There are a few reasons for this. Some banks have stopped offering their programs, some schools and P&Cs have chosen to stop running the programs, and fewer parents are choosing to participate with their children.

While we are having this conversation, I would particularly like to acknowledge the parent volunteers and school staff that have spent hundreds of hours administering these programs for school communities. For some schools, school banking programs have been a great tool for community engagement, giving an opportunity for parents to connect with each other and to connect with school staff. In planning this transition away from school banking, the government is committed to working with school communities and P&Cs to ensure that we create new opportunities for parents to engage in their local schools.

Since the banking royal commission, the ACT government has been considering how best to deliver financial literacy education in public schools. The government has been consulting with students, the Australian Education Union, the ACT Government School Education Council and P&C associations, as well as the ACT Principals Association, on the future of school banking. The government has also been cooperating and collaborating with ASIC to ensure that students have access to best practice financial literacy education. The government is committed to ensuring that all children in the ACT get the best chance at a good education and a good life. An understanding of money is an important part of being an adult, and it is clear from an ASIC report that school banking programs do not provide that learning.

I want to talk a bit about the numbers with regard to the banking programs currently being operated by P&Cs in our schools. We estimate that the total revenue that is received from all the P&Cs together is around \$20,000. That is across all schools. That is around \$2,000 for one school. That is the maximum amount for one school. It is a very small amount of money, but important, nonetheless.

The ACT government has been providing grants to P&Cs over the last couple of years, and in the last year we provided \$178,403 to P&Cs to continue their engagement with parents in their schools. So far, these grants have totalled \$467,521. I understand that Mr Hanson will be talking to an amendment to this motion, and I just want to provide that information so that it is clear that the government is already supporting P&Cs.

That is what this transition is about—making sure that we work with P&Cs, which have been doing the heavy lifting in their schools and engaging parent communities. We want to make sure that they can continue to do that work and that there are grants available to support them in doing that, because for some school communities, school banking programs have been an important opportunity to reach parents. Those grants are up to \$20,000 to strengthen family and school partnerships. I just wanted to assure the Assembly that the ACT government already supports parents and citizens organisations. A transition period at the start of this year will assist P&Cs to continue to engage with families and parents, and the ACT government can support them financially through those grant programs. I am happy to support Mr Davis's motion today.

MR HANSON (Murrumbidgee) (3.20): The opposition will be supporting Mr Davis's motion. Before I go to the substance of the debate, I highlight that describing the Dollarmites program and the various other programs that have been run to support financial literacy as grubby and to talk about institutions as dodgy businesses is an unnecessary slur. I do not think that it adds to the debate. I appreciate that it might help Mr Davis in his particular constituency when he is trying to rally the troops. If we are going to have substantive debates in this place about programs that involve literally hundreds, and potentially thousands, of parents and children in the ACT, to describe the program that they have been participating in over the years as grubby and dodgy does not really add anything to the debate.

I make the point as well that there is parental choice around this. This has not been imposed on parents or children. I acknowledge that the minister spoke about the work done by P&Cs and volunteers on this. I thank her for doing so and for not using the same unhelpful rhetoric that we heard from Mr Davis. As I said, we will be supporting this motion. I will, as the minister alluded to, be moving an amendment which I think improves the motion.

The motivation for this motion arises from a December 2020 ASIC report. The report undertook to identify why banks, schools and students engage with the programs, to understand whether banks assess the impacts on students' savings habits, and to analyse the long-term impact of marketing through these programs on children. ASIC made four key findings. The first was that school banking programs claim to help children develop long-term savings habits; however, providers were unable to demonstrate that these programs, in and of themselves, improve savings behaviour.

ASIC found that payments to schools for implementing school banking programs incentivise schools to encourage greater participation in the programs. It found that young children are vulnerable consumers and are exposed to sophisticated advertising and marketing tactics by school banking program providers, and that school banking program providers fail to effectively disclose that a strategic objective of these programs is customer acquisition.

All of those elements, obviously, are of concern, and that is what has led to this debate here today, following a whole series of media reports, and debate in other jurisdictions as well, including Victoria.

The Commonwealth Bank, as has been highlighted, is the only major bank to provide a school banking program. It first initiated that in 1931. That is called the Dollarmites Club, and it is a big driver of dominance, and of it being the largest bank in the retail deposit market. The Commonwealth Bank has been running that Dollarmites program across the nation. I thank the minister for providing the specific figures for the ACT. Within Australia, it has 175,000 out of a total of about 180,000 school banking accounts, which is a 97 per cent share of the market—a significant amount.

I had an interesting interaction with Ms Le Couteur, who often railed, along with her Greens colleagues, about the Commonwealth Bank. I saw her popping out of a Commonwealth Bank branch one day. I noted the irony that someone that was so opposed to big banks, and potentially the Commonwealth Bank, would be banking there. She said, “I’ve been banking here for a long time.” If I recall the conversation, she said, “Since I was a primary school child.” So there you go, Mr Assistant Speaker; perhaps not all of the Greens are as distraught at this. If you look at Ms Le Couteur’s register of pecuniary interests in previous terms, you will note that she is probably a pretty savvy investor. Anyway, I digress; I will move on.

Mr Rattenbury: Relevance, Mr Hanson?

MR HANSON: The relevance is the use of the Dollarmites program, Mr Rattenbury, and perhaps the contradiction and hypocrisy of certain members of this place in raising some of these issues. But I will not go into more detail about members who say one thing and do another at this stage. I will leave that for another day.

Certainly, there has been significant public debate on this matter. I note that the CEO of consumer group CHOICE said that the programs are “nothing more than marketing schemes”. The Commonwealth Bank has also made public statements. Without necessarily agreeing with what they say, I will put those on the public record:

While we acknowledge some of the findings, we do not believe they are entirely consistent with international research or our own, and we do not agree with the overall assessment of school banking programs.

Certainly, within the student and parent body, and indeed in schools and P&Cs, there are mixed views. My office spoke to the ACT Council of P&Cs this week to discuss the issue. There is no unanimous view one way or another. Here is one quote from the

ASIC report: “I love the school banking program; it teaches children the value of money and how to save.” That is what one parent said, responding anonymously. Another said, “I feel like it is just a way for the banks to get my child’s information and as soon as they turn 18 send them a credit card offer.”

There is a mixed view, but when you consider what ASIC have said in their findings, we are supportive of the motion. It is right that the program not be so reliant on a single financial institution, in this case predominantly the Commonwealth Bank. Indeed, although there is parental and student choice, I note, Mr Assistant Speaker, that if that is the only program on offer, in some regard you could argue that there is not any choice. They either participate in that program or in no program. In that regard I am supporting Mr Davis’s motion, which, obviously, is also supported by the government.

As I alluded to, I have an amendment, which I will move shortly. It has two effects. One is that it delays the time frame in the original motion. Mr Davis said that this needs to be done by the end of the financial year. That seems to me to be a very short time frame for students, parents and P&Cs to adjust and for an alternative, appropriate program to be delivered.

I also note that schools operate on a school year, not on a financial year. If you are teaching a subject, you may be halfway through that subject. Many kids may have received instruction on the Dollarmites program. I do not think it is helpful, halfway through a school year, in learning about financial literacy through this program, to say, “Forget that, rip it up and start all over again.” I do not know whether schools are ready to come up with another program, but in delivering a curriculum it is not a good way of doing business to change halfway through a school year. The beginning of the school year, when going into year 6 or year 5, is the time to start that.

