



Debates

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Legislative Assembly for the ACT

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Wednesday, 31 March 2021

Bushfires—recovery (Ministerial statement).....	661
Bushfires—management (Ministerial statement)	665
Health services—workplace culture (Ministerial statement).....	668
Revenue Legislation Amendment Bill 2021	674
Domestic Animals Legislation Amendment Bill 2021	676
Public Accounts—Standing Committee	679
Territory rights—voluntary assisted dying	680
Planning and Unit Titles Legislation Amendment Bill 2020.....	692
Ministerial arrangements	694
Questions without notice:	
Environment—climate change	695
Alexander Maconochie Centre—oversight committee	696
Crime—antisocial behaviour.....	697
Economy—performance.....	697
Municipal services—community gardens	699
Public housing—safety.....	700
Planning—land use.....	701
Municipal services—public amenities	703
Transport—Lawson bus services	704
Work safety—government priorities	705
Parking—Greenway	707
Gungahlin—swimming pool	707
Trees—removal	708
Planning—Gungahlin	709
Business—Better Regulation Taskforce.....	709
Supplementary answer to question without notice:	
Naas Valley—bridge	710
Papers.....	711
Trees—urban canopy	712
Crime—forensic sexual assault services.....	712
Trees—urban canopy	729
Crimes Legislation Amendment Bill 2020	738
Mental health—veterans	742
Adjournment:	
National Association of Women in Construction ACT 2020 Awards	753
Multicultural affairs—International Mother Language Day	755
Yerrabi electorate—community events.....	756
ACT Down Syndrome Association	756
Multicultural affairs—Sakyamuni Buddhist Centre.....	757
Multicultural affairs—India Australia Association of Canberra	757
Arts—Phish and Phreak Productions	759
Women—International Women’s Day	760
Multicultural affairs—events.....	760
Ginninderra electorate—community engagement.....	761
Schedule of amendments: Schedule 1: Crimes Legislation Amendment Bill 2020 ..	763

Answers to questions:

Waste—green bins (Question No 86).....	765
Justice—parole conditions (Question No 87).....	765
Drug rehabilitation programs—parole conditions (Question No 88).....	766
Crime—drugs (Question No 89)	766
Government—procurement policy (Question No 90).....	767
Sport—disability strategy (Question No 91).....	767
Housing ACT—victims of domestic violence (Question No 92)	768
Roads—traffic calming (Question No 93)	768
Planning—McKellar shops (Question No 94)	770
Disability—employment strategy (Question No 95).....	770
Drone use—legislation (Question No 96)	770
National broadband network—maintenance and repairs (Question No 97)	771
Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders—Children and Young People Commissioner (Question No 98)	772
Remand centres—closure (Question No 99).....	773
Alexander Maconochie Centre—costs (Question No 100).....	773
Corrections officers—training (Question No 101).....	774
Alexander Maconochie Centre—detainee privileges (Question No 102).....	775
Remand centres—Symonston (Question No 103)	776
Alexander Maconochie Centre—detainee education and training programs (Question No 104)	776
Alexander Maconochie Centre—fire safety (Question No 105).....	777
Alexander Maconochie Centre—fire safety (Question No 106).....	779
Alexander Maconochie Centre—expansion (Question No 107).....	780
Alexander Maconochie Centre—dental services (Question No 108)	780
Alexander Maconochie Centre—crisis support unit (Question No 109)	781
Alexander Maconochie Centre—naloxone use (Question No 110)	781
Alexander Maconochie Centre—worship services (Question No 111)	781
Alexander Maconochie Centre—ICT facilities (Question No 112).....	782
Alexander Maconochie Centre—visitor searches (Question No 113)	782
Alexander Maconochie Centre—staff disciplinary policy (Question No 114)	783
Alexander Maconochie Centre—CCTV surveillance (Question No 115).....	784
Alexander Maconochie Centre—parenting programs (Question No 116).....	785
Alexander Maconochie Centre—Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander detainees (Question No 117)	786
Disability services—government regulations (Question No 118).....	787
Disability services—funding (Question No 119).....	787
Arts—Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artworks (Question No 120)	789
Roads—projects (Question No 121)	790
Transport—Latham (Question No 122)	791
Municipal services—footpaths (Question No 123).....	791
Planning—Kippax group centre flood study (Question No 124).....	792
Health—disability strategy (Question No 125).....	792
Discrimination, Health Services, Disability and Community Services Commissioner—disability complaints (Question No 126).....	793
Sentence Administration Board—decisions (Question No 127).....	793
Housing—Justice Housing Program (Question No 128)	794