The first part of my amendment delays the start date of the transition, to allow time for schools, P&Cs, parents and, most importantly, the students themselves, not to be unduly disrupted. I make the point that this program has been running since 1931, so I do not think there is a massive urgency to rush to failure here. I think we can do this in a more considered, deliberate way that is less disruptive.

The second part of my amendment—and I note the comments of the minister—relates to the fact that P&Cs are engaged financially in this. They receive some of their funding through the Dollarmites program. If the Dollarmites program ceases then they are out of pocket. It might sound like small amounts—\$1,000, \$500 and so on—but if you have ever been on a P&C or a P&F, you would understand that that is a significant amount of money. The minister is saying, “Don’t worry, we’ve got grants available; people can apply for grants and so on,” but there is no guarantee that you will get that grant.

I say to the minister that there should be no problem with supporting that amendment. If the minister is saying, “We’re doing that,” or “We’re going to do that,” why not support my amendment? If she agrees with it, why not support it, unless she is not actually going to do that? I make the point, Mr Assistant Speaker, that if you have ever applied for a grant—and I am sure there are many people here from the

community sector that have—you will know that it is not an easy process; it is a difficult process. It is time consuming. Many P&Cs do not have the ability to do that; they are volunteers.

Why are we going to make these P&Cs jump through unnecessary hoops? If we all agree in this place that we need to make sure that they are not massively out of pocket, let us implement that, rather than saying, “No, you’ve got to go and apply for a grant,” through some grants process. They would need to have it all stitched up in a matter of a few months.

The point is that we can all agree on these philosophical points that Mr Davis has raised. I agree with many of them, even if I do not agree with some of his language. When this hits the real world, it is going to hit parents, P&Cs and students. The amendment that I am moving will ease that and make the transition fairer for those involved in this program.

We will be supporting Mr Davis’s motion; but, in order to make it fair, and so that it has less of an impact in the real world, I move the following amendment that has been circulated in my name:

Delete everything after section (4) (a) and insert:

- “(b) transition away from banks and financial institutions delivering school banking programs in ACT Government schools by the end of the 2022 school year; and
- (c) provide financial or other in-kind support to Parents and Citizens Associations and schools for any external funding lost by a transition away from financial institutions providing school banking services.”

MR DAVIS (Brindabella) (3.32): The ACT Greens will not be supporting Mr Hanson’s amendment that was circulated earlier, for a few reasons. First of all, I would like to note a few items raised in Mr Hanson’s speech. With all due respect, Mr Hanson, I will not be tone policed. My youthful enthusiasm for this place, I think, is actually what is going to make me most effective. While you may seek to make me a little bit nicer to the big banks, and even insinuate that perhaps my work is motivated by attempting lock up a constituency, I will lock up a constituency of people who are cynical about the motivations of the Comm Bank, rather than think that I might upset some rich board members. So I am quite comfortable with my tone and with my language.

In terms of your comments around the time frame, I can understand some hesitation about the time frame.

MR ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Mr Pettersson): Mr Davis, could you please direct your comments through the chair.

MR DAVIS: Yes, I can, Mr Assistant Speaker; I appreciate that. In terms of the time frame noted in Mr Hanson’s circulated amendment, I note that Mr Hanson and his colleagues do, and on occasion I respect them for it, make an active effort to come into this place and criticise this government—both the one that exists now and the one

previously—for not acting quickly enough on recommendations, not acting quickly enough on reports or not acting quickly enough on advice.

The advice has existed since December. To their credit, the Victorian Labor government did react immediately. In fact, these programs have been phased out of Victorian public schools since the beginning of this year. They were able to do that in a lot more schools than we have to roll them out to, they have to do that with a lot more students, and they were able to do that with quiet efficiency. I have a lot of faith in our P&Cs, our public schools and our Education Directorate to be able to do a small task, having regard to what the Victorian government was able to do.

In particular, I am a bit hesitant to show any support for Mr Hanson's proposed paragraph (c), as it tends to pre-empt negotiations and consultations that the minister for education, and the Education Directorate more broadly, is already engaged in, as cited in paragraph (1)(a) of my original motion. I do not think it is healthy to pre-empt those discussions. I have faith in the P&Cs to engage in those discussions in good faith and make very clear what, if any, supports they need through the transition, rather than assuming what might be needed and having a monolithic approach across all of our school communities. I am encouraged to see that those conversations will happen, and I will be keeping a close eye on those as well.

I look forward to bringing more motions and more legislation to this place over the next four years that challenge big business and the stranglehold they have on our communities. I look forward to Mr Hanson's continued efforts to defend them from my meanness.

Question put:

That the amendment be agreed to.

The Assembly voted—

Ayes 9

Noes 15

Mr Cain
Ms Castley
Mr Coe
Mr Hanson
Mrs Jones
Mrs Kikkert
Ms Lawder
Ms Lee

Mr Parton

Ms Berry
Mr Braddock
Ms Burch
Ms Cheyne
Ms Clay
Ms Davidson
Mr Davis
Mr Gentleman

Ms Orr
Dr Paterson
Mr Pettersson
Mr Rattenbury
Mr Steel
Ms Stephen-Smith
Ms Vassarotti

Amendment negatived.

Original question resolved in the affirmative.

Housing—policy

MR PARTON (Brindabella) (3.40): I move:

That this Assembly:

(1) notes:

- (a) the ACT is Australia's most expensive rental market. As a result, an increasing number of residents are experiencing housing stress;
- (b) data from CoreLogic shows the median weekly rent for houses in Canberra is \$657, up 3.6 percent since 2019, while median weekly unit rents are \$473;
- (c) over 20 years the ACT Labor/Greens Government has driven housing and thereby rental costs up through increased rates, slow land release for new stock and the failure to deliver effective policy for affordable housing; and
- (d) a number of Canberrans are being driven into homelessness as they struggle with increased living costs, in major part driven by increased housing costs; and

(2) calls on the Government to:

- (a) investigate the effectiveness of a range of policy levers aimed at alleviating the extremely high cost of housing in the ACT, particularly for low to moderate income earners, including working more effectively with community housing providers (CHPs) to strengthen their ability to provide more affordable housing;
- (b) investigate implementing shared equity arrangements, whereby the ACT Government provides land for CHPs to provide social housing, while maintaining an ownership stake;
- (c) investigate the introduction of a rent supplementation lease arrangement whereby the ACT Government would undertake bulk auctions of long-term leases to CHPs, to provide affordable rentals, with the supplement serving as an incentive for institutional investors to partner with CHPs;
- (d) immediately extend lease durations for public housing currently let out by Housing ACT to CHPs, thereby allowing long-term revenue certainty to allow providers to borrow and grow;
- (e) consider providing more extensive land tax exemptions and rates rebates for landholders leasing to CHPs;
- (f) investigate implementing a land tax threshold, where the tax is only paid on the value of land over a certain amount, similar to jurisdictions like NSW;
- (g) reassess the current land release regime to determine whether supply is meeting demand; and
- (h) report back to the Legislative Assembly on the Government's progress in considering these proposals by the final sitting day in April 2021.

Here we are, the day after the budget, a budget from a super-progressive Labor-Greens government, a government that beats its chest on a daily basis, pretty much, about its fairness—a government that reaches out to renters and struggling families with hand on heart and declares that it is fighting for the battler. Time and again, year after year, we see that in reality this Labor-Greens government does not

give a hoot about the people who are struggling to pay their rent or who cannot get a seat on the rental merry-go-round because it is moving quite fast at the moment.

There was some political risk in our bringing this motion forward this week. I will explain why. What if, in yesterday's budget, the government had magically actually done something about the shortfall in social housing? What if, in the budget, the government had actually addressed the rental affordability crisis? We would have looked quite stupid today. What if the power-sharing agreement promise of 400 new social dwellings had gone part of the way to being fulfilled? I was pretty confident that that would not be the case and, sadly, I was right.

I am absolutely dismayed, but not in the least bit surprised, that we are here debating this sort of motion. We have a genuine rental affordability crisis in this city, and it is playing out exactly the way we said it would. The motion aims to achieve a number of things. It aims to bring to light a major issue that a series of Labor-Greens governments in this city has exacerbated and repeatedly failed to address while at the helm over the past 20 years.

That issue is the cost of housing, and particularly the skyrocketing rents that many families and individuals across our community are very much struggling to contend with—and now worse than ever. At the end of the day, I am here with hope and optimism in the belief that maybe some of this motion—I would have thought—could succeed, and that ultimately it would lead to more homes for struggling families and individuals.

I use the word “struggling” quite loosely because, as thousands of people trying to get on the rental merry-go-round have discovered, this crisis is affecting many people who are a fair way up the food chain. As a small jurisdiction, there are not many national races that we win, but we are winning this one. When it comes to rental unaffordability we are the leaders.

New data from CoreLogic reported last month shows that the median weekly rent for houses in Canberra is now sitting at \$657. In many suburbs that is an increase of more than 10 per cent in 12 months. This is not sustainable for families and individuals who are already struggling to get by. The story is the same for units and apartments in this city, with rents now averaging \$473 per week. That is based on the CoreLogic research.

For low and middle-income earners, the ACT is becoming an even scarier place, whether you are looking to relocate your family at the end of lease or you are entering the market for the first time or whether you might be downsizing. Fascinatingly, we are seeing the opposite of these trends, particularly when it comes to inner city apartments, in Melbourne and Sydney.

We all know someone who is trying to find a rental right now. We all know people who are being shut out and who are reassessing their stay in this wonderful city because of the very real financial challenges that that presents. Despite two decades in government, Labor and, for the most part, the Greens have presided over a land release regime that has driven up housing costs with terribly constrained supply,

meaning home ownership is becoming more out of reach. I am not even going to mention Jon Stanhope, just because you are sick of it—you are sick of me mentioning him.

As a result, more people are renting, and renting is getting so expensive. Once a place where you could live relatively comfortably, renting in Canberra is becoming a nightmare. If you are in a situation where you need social housing here in the ACT under Labor and the Greens, buckle up and be prepared to wait for a long, long time.

I came into this place today armed with what I think and what people in the sector believe, and certainly what people who are trying to get onto the merry-go-round believe, are genuine policy solutions. All I am doing is asking that those on the other side investigate. This is not a bill; this is a motion. We are just asking for some genuine investigation and consideration.

Much of what I am calling on the government to investigate and adopt is aimed at increasing the supply of more affordable rental properties provided by community housing providers, of which we have many operating here in Canberra. They do a great job. But what the Canberra Liberals are pushing for here is for those providers to be empowered to do even more and to provide more affordable accommodation for people who need it.

Separately from working with the community housing providers, there are two things the government, I think, needs to do immediately. The first is to seriously reassess the current land release regime to see whether supply is meeting demand and, if it is not—and certainly a lot of the telltale signs are that it is not—work out a way to make sure that it does. I note that this has been addressed in some of the forthcoming amendments.

The second is to investigate putting in place a land tax regime like the one over the border in New South Wales, where the tax is only paid on property over a certain amount. The threshold at the moment in New South Wales is, I believe, \$750,000. A land tax threshold would come at a cost to the budget, yes. Of course it would. But it would also reduce the burden on mum and dad property investors, thereby reducing the burden on their tenants and bringing more of those investors back to the market. I think it is something the government should investigate.

When it comes to community housing providers, there is a range of reforms that we are proposing the government just investigate and consider. First, shared equity arrangements broader than the ones that are outlined in Ms Berry's forthcoming amendment—this is a situation where the ACT government would provide land for community housing providers to build new social housing. The government maintains its stake in the dwelling, and that equity is only released when the CHP sells the property. The CHP keeps all the rent, the government waives its claim based on its equity stake. The idea is that a passive investment portfolio is developed for the government and they retain any capital growth in their share of the asset. It makes a lot of sense.

Second, we are asking the government to investigate introducing a rent supplementation lease arrangement, which has been underway in Victoria, where the government could undertake bulk auctions of long-term leases to CHPs and the supplement would serve as an incentive for institutional investors to partner with them.

Third, the government can provide a lot of certainty by immediately extending the head leases on properties let to CHPs for, say, up to 20 years, which is exactly what they did in New South Wales. I believe that that part of this motion has not even been mentioned in the amendments. It is one of the easiest things, one that could be done tomorrow, and it would instantly provide certainty to these community housing providers moving forward.

Finally, we think the government should consider more extensive land tax exemptions and rates rebates to landholders who lease to CHTs. We understand that this is addressed in the amendment, but we think it should be even more extensive.

In closing, whatever the government is doing in this space is not working. The Labor-Greens coalition should be open to considering new policy options, and that is why I am putting this motion forward here today. I firmly believe that it is the job of the opposition not only to hold the government to account but also to provide genuine alternatives. That is what we are doing with this motion, and I hope the government—the Labor wing and the Greens wing—will take on board investigation of these proposals in good faith.

MS BERRY (Ginninderra—Deputy Chief Minister, Minister for Early Childhood Development, Minister for Education and Youth Affairs, Minister for Housing and Suburban Development, Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence, Minister for Sport and Recreation and Minister for Women) (3.49): I want to thank Mr Parton for bringing forward this motion today; it is a very important issue. I always enjoy the conversations that we have around housing and homelessness in the ACT, particularly on the support that the ACT government provides to people experiencing chronic homelessness in the ACT.

First, I want to move the amendment that I have circulated. I move:

Omit all words after “(1) Notes” and substitute:

- “(a) that while the ACT is one of Australia’s most affordable jurisdictions to rent and buy a home on measures based on average incomes, these higher than average incomes hide the challenges lower-income families face in the private rental market;
- (b) data from CoreLogic shows the median weekly rent for houses in Canberra is \$657, up 3.6 percent since 2019, while median weekly unit rents are \$473.

(2) further notes:

- (a) the ACT Housing Strategy released in 2018 is built on hundreds of community voices in a year-long consultation process and includes 74 short, medium and long-term actions to deliver;
- (b) the Year 2 Report Card of the Housing Strategy was released today outlining the actions that have been taken over the last year, including

actions to support the housing and homelessness sector through the COVID-19 Health Emergency.