Questions without notice taken on notice:

Schools—modular learning centres.....	795
Land—sales	795
Gungahlin—swimming pool	796
Gungahlin—multipurpose centre	796

Wednesday, 31 March 2021

MADAM SPEAKER (Ms Burch) (10.01): 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.

Bushfires—recovery Ministerial statement

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) (10.02): I rise to report to the Assembly about the bushfire recovery and the lessons learnt a year on from the 2019-20 bushfire and storm season in the territory. Last season the ACT suffered the driest conditions on record. After an already intense early phase to the fire season that saw the ACT deploy more than 2,100 personnel to support our interstate colleagues, the ACT was faced with our own emergency response to both fire and hailstorm. January 2020 was a month that showcased the resilience and strength of emergency services and Canberrans. All services involved should be incredibly proud of their efforts. Their commitment and resilience to keep the community safe has not gone unnoticed.

The government and all its directorates have learnt a lot from the 2019-20 bushfire season. Not only have we been informed; we have acted and continue to implement actions to benefit from these learnings. As part of this learning process, the ACT government has undertaken a number of reviews and inquiries in relation to the 2019-20 bushfire season, all with the aim of making improvements for future bushfire seasons. These include the Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Arrangements, announced by the federal government; the ACT Legislative Assembly justice and community safety committee review of ACT emergency services responses to the 2019-20 bushfire season; the report on whole of ACT government coordination and response during the 2019-20 bushfire season; and the ACT Emergency Services Agency, ESA, operational review, which took into consideration the individual observations of staff and volunteers received through the ESA's internal after-action review process.

These reviews have reaffirmed the importance of a process of continuous improvement to protect the ACT from all hazards, including fire and storm. The reviews and inquiries addressed several areas, including, but not limited to, response, capability, preparedness and planning, incident management, and personnel. While many of the recommendations from these reviews could be addressed immediately, others require long-term planning and consultation with stakeholders or may be impacted by the outcomes of other reviews.

The ACT government has welcomed the recommendations of the Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Arrangements. The ACT has wasted no time in progressing the implementation of recommendations, many of which align with work already underway to address the learnings from the 2019-20 bushfire season. The recently established National Emergency Management Ministers Meeting, NEMMM, will initially be responsible for driving and coordinating the implementation of the royal commission recommendations. The ACT government is continuing to work with volunteers, staff and stakeholders to implement learnings from the reviews and to improve our response and preparedness into the future.

I appreciate that this was a very distressing period for our region, and people are understandably interested in how the Orroral Valley fire started. I would like to reassure the community that our emergency services did all that they could to reduce the spread of the fire. The ACT ESA quickly spotted the fire and identified its location using fire towers and an aerial flyover. They were able to rapidly deploy appropriate ground and air responses to the fire ground. I trust that Defence has learned from this incident and examined its procedures. The ACT government has undertaken an extensive lessons-learned program with the ADF, including examining our working relationship and how aerial assets are used. The ESA has recently corresponded with the Deputy Chief of Army to facilitate joint training programs, including incident management training and exercise planning.