- (c) the important role of community housing providers in delivering affordable housing to Canberrans;
 - (d) the 10th Assembly Parliamentary and Governing Agreement outlines commitments to support housing affordability in Canberra including growing social and affordable rental housing;
- (3) acknowledges that:
- (a) the ACT has several shared equity arrangements between community housing providers and the ACT Government, where the ACT Government hold an interest in a community-owned property;
 - (b) funding was announced last year to commence the policy design work for an expanded Land Rent scheme in an ACT context, investigate the feasibility of a broad-ranging shared equity scheme, and additional build-to-rent programs, under the ACT Housing Strategy;
 - (c) the 2020-2021 Budget expands the Community Housing Land Tax Exemption scheme to provide for up to 250 properties to participate, an action under the Parliamentary and Governing Agreement;
 - (d) the Federal Government's National Rental Affordability Scheme is ceasing and has provided a direct rental subsidy to community housing managed affordable rental properties;
 - (e) in their 2020-21 Budget, NSW has proposed transitioning from stamp-duty and aggregated land tax charges to an annual property based tax similar to ACT's general rates and land tax; and
 - (f) the Indicative Land Release Program is continually reviewed to respond to market and economic conditions and ensures enough land is released to cater for Canberra's population growth and demand for housing; and
- (4) calls on the ACT Government to:
- (a) continue to implement the ACT Housing Strategy to support the growth of social, community and affordable housing;
 - (b) continuing working with stakeholders, including community housing providers, on the implementation of the ACT Housing Strategy;
 - (c) continue implementing the 10th Assembly Parliamentary and Governing Agreement; and
 - (d) continue to advocate for the continuation of the Federal Government's National Rental Affordability Scheme."

I am not going to speak for too long on this motion, because this morning I spoke a lot about the year 2 update for the Housing Strategy which I released. I refer members to my speech this morning.

I do want to touch on some of the comments that Mr Parton made, taking us back to the election in October last year, when the Canberra Liberals' commitment was a \$100 million loan in the housing and homelessness space to community housing providers. It is completely, totally, unfeasible that a \$100 million loan would build 1,200 properties. Even if it was feasible to build 1,200 community housing properties, \$100 million is not enough money.

We have done a lot of investigating and we are now doing that work. Mr Parton was part of those investigations when he attended the consultations on the development of the Housing Strategy. As I said, I want to thank Mr Parton for bringing these ideas forward again today. Many of these suggestions already formed part of the Housing Strategy and were part of that consultation process, as Mr Parton might recall.

My amendment outlines some of the responses that have already been occurring through the ACT Housing Strategy, including investigating shared equity and other housing models and the expansion of the community housing land tax exemption scheme which has been outlined in the budget.

The ACT Housing Strategy is an important blueprint for the government to guide actions for housing affordability across the whole continuum. The strategy led to our nation-leading investment in public housing, which will see 400 extra homes for Canberrans who need them and a further 1,000 dwellings renewed. I acknowledge the important role that community housing providers play in the Housing Strategy. That is evident across all of the five goals.

Working in partnership with community housing providers, we have been able to deliver some remarkable new programs over the last year in response to COVID-19. CatholicCare and Argyle are now funded to operate MacKillop House and the Winter Lodge to provide emergency accommodation for men, women and families. The housing first program Axial has been expanded to provide permanent housing and support to chronic rough sleepers.

The ACT government has also provided direct rent relief to community housing providers, with \$2.2 million in assistance over the last six months to support providers and their tenants during what has been an incredibly challenging year. I have received reports from many in this sector about how this relief has been used to help tenants with extra support and services.

New mixed developments like Toolangi in Kaleen and Common Ground in Dickson, which is currently under construction, provide both social and affordable housing for eligible Canberrans. That social mix, creating vibrant and supportive communities, is a feature of the ACT Housing Strategy and something I am incredibly proud to be able to deliver on.

The ACT Housing Strategy will continue to guide the government on what needs to be done to address housing affordability in Canberra. We have already seen significant progress in the two years since it was released. There is, of course, far more that needs to be done. As I said, I want to thank Mr Parton for raising some of the ways that this can be achieved. I am particularly keen on Mr Parton's reference to the rental subsidy for community housing providers. I invite Mr Parton and the Canberra Liberals to join with Labor and the Greens in calling on the federal government to extend and expand the National Rental Affordability Scheme that has been so important to increasing the supply of community housing here in the ACT and across the country.

The ACT government is doing its bit to deliver outcomes for social and affordable housing in Canberra. If we can agree on this tripartisan commitment with the Canberra Liberals, I hope that we can achieve even more.

MS VASSAROTTI (Kurrajong—Minister for the Environment, Minister for Heritage, Minister for Homelessness and Housing Services and Minister for Sustainable Building and Construction) (3.54): I would firstly like to thank Mr Parton for his motion today and particularly recognise some of the focus in the motion on the role of community housing and supporting affordable housing.

Housing is an issue that I deeply care about. As someone who has worked with community housing providers, I have seen firsthand the positive impact they have on our community. Housing is a priority area for the Greens. We are highly aware that our community wants us and expects us to address the significant housing and homelessness issues in our community.

I want to acknowledge the important role that community housing providers play in ensuring that every Canberran has a home. As tenancy managers, they provide a different approach to private real estate agents or private landlords and are able to invest in supporting individual households as well as creating a sense of community across the tenancies they manage. It was particularly striking that, through the COVID-19 period, I was provided with information about how community housing providers were able to often provide rental reductions for tenants who were impacted by this health and economic crisis, which was a great relief to those households.

I thank Mr Parton for bringing ideas to the table. However, I acknowledge that many of the measures that will increase community housing in Canberra that have been noted and proposed in the motion are already being progressed through the ACT Housing Strategy. That is why the Greens will be supporting the government amendments today.

The rental and housing market in Canberra is a difficult place, particularly for those on lower incomes. While many are able to afford the higher rents in the ACT, due to higher median wages, there are far too many people in our community who do not have appropriate housing choices available to them. This includes single parent families; students; people with insecure work and underemployment; and, of course, people who are dependent on the income support safety net. We also know that life circumstances can mean that a rental arrangement that worked for your family can suddenly create housing and financial stress, a job loss, an injury or illness, or things that commonly happen to people in the community.

The Greens believe that one person without a home is too many and we believe that it is possible to deliver a home for all. We are deeply concerned that there are a growing number of people who are facing the lack of a home. With a culture that sees rental as a temporary housing option, there is a lack of understanding of the ongoing financial and emotional impacts of rent that eat up more and more of one's income.

A home for all was a central part of our election campaign, and we recognise the need to think creatively around solutions. This is not an issue the government can solve

alone; we need to work with business and the community sector to identify solutions to this challenging issue. The ACT government recognises the important role of community housing providers in delivering this vision. They are able to bridge the gap between private rental and social and public housing. Their organisational arrangements enable them to look at different tenancy options and deliver different housing solutions to the market that can be more responsive to community needs, and more affordable.

This is why the parliamentary and governing agreement has an affordable rental target of an additional 600 dwellings by 2025-26. We understand that this is an ambitious target and it will take collaboration with community housing providers and others to develop a range of identified and new ways to ensure that we deliver on this commitment. While we have many ideas already, I know that there will be new initiatives for us to explore with our partners. I look forward to ongoing conversation about how the community sector can assist us in reaching our ambitious goals to deliver more affordable housing.