Following the Orroral Valley bushfire, the government was able to provide immediate relief to landowners after the fire by funding emergency fodder for livestock and resourcing to replace boundary fences. The ACT government funded post-fire work on rural leases and rural lease boundaries, including the removal and disposal of 21 kilometres of damaged rural fencing; the erection of 21 kilometres of new fencing; the repair of eight floodgates; access trail repairs totalling 14 kilometres; and the clearing of eight kilometres of dangerous trees.

In addition to support directly offered by the ACT government, assistance was requested from the commonwealth for fire-affected landholders, which resulted in a \$10,000 small business grant, in line with other jurisdictions, being made available for fire-affected primary producers and small businesses. The ACT government is proactively engaging with rural landholders to provide support and assist with recovery efforts.

The Orroral Valley bushfire burnt through 88,000 hectares, including approximately 80 per cent of the Namadgi National Park. An early assessment of the impacts of the fire indicated significant damage to the park's physical assets, wildlife, habitat and

water catchments. The government provided \$1.36 million to support recovery actions in the park over 2020-21. The funding has been used to reinstate and improve popular walking trails and address erosion and sedimentation in key areas.

Within the first six months following the fire, the government undertook a number of immediate actions to address and mitigate extreme risks to public safety, the environment and the park's cultural values. In July, the government released the rapid response progress update, which contains further information about the government's actions to date.

Damage to infrastructure and the environment has resulted in safety issues and led to the ongoing closure of large areas of the park. Some of these areas were reopened to the public as remedial works to walking trails, car parks and other higher-use public areas were completed.

The Orroral Valley recorded over 200 millimetres of rainfall spread over 36 hours in the recent March heavy rain event that brought widespread flooding to New South Wales. There has been some new damage to management trails, which is still being assessed by rangers. Most significantly, floodwaters undermined a concrete crossing over the Gudgenby River which had only recently been repaired after the last flood event in February 2020. Work is now focused on the repair of two key public roads that provide access to popular campgrounds and walking trails, with a view to reopening the remainder of the park to the public in the coming months, well ahead of schedule.

Notwithstanding the March 2021 flooding, rangers are continuing to work towards the near full reopening of Namadgi National Park. Public area access will need to be carefully managed, as the landscape will be in recovery mode for some years to come.

One year on, the government has embraced the lessons learned from the previous season by focusing on enhancing its capability, collective training, preparedness, personnel management, planning, and incident management strategies. Proactive steps have been taken to make improvements such as the recruitment of specialist roles in the ACT Rural Fire Service, including fire behaviour analysts, strategic planning, air operations and fire tower operators, all of which will help fatigue management and boost the existing specialist skills within the ESA.

Following the destructive storm, the ACT government has invested in additional volunteers, vehicles and training to further enhance the response and capability for future storm events. Investments have been made to provide further training for our volunteer members and provide several new road assets to strengthen emergency planning, preparation and response during bushfires and floods.

While government directorates and agencies are equipped and ready, bushfires and grassfires can strike at any time, and it is vitally important for the ACT community to be prepared. Just as the government is updating its preparedness for future fire seasons, so, too, must the community. I urge people in the community to update their survival plan and have a conversation with their family about what they will do during

a fire, including how they will stay informed, when they will leave and what they will take.

The ESA has also developed a range of education resources to help support the community to prepare for an emergency. The resources allow the community to download, complete and store their survival plan from any digital device, and, importantly, share it with family and friends. The resources are available via the ESA website, and I encourage everyone to familiarise themselves with this information.

The government has invested in ensuring that appropriate measures are in place, and that our community can continue to live in one of the safest cities in the world, with well-funded, well-resourced and well-governed emergency services. The government and its directorates and agencies, volunteers and staff have all demonstrated that the ACT is as prepared as it ever has been in keeping our community safe and informed.

I present the following paper:

Bushfire recovery and lessons learnt a year on—Ministerial statement, 31 March 2021.

I move:

That the Assembly take note of the paper.

MR BRADDOCK (Yerrabi) (10.12): I would like to respond to the minister's statement regarding bushfires and lessons learnt one year on. I also would like to draw attention to the report of the justice and community safety committee that was lodged yesterday, which had a number of recommendations that directly related to that bushfire.