Today my colleague Minister Berry, the Minister for Housing and Suburban Development, delivered the year 2 report card of the ACT Housing Strategy. Goal 4 of the strategy outlines the actions the government is taking to grow and develop the community housing sector. There are commitments to continue to work with community sector providers around the development of affordable housing, shared equity schemes and an expanded land rent scheme.

I also welcome the 2020-21 budget commitment to expand the community housing land tax exemption to a further 250 properties. This targets land tax relief specifically to those who will provide affordable housing rentals, rather than granting tax relief to private investors, which would likely have a knock-on effect and further drive up the purchase price of houses and apartments.

We know that one of the most significant issues for low-income households struggling to pay rental costs is the low level of income support. We have heard many stories of the dramatic positive impact there was while the COVID supplement was in place. Canberrans on JobSeeker were lifted out of poverty; they could afford to eat at every mealtime and could afford to pay for their medication. I implore those opposite to advocate to their federal counterparts to immediately and permanently increase the rate of the JobSeeker payment.

In addition to this, the national housing policy settings are already geared towards property investors and yet we have ongoing issues with an affordable housing supply. We need to look more closely at models that address issues for renters, rather than expanding the financial benefits for investors who are already well catered for—such as capital gains tax discounts—which have caused huge inflation in house prices throughout Canberra and the rest of the country.

The federal government program that does help community housing providers nationally, the National Rental Affordability Scheme, which is due to end, with no indication of continuation, is key. I hope that those opposite will advocate for this to continue.

To conclude, we will be supporting the Labor amendment, which I believe clarifies that community housing providers are already an important part of the ACT Housing Strategy and that we must continue with implementation.

This is an issue that we will need to continue to put energy, effort and resources into. I look forward to working with Minister Berry, in my capacity as Minister for Homelessness and Housing Services, in delivering the housing commitments of the parliamentary and governing agreement. In doing this, I trust that we will work collaboratively across the Legislative Assembly—as well as with key stakeholders, including community housing providers—to achieve our shared goal of ensuring that everyone in Canberra has a decent home.

MS LAWDER (Brindabella) (4.01): I want to say a few words about Ms Berry's amendment. Mr Parton has done a good job of outlining what he believes and what we believe needs to be done. I want to talk, specifically, a little bit about NRAS, the National Rental Affordability Scheme. A Grattan review showed that only half of NRAS properties went to the poorest 20 per cent. I believe we need to think about how to best address those people most at risk of homelessness, those most vulnerable in our community, those in the lowest or even the two lowest quintiles. Is NRAS the best way to do that? It seems to me that our stagnating levels of housing stock mean that there is little flow of social housing for those who are the most vulnerable in the ACT. We need to make sure we are helping those at the very bottom. The question is: is more social housing the best way to do that, rather than more affordable housing?

Many other points in Mr Parton's motion highlight the way this government's policy has contributed to unaffordability of housing and why the ACT is one of the most expensive jurisdictions. I want to highlight the fact that we should be focusing on the policies that will do the most—potentially at the least cost—to better help low-income families in Canberra. We should be targeting those who are at most serious risk of homelessness, those teetering on the brink of homelessness whose lives are so stressful, every week, every fortnight, every pay day wondering how they are going to afford the other necessities of life on top of their housing cost. These people are in housing stress; they are in housing crisis. If they have children, their children will be going without in very many ways, whether it is school excursions, clothing choices or food choices. These are the people we should be here to best support. I commend Mr Parton's motion to the Assembly.

MR PARTON (Brindabella) (4.04): I love it how these amendments work. Ms Vassarotti spoke to me very briefly in an email at 9.30 this morning—and I appreciate the engagement that my office has had with hers on this—about these amendments, and clearly she had the whole swag. I had not seen them. I love it that when we did media at midday today some of the journalists gave me an inkling as to what was in the amendments, but the very first time I got to see them was 15 minutes before we debated them. I know it sounds like I am being snarky and everything else, but as we move forward it might be worthwhile—

Ms Berry interjecting—

The minister says most of the things have already been investigated, but I am really not sure that they have. It is interesting that we are having this discussion about NRAS because, on the face of it, an NRAS-style scheme—as was the case when it was first mooted—sounded great, but when it was rolled out it did not actually deliver to the people that needed it. That is one of the reasons I specifically put forward the Dan Andrews rent supplementation scheme. One of the great differences is that institutional investment money contributed to it, but the biggest difference is that the properties are managed by community housing providers, and it has delivered hundreds of new social and affordable dwellings to the Melbourne market. I had one of the institutional investors sitting in my office last year and he told me that if a similar scheme was offered in the ACT his large company would be on board straight away.

I am dismayed that the Greens have just laid down here. I know it is not possible for me to address the audience watching on the live stream, Madam Speaker, but if the standing orders allowed me to, I would. I would stare down the barrel of the camera and I would say, “Caroline, I wish you were here. I really do. Where are you?” That is what I would do. Because, back in the days when we had an independent, free-thinking Green in the Assembly, I know Caroline Le Couteur would have backed me up on a number of these proposals because she genuinely cared for the people on the margins and she understood the housing crisis. And on occasions—usually when it suited her—she was able to look through some of the Labor rhetoric and pick through what was actually real and what was not.

We are witnessing today the Greens lying down and letting Labor determine the way forward absolutely and completely. What we see today, despite all the rhetoric and talk of a new normal, is more of the same. I think, this is a sellout from the Greens. I can understand the Labor guys holding your line because this is the story you have been telling for years, and if you tell a lie for long enough it sort of morphs into the truth, doesn't it? I am happy to withdraw that, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: Yes, I think you will.

MR PARTON: My question for the Greens is this: are you happy with the current state of play and are you happy with the current direction? Emma Campbell from ACTCOSS certainly is not happy. Emma appeared on ABC Radio yesterday, discussing the budget. For the benefit of Greens members and any Labor members who actually remember why they were elected to this place, let me quote what she said. She said the biggest gap in the budget today is around housing. She also said that the Chief Minister may feel comfortable with the levels of public and community housing we have, but, given that we have a shortfall of 3,000 community houses and 1,600 people experiencing homelessness every day in the ACT, we should be doing much better. Emma Campbell is not the only one; I have spoken to a swag of people in that space who are of the same opinion.

I am astounded that the Greens are going to accept paragraph (1)(a). They are just prepared to accept that because a lot of people in the ACT are earning a good quid that is good enough and low-income families can just fend for themselves. I am not sure that is really the go.

Paragraph (2)(c), notes the important role of community housing providers in delivering affordable housing to Canberrans. If you ask anyone in the community housing sector or their advocates, they will tell you very clearly that this government never notes the importance of CHPs. They have to tread very carefully because they are in the game and they are beholden to what goes on from government.

Paragraph (2)(d) notes that the Tenth Assembly parliamentary and governing agreement outlines commitments to support housing affordability in Canberra, including social and affordable rental housing. That is great, but where is the actual action? The height of the crisis is now and I am not seeing it.

In regard to land supply, I was listening to the CoreLogic guy—whatever his name is—on ABC Radio recently and he pointed out that when it comes to apartment rental markets in Sydney and Melbourne we are seeing the complete opposite in market trends than Canberra: vacancy rates are much higher and rents are actually falling. Why is it so? According to the CoreLogic dude, it is because COVID has changed the market. This is what he said. He suggested that most Australians are now of the belief that it is highly likely that at some stage in the future they will be locked down and that maybe an apartment is not such a good idea.

The CoreLogic assessment was that people were drifting back to seeking standalone homes, and I assume this is a national trend. It is a little bit of a worry when you consider that this government has committed to 70 per cent of all new dwellings being urban infill.

As far as the calls-on section goes, I suggest to the minister that it would have been much easier for her to say “calls on the government to deliver more of the same”. Just go with it: “Calls on the ACT government to deliver more rental stress, more homelessness, more pain for those who simply cannot get a firm foothold in the tightest and most expensive rental market in the country.” If you are happy with the current state of play, you go right ahead, but we will not be supporting the amendment. Thank you.

Question put:

That the amendment be agreed to.

The Assembly voted—

Ayes 16

Noes 9

Mr Barr	Ms Orr	Mr Cain
Ms Berry	Dr Paterson	Ms Castley
Mr Braddock	Mr Pettersson	Mr Coe
Ms Burch	Mr Rattenbury	Mr Hanson
Ms Cheyne	Mr Steel	Mrs Jones
Ms Clay	Ms Stephen-Smith	Mrs Kikkert
Ms Davidson	Ms Vassarotti	Ms Lawder
Mr Davis		Ms Lee
Mr Gentleman		Mr Parton

Amendment agreed to.

Original question, as amended, resolved in the affirmative.

Adjournment

Motion (by **Mr Gentleman**) proposed:

That the Assembly do now adjourn.

Parkrun

MR PARTON (Brindabella) (4.16): I want to speak this afternoon about the amazing work being done in Tuggeranong by my new friend Tyson Flynn, who is doing his darnedest to establish another official Parkrun on the south side, specifically in the Lanyon Valley.

For those not completely familiar with the Parkrun concept, Parkruns are free, weekly timed runs all around the world. Saturday mornings is when they happen. They are five kilometres. They take place in parks and open spaces. I am trying to think how many we have in Canberra. It must be seven. Parkruns are a positive, welcoming and inclusive experience where there is no time limit, no-one finishes last and everyone is welcome to come along, whether you walk, jog, run, volunteer or spectate.

Along with my colleague Ms Lawder, we are regulars at one of the most populated Parkruns in Canberra, the Tuggeranong event—because everything is better on the south side. It starts at Tuggeranong Town Park. It wends its way around the lake and back again. We love it. I love the community vibe, the fact that it really encourages all of us to get out and be active.

Tyson is well aware that Tuggeranong is an extremely popular run and that perhaps the valley needs a second one—and who are we to argue? He has been going through the process of trying to establish a new one. He has got a course that takes in the views of Point Hut Pond at Gordon and would end up starting and finishing very close to Lanyon Marketplace. He has got a lot of people on board. He has had a number of meetings with the bigwigs of Parkrun and he is heading in the right direction to make it happen. I have yet to run the course with him, because I think I would be too slow, but dozens of people have done just that so far and we are just about at the next stage to make this happen.

Tyson and his band of volunteers are now on the hunt for some sponsorship dollars. We are not talking about absurdly high amounts of money. I believe that the Commonwealth Bank may be freed up for some sponsorship soon, but if this information gets to you as a potential sponsor and you are not sure how to make contact with Tyson, feel free to make contact with me and I will put you in touch with Tyson. I hope that Lanyon Parkrun can become a thing. I look forward to being one of the early volunteers and one of the first—if slow—runners.

**Australian Muslim Friendship Organisation
Gungahlin Community Council**

MR BRADDOCK (Yerrabi) (4.18): I have not yet done an adjournment speech, so I thank you, Madam Speaker, for the privilege. I want to draw attention to a newly established community group, the Australian Muslim Friendship Organisation, or the AMFO. They have positioned themselves as a launch pad for having an enhanced dialogue with Australian governments and political parties while welcoming Australians from all walks of life.

I had the honour, in conjunction with fellow members Shane Rattenbury, Suzanne Orr and Leanne Castley, last weekend to attend their launch, which coincided with Muslims from Yerrabi celebrating Australia Day over a barbecue and an Australia Day cake. I extend my thanks to all members of the AMFO, and in particular president Rehan Shafi and general secretary Imran Amjad, for their excellent work.

Tonight I will be joining the Gungahlin Community Council, which will be meeting online to discuss, amongst other things, the Thoroughbred Park development, consultation on the Canberra Hospital master plan, and a PCYC facility for Gungahlin. On Friday there is the Gungahlin sports and recreation fair at the Gungahlin enclosed oval. I encourage everyone to get along and find out about the local sports and rec opportunities. There will also be a sausage sizzle.

Finally, Celebrate Gungahlin is coming up. It is a great day for Gungahlin here, is it not? This year Celebrate Gungahlin will be a week-long celebration of all things Gungahlin from 20 to 28 March 2021, showcasing the incredible wealth of talented individuals, fantastic artists, hardworking community organisations and diverse local businesses that call Gungahlin home. Applications are now open for those who want to be part of this festival. I plan to do so myself and I encourage all community groups and artists to participate.

Health—eating disorder residential treatment

DR PATERSON (Murrumbidgee) (4.20): At the last federal election, as part of a \$52 million health package for the ACT, Senator Seselja announced a \$13.5 million eating disorder residential treatment centre in the ACT. Currently, Canberra families who require residential support for an eating disorder must leave the ACT for treatment. Whilst federal funds for Senator Seselja's announcement were allocated for the 2021-22 budget, the Canberra community has not yet heard any details about the project. There appears to have been no further comment at all from the federal government since the 2019 election.

Experiences of eating disorders can be very complex for the individuals affected and very distressing for family and friends who watch a loved one's battle, often over a prolonged period of time. The promised centre for eating disorders in the ACT will provide a critical, and much-needed service. It is for this reason that I am speaking today to hold the federal government to account to ensure that they fulfill their promise to our community.

Eating disorders are common—too common—and not enough is being done. Research shows that eating disorders and disordered eating impact between four and 16 per cent of the population and that this number continues to rise. In 2012 research found that 63 per cent of those with an eating disorder in Australia were women. However, specific disorders such as binge eating are experienced by males and females alike. The average age for the onset of an eating disorder is between 12 and 25 years of age. Many disorders disproportionately impact young people.

Given the comorbidity of eating disorders with other mental health issues, treatment can be complex and long term. However, a 2015 report by the Butterfly Foundation and Deloitte Access Economics highlights that only between five to 15 per cent of people receive treatment for their eating disorder. As is common with mental health and addiction issues, there are significant barriers to seeking help. But one of the major barriers in the ACT is not that families do not want help; it is that help does not exist in the form of a residential facility.

Severe eating disorders can require very specialised, long-term medical treatment to effectively save an individual's life. As a mum of three children, including two daughters, who are about to enter into their teenage years, I feel enormous compassion for those families who grapple with eating disorders on a daily basis. Parents I have spoken to are distraught as to how to support their child. I would like to read a quote from a father whose daughter has experienced a severe eating disorder:

Eating disorders are devastating in that none of us really fully understand or can rationalise the problem. The problem persists over an extended period of time and the stresses placed on the family are immense as you watch your loved one deteriorate before your eyes with almost no support until the disease is life threatening. In our case, our eldest daughter had to leave home to protect herself from the toxic environment that evolved as a result of the constant pressures in the family environment that come from an eating disorder.