I note the minister said that he trusted that Defence had learnt its lessons. I would fall on the words of Ronald Reagan to "trust but verify" as an approach the ACT needs to take to ensure that we are safe from such events happening, going forward.

I also note the committee's recommendation that:

... ACT Government ensure adequate numbers and safe positioning of helicopter landing sites in Namadgi National Park, with site locations published and made known to relevant agencies.

I will be interested in seeing the ACT government's response to the committee report and whether that recommendation was identified and responded to.

The committee also recommends that:

... the Minister for Police and Emergency Services provide a statement to the Assembly outlining the coordination and training activities conducted in the wake of the Orroral Valley fire with NSW and Commonwealth agencies, including the Australian Defence Force, to strengthen future management of cross-border operations ...

Whilst it says “including the Australian Defence Force”, this is not exclusive to that particular agency; it includes other commonwealth and New South Wales agencies. Again, I will be interested in seeing how the minister’s statement can address those factors.

The report also recommends that:

... training and coordination activities conducted with NSW and Commonwealth agencies be reported on an ongoing basis in the Emergency Services Agency annual report.

I look forward to seeing in future annual reports how this might be addressed.

I would also like to draw attention to the JACS estimates hearings, in which the ESA Commissioner highlighted the good work that has gone into building relationships between the ACT government and federal government agencies, particularly the ADF. However, relationships are not the be-all and end-all in this space; relationships can come and go as key personnel are posted in and out. Therefore, there needs to be some more formal structure provided to ensure good ongoing communication between those two entities.

In light of all that, I am looking forward to seeing the government’s response to the JACS report.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Bushfires—management

Ministerial statement

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): As we come to the end of the bushfire and storm season, I would like to take this opportunity to commend the ACT Emergency Services Agency, ESA, and the Parks and Conservation Service, PCS, for their efforts in preparing for and protecting the ACT community during the 2020-21 bushfire and storm season. Canberra remained well informed and protected during the bushfire and storm season thanks to the dedication of our hardworking volunteers and staff. I would like to pass on my sincere thanks to all involved in assisting the Canberra community to remain safe.

The Australian government Bureau of Meteorology declared a La Nina alert for the 2020-21 summer period. A La Nina alert indicated an increased likelihood of higher than average rainfall. The risks from heatwave and bushfires to the ACT were deemed average in comparison to historical records, while higher rainfall totals increased the likelihood of riverine flooding in Australia’s south-east.

Whilst rainfall events reduced the risk of forest fire ignitions over the summer months, it resulted in sped-up growth in grasslands and increased the available fuel for

grassfire ignitions within or adjacent to the Canberra urban area. While the season remained wetter than average, the increased grass growth and intermediate hot days meant that the risk of grassfires was still prevalent in the ACT community.

Throughout the 2020-21 fire season, the ACT Rural Fire Service and supporting services responded to 41 bushfires and grassfires within the territory. The majority of these fires were located within urban greenbelt areas and surrounding grasslands. Thank you to our dedicated RFS volunteers for their hard work throughout the season and for once again keeping our community safe from the threat of bushfires and grassfires.

As a result of the great work done by rural landholders, land managers and the PCS through slashing, physical removal and grazing, the risk of grassfires was substantially reduced. I would like to thank the community for their diligence in preparedness activities and completing their survival plans.

Since 1 July 2020, the ACT State Emergency Service, ACTSES, has received over 1,300 requests for assistance for significant damage to private residences and businesses across the territory. This is an increase above the yearly average of 800 requests for assistance for the same period, due to the wetter conditions that occur with a La Nina weather pattern. The majority of the requests for assistance were for leaking roofs and water inundation, with a considerable number of fallen trees across the territory and a small number of localised flooding incidents. The ACTSES was kept busy throughout the season, attending to calls across the ACT and making temporary repairs to properties. This is a timely reminder to all Canberrans that whilst the period of heightened storm activity has ended, storms can happen all year round. It is important to remain prepared and know what to do if you become affected by a storm.