One of the most striking features for me personally in my discussions with people in the local community about eating disorders is how deeply it impacts the entire family. Many of us take our family mealtimes for granted, but for some in our community it is a deeply distressing daily battle. The federal government promised the Canberra community a residential eating disorder clinic in 2019, and as we turn our heads to the next federal election this promise is looking emptier by the minute. Senator Seselja may not have talked about it since it was announced in 2019; however, for the families in the ACT that are desperate for treatment and are deeply struggling, it is an everyday conversation.

Indian agricultural reform protests Ahmadiyya Muslim Association

MRS JONES (Murrumbidgee) (4.25): The plight of Indian farmers protesting the reform of agriculture laws has affected and concerned our Indian community here in Canberra. The Canberra Punjabi Sports & Cultural Association recently wrote to me. They are the friends, relatives, children and grandchildren of Indian farmers, many of them now living and contributing to the Canberra community and our economy.

Their relatives, their friends in India who are farmers, are upset with the central government of India's reforms to deregulate the agriculture industry and give private enterprise the ability to circumvent regulated wholesale markets and deal directly with farmers. The central government of India says the reforms will boost investment and break up state control over the marketing of food and fibres, allowing farmers to sell directly to corporations, grow crops under private contract and use e-commerce platforms.

Farmers fear it will leave them at the mercy of big business and say that government has refused to listen to the legitimate concerns of farmers regarding the impacts of the proposed legislation, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. They say the legislation will take away the fundamental rights of farming communities, will weaken the farmer economically and will not provide a guarantee for the minimum support price, which is equivalent to the minimum wage for workers.

Added to this have been media reports of political interests having a hand in funding farmers' protests in order to create more chaos and influence public opinion. At this point in time, staple foods have been removed from a list of essential commodities regulated by the state. The Indian Supreme Court has ruled in favour of delaying the laws' effect, but the laws look likely to be implemented.

Some Indian farmers are not educated and would not know how to use e-commerce platforms. It may be also that some are not skilled at negotiating with big corporations. It is a reminder for us about the importance of community consultation, about really listening to people before we bring in change, before legislation is written and implemented.

On 30 January 2021 I attended the Australia Day celebrations of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Association at the Garden City Hotel in Narrabundah. There are approximately 6,000 Ahmadiyya Muslims in Australia and 150 in Canberra. Let's not forget that this small and dynamic community will be building their own mosque after a decade-long search and negotiation with the government for appropriate land. At the time, I advocated for proper process and respect to be given to this, at times, marginalised group. After all, their motto is "Love for all and hatred for none", with a strong focus on community service and service to humanity.

In 2020, after the horrific bushfire season, the association held an Australia Day event attended by more than 150 people to honour the brave firefighters and volunteers. In his concluding speech, Imam Ahmed Nadeem outlined the reasons why Muslims celebrate Australia Day. He said it is an Islamic teaching that love of one's country is part of one's faith, and the standard of this love is the service to your community.

The Ahmadiyya Muslim Association paid tribute to our frontline workers and healthcare staff for their service and sacrifice in response to the pandemic. I would like to acknowledge the director of community outreach, Ahmed Munir, as well as Imam Ahmed Nadeem and the many volunteers who help educate the general public about their community as well as the good work they do.

They have said that a mosque is not only a place of worship but also a community centre where people gather for education and even sports, and it is a shelter house where anybody can come. I look forward to seeing the opening of their mosque for their own worship soon. I pay particular tribute to the children who presented at this most recent event, giving us hope for our future with such positive ideas of what the purpose is of community and religious belief.

In our leadership role as MLAs, it is vital that we treat all groups with the same respect and have open dialogue to get to know and care for them in order to make Canberra a genuinely connected and respectful capital city.

Health—skin cancer

MR DAVIS (Brindabella) (4.29): Usually when I get up in this place to talk about health care I will be doing it in my capacity as the ACT Greens spokesperson for health. Sure, sometimes it might be to criticise the government. At other times, though, it might be to introduce a new idea or to give a different perspective. But today I have risen to speak to health care in the capital in my capacity as a son who dearly loves his dad. I will tell you why. I will give you some perspective.

Only a few weeks ago, my old man's mates finally convinced him to get that sinister-looking mole on his leg checked out—finally. Like many men of his generation, he will happily admit that personal health care can tend to be something you have got to be prodded into doing. After a quick surgery, it was discovered that in fact it was a particularly aggressive melanoma—caught just in time, I am very glad to inform the house.

Why I wanted to rise to draw our attention to that is that so often in the argy-bargy of this place we talk about health care in the context of its shortcomings, places we should be spending money and places we are spending too much money or not enough money, and we talk about the public policy. What we can sometimes fail to remember—and what it behoves us to remind ourselves of in this chamber and out in our community—is that hundreds, if not thousands, of very hardworking, passionate healthcare workers provide absolutely sensational care to Canberrans every single day.

Usually I speak about that in the context of representations that are made to my office by constituents who tell me of their own personal experience. It is rare, and I hope rarer into the future, that I will be able to stand in this place and speak to my own personal experience of only a few weeks ago.

From go to whoa, I cannot fault the excellent staff at the Calvary Public Hospital. To think that, in the space of four weeks, a cancerous mole was identified, Dad had the surgery, was treated by exceptional nurses and an exceptional doctor and is now at home recovering is an absolute credit to our healthcare system. We should not abandon, ignore or look the other way from the shortcomings. But we should always remember to celebrate the fact that we are incredibly lucky to be supported by one of the best healthcare systems in the world.

With that in mind, I strongly encourage each and every member, and strongly encourage their constituents, to consider getting their annual skincare check-up, which we in our household are now affectionately referring to as to the annual mole patrol—to book in and get a look in. To think that there were weeks, not months, that could have been the difference between what was an innocuous day surgery and what could have been something more sinister has laboured on me in recent weeks. No-one wishes to think about the mortality of their own loved family members. It only presses upon me more the importance of strongly promoting how important it is to take control of your own health care, to see your doctor and to get that preventative check-up. Prevention is always better than a cure in public health. No doubt the health minister will agree with me.

On that note, I encourage everybody to head to the Cancer Council website, which has a number of resources locally for Canberrans and right across Australia to access skincare professionals for their annual mole patrol.

While I will never do it justice, the people in my office will not forgive me if I do not give this a crack. Was it Sid the Seagull who said to “Slip, Slop, Slap, Seek and Slide”? I cannot do a very good Sid the Seagull, but for those interested I will be sure to post it to my Facebook page tonight. It is a very good rap and it has been updated since most of us might have last seen it. Thank you very much, Mr Deputy Speaker, and in particular I thank the awesome healthcare workers at Calvary Public Hospital.

Arts—community events

MS CHEYNE (Ginninderra—Assistant Minister for Economic Development, Minister for the Arts, Minister for Business and Better Regulation, Minister for Human Rights and Minister for Multicultural Affairs) (4.33): Canberra’s art scene has always been pretty extraordinary, but the last week has especially driven home to me just how wonderful it is. I want to draw the Assembly’s attention to some of these moments.