This season the ACTSES also provided valuable support to ACT Policing with their search capability, with 17 search activations, an increase from their yearly average of 12. I would like to recognise and thank our hardworking ACTSES volunteers for their dedication and service to the ACT throughout such a busy season.

Whilst the conditions of the season resulted in fewer operational tasks and requests for assistance in comparison with the 2019-20 season, the ACT government has made considerable investments in advancing the use of technology to support preparedness and the response to natural hazards. Technology investments include the installation of pilot fire detection cameras in all four of the ACT fire towers; the pilot of an automated rain gauge alerting for potential flash flooding in Sullivans Creek; and the introduction of the ESA radio positioning platform, which improves the safety of our frontline personnel by allowing real-time viewing of the location of any radio user who has activated the emergency duress button.

Many of Canberra's streams are in urbanised catchments. Stream water levels can rise in a matter of minutes, giving little warning of the impending danger to lives and property. ACT Healthy Waterways, in partnership with the ACT ESA, ACTSES and the ACT Data Analytics Centre, have developed a flash flood warning capability for the ACT. Using the existing rainfall gauges and streamflow gauges across the ACT,

the new capabilities within the ACT Data Lake are being used to provide an automated alerting service for ACTSES based on rainfall intensity and stream level changes.

The ACT government and the Bureau of Meteorology have numerous rain gauges in and around the built-up areas of the ACT. The data from these rain gauges can be used to assist ACTSES and other government agencies to make rapid operational decisions and increase the visibility of flash flood events as they happen, to ensure that the Canberra community are prepared and safe during these types of events.

In relation to aerial capability, the ACT, through the National Aerial Firefighting Centre, NAFC, contracted one light helicopter with specialist intelligence gathering capability and two medium helicopters to provide dedicated aerial firefighting services to the ACT for the 2020-21 bushfire season. One of the medium helicopters is through a shared contract with the New South Wales Rural Fire Service.

The SIG helicopter used for the season provided a valuable asset for the early detection and confirmation of active fires. The high definition and infrared camera on board allows imagery to be streamed into the ESA incident management room in real time, providing critical fire line and hotspot information. This significantly enhances bushfire fighting operations by allowing key decision-makers to better understand the extent of situations as they unfold.

Whilst, thankfully, the conditions of the season did not warrant the use of the helicopter too often, the SIG helicopter was utilised in other ways to keep Canberrans safe. For example, it helped ACT police to locate an 18-year-old missing person in the Cotter Dam area and to investigate a smoke sighting in rugged bushland in the Blue Range area that was determined to be dust in high winds.

The ACT Parks and Conservation Service, through its annual bushfire operation plan, has scheduled over 700 activities to manage fire fuels across the territory's parks and reserves. This year has seen the scheduling of the following fuel reduction activities across areas managed by PCS and Transport Canberra and City Services: 1,958 hectares of prescribed burns; 483 kilometres of fire trail maintenance; 490 kilometres of chemical treatment of fuels, including fire trail verge vegetation control; 4,505 hectares of stock grazing in grassy areas; and 4,273 hectares of grass slashing.

Thanks to the ongoing work and commitment of our fantastic PCS team, a significant number of these activities have been completed, noting that four prescribed burns were delivered in late February and many other burns are scheduled to be delivered later this year. It is important to note that prescribed burns can only be delivered under particularly favourable weather conditions, to ensure both crew and public safety but also to ensure the desired reduction in the fire fuels. If conditions are too wet, too windy or too dry and hot, prescribed burning cannot be carried out.

The clear expert consensus following the Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Arrangements is that while hazard reduction burns are part of a toolkit, they have a limited impact on reducing fire risk under extreme weather conditions. Their

effectiveness is reducing even further as climate change makes seasonal conditions more extreme.