Last Thursday, PhotoAccess kicked off 2021 with their annual exhibition, *VIEW*. *VIEW* brings together early career artists in a showcase of their work. Starting a new year with a show of new and emerging artists was incredibly fitting. But shows do not just come together; they are curated and, in this case, expertly so. The photomedia brought together much of the emotion of 2020 that words do not do justice to—the isolation and the hope, frustration and a bright future. The exhibition displayed the challenges and the opportunities of constraints, whether those constraints were known to us or came as a surprise. I remarked at the time that I was blown away by the talent. I encourage Canberrans to attend the exhibition or else to view it online—but nothing beats being there in person.

Friday marked the launch of the Lime Flamingo Collectives exhibition *Outside In, Inside Out* at the Belconnen Arts Centre. Canberra artist and educator Jodie Cunningham facilitates the collective, which is a mentoring and networking group for emerging artists. These nine artists have different backgrounds and work with different media, but they have come together as one to support one another, and what

has emerged from this is their very first exhibition. On the one hand, it is an exhibition that is completely diverse, with each artist exhibiting entirely different work. On the other hand, there is a real thread or narrative to the works, where each artist has applied a different perspective, and through largely different media, to reflect on the challenges of our current world, whether through humour or introspection, or simply looking at something in a different way.

In the neighbouring gallery is Stephen Harrison's *You Want It Darker*. This exhibition pushes the boundaries of darkness and also what we think might be possible with art. There were intricate sculptures of lighthouses and World War II era planes made of found rusted material. There was a 17-metre wall hanging which stretched across three walls of the gallery—a horizontal wall hanging, not vertical—an inked stream of dark thought, the unreal, dreams, dark dreams. I came back to this piece time and again.

Belco Arts also has been hosting Warehouse Circus's *Interrobang*, which many of us in this place were lucky enough to attend. This was their 30th birthday show, and what a show. That young people can achieve the feats they do—complex aerobatics, aerial feats, juggling—captured my attention. The show had me somehow laughing and also holding my breath at the same time during some of the stunts. What impressed me most, and I think all of us, was the camaraderie, how well each artist complemented the other, how they worked together. And no matter what happened, the show went on.

What I loved about each of these shows is how well they showed off, in different ways, the finally completed arts centre and why the investment was necessary.

Saturday marked the highly anticipated celebration of 92-year-old Jack Featherstone's work at Tuggeranong Arts Centre. A Braidwood resident for 20 years, Jack has been painting for about 70. This brought together his many years of work—portraits of place, capturing moments and movements, life and a life. What made this extra special is that Tuggeranong Arts Centre commissioned an essay by Jack's son, acclaimed writer Nigel Featherstone, and a deep video dive into who Jack is by documentary artist Ana Georgia. This provides new lenses, and deeply special ones, through which to engage with and explore Jack and his decades of work. Jack's work is described by many as joyful, and to have so much of it together in the one place is a delight.

Finally, I cannot go past congratulating Genesis Owusu and Peking Duk for their outstanding results in the Triple J Hottest 100, and to Hands Like Houses for making it into the Hottest 200. These are pretty remarkable achievements to even be there as Australian artists, let alone as Canberra artists. We have a lot to be proud of in the arts scene in this city.

Canberra Business Woman of the Year award

MS LAWDER (Brindabella) (4.38): I rise today to recognise the incredible achievement of businesswomen in the Canberra community who were recognised recently through the Canberra Women in Business Business Woman of the Year

awards. What a great bunch of businesswomen we have. They are not just businesswomen; they are impressive in the business sense overall. I want to very briefly touch on some of the winners and their achievements.

In the category of Chamberlains Business Woman of the Year, there were three fantastic finalists: Bianca Russell from the Australian Red Cross; Amanda Tobler from Community Services #1; and the award winner, Sunita Kumar from Daana Original Food. Beginning in 2015, Daana is an award-winning Indian restaurant inspired by south Indian and regional Indian food, co-owned with her husband, Sanjay. Sunita keeps herself busy, overseeing all aspects of the business: designing the menu, kitchen operations, management, financial planning, HR, bookkeeping, social media, website, and marketing. She is a real powerhouse.

In the category of QT Canberra Young Business Woman of the Year, the finalists were Carina Zeccola from Griffin Legal; Mikhaila Davis from POP Canberra; and the winner, Christina DeLay from Altina Drinks, which was co-founded with her partner, Alan, in 2018. Altina Drinks challenges the drinking culture in Australia with its unique and delicious zero-proof cocktails. As CEO and head of research and development, Christina develops and scales Altina's recipes and manufacturing processes and sets the strategic direction for the business. She is also responsible for Altina's digital marketing and e-commerce offerings.

The Rubik3 Indigenous Business Woman of the Year award had two finalists: Nekol Stewart from Australian Red Cross; and the winner, Rachelle Towart from Pipeline Talent. Rachelle is a proud Wonnarua woman. She launched Pipeline Talent in 2016, an organisation that aims to support emerging Indigenous leaders and has become a highly esteemed Indigenous recruitment company and Australia's first Indigenous executive search company.

In the category of Solace Creations Small Business Woman of the Year, the finalists were Sunita Kumar from Daana Original Food; Kym Degenhart from Bom Funk Dance Studio; and the joint winners, co-directors Dr Eryn Davies and Jenna Keen from the Capital Psychology Clinic, which is a female-led practice. Dr Davies and Ms Keen launched the Capital Psychology Clinic in 2016, with a focus on providing high-level child, adolescent and family mental health care and community health support.

The Clover Canberra Innovation Business Woman of the Year award had three amazing finalists: Juliet Fallace from Chalfont Consulting; Rachael Greaves from Castlepoint Systems; and the winner, Tracy Ryan from Canberra Virtual Tours. Tracy is a virtual reality specialist photographer who started in 2005 as a landscape and nature photographer. Adapting to new and emerging technology, Tracy moved into commercial and virtual reality photography and became a Google trusted photographer in 2012. Tracy is the chief inspiration officer at Canberra Virtual Tours, as well as photographer, marketer, producer and trainer for the use of the virtual tours.

In the final category of Lerida Estate Social Impact Business Woman of the Year, the finalists were Kristine Hewett from Adamas Nexus; Samantha Tidy from Storytorch Press; and the winner, Tracy Hebden from Tracy Lee Photography. Tracy is a highly

awarded photographer and a long-term volunteer at Heartfelt, a group of photographers who give the gift of memories to families that have experienced stillbirths or premature births or who have children with serious or terminal illnesses. Tracy Lee Photography specialises in weddings, portraits for family, and branding images.

I would like to personally thank the sponsors of the CWB awards, who make the awards possible; the judges, who are obviously very committed and intelligent people, for all the time that they gave; and, of course, the nominees and award winners. Thank you to the board of CWB, past and present. There have been a few new people join the board recently. And thank you to all the fantastic businesswomen in Canberra for all the work they put in and for demonstrating the excellence of their work, the way you can achieve anything when you put your mind to it. These women deserve to be recognised for their accomplishments; I commend them to the Assembly. *(Time expired.)*

Question resolved in the affirmative.

The Assembly adjourned at 4.43 pm.

Schedule of amendments

Schedule 1

Covid-19 Emergency Response Legislation Amendment Bill 2020 (No 3)

Amendments moved by Ms Lee

1

Schedule 1, amendment 1.8

Page 5, line 3—

omit the amendment

2

Schedule 1, amendment 1.9

Page 5, line 8—

omit the amendment

3

Schedule 1, amendment 1.10

Page 5, line 12—

omit the amendment