The ESA engaged in extensive preparedness and readiness activity in preparation for the 2020-21 bushfire and storm season. The ESA has worked hard to increase community awareness through the “Are you emergency ready?” campaign. It also conducted 11 community information sessions at shopping centres in bushfire and flood prone areas across the ACT through November and December 2020. Thank you to the volunteers who engaged directly with approximately 1,500 community members during these sessions, handing out survival plans and encouraging our community to know their local risks. Through these activities, more than 4,000 survival plans have been distributed, and more than 1,200 survival plans and associated documents have since been downloaded from the ESA website. Additionally, the ESA has partnered with the Suburban Land Agency and the Council on the Ageing to distribute a further 13,000 survival plans along with important preparedness information.

It would be remiss of me not to mention the excellent communications delivered by the ESA during the events of this season. Keeping the community engaged was one of the biggest issues raised following the 2003 bushfires. The ESA kept the community informed about all hazards through a number of platforms, including social media, radio, television and print media. The ESA social media channels have seen over 82,000 engagements since September 2020 across all hazard information dissemination areas, and more than 87 alerts and warnings were issued by the agency.

The government is acutely aware of the threat that natural hazards present to our city and we will continue to make the investments needed to deal with this as our city grows. Our city is well prepared—better prepared than ever before. This is because of the hard work of all of our staff across government and our volunteers. Once again, thank you.

I present the following paper:

End of 2020-21 bushfire and storm season—Ministerial statement, 31 March 2021.

I move:

That the Assembly take note of the paper.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Health services—workplace culture

Ministerial statement

MS STEPHEN-SMITH (Kurrajong—Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs, Minister for Families and Community Services and Minister for Health) (10.27): This statement respects the commitment made by the former Minister for Health and Wellbeing on 16 May 2019 to provide the Assembly with biannual

updates on the actions being taken in response to the Independent Review into the Workplace Culture within ACT Public Health Services.

In August 2020 I provided members with the third update on the substantial work that had progressed against the recommendations. Significant work continues against these recommendations, at a system-wide level and within each of the three arms of the public health system—the ACT Health Directorate, Canberra Health Services and Calvary Public Hospital Bruce.

A strong governance framework continues to oversee the program of work. The Culture Review Oversight Group, hereafter referred to as the oversight group, which I chair, has met on seven occasions, the purpose of the group being to oversee the implementation of the recommendations of the final report. The Culture Review Implementation Steering Group, hereafter referred to as the steering group, chaired by the Director-General of the ACT Health Directorate, facilitates the implementation of the recommendations of the review and has met 16 times.

As recommended in the inaugural annual review conducted in April and May 2020, the oversight group held a strategic workshop on 25 August 2020 to consider the roles and responsibilities of committee members, the oversight group's future focus, and how it will operate as a group collectively committed to delivering real and sustainable improvement in culture across the ACT health system. A further workshop was held on 18 March 2021, where the conversation continued to focus on sustainable culture reform across the system and how we will measure our success into the future.

As noted in the inaugural annual review, significant culture reform requires sustained effort over several years for the full impact of the investment in the system to be felt. However, improvements are being seen, and more are on the way.

Engagement with key stakeholders across the health system continues through a range of forums, including the NGO Leadership Group; the Clinical Leadership Forum; and the Professional Colleges Advisory Committee. Over the last six months, effort on a range of initiatives has progressed and will continue to develop over the coming months.

All three organisations in the ACT public health system continue to embed and incorporate their vision, values and desired behaviours into organisational and people-related practices. This has included deliberate integration into organisation-wide strategic planning, cascading through to division and business unit planning, ultimately being integrated into individual performance discussions and planning.

Calvary Public Hospital Bruce launched its values in action framework in February 2021. The framework builds on Calvary's values work and defines the behaviours that the organisation and people require to be successful, and it establishes a common language for staff.

Canberra Health Services has developed an awards and recognition program that recognises and acknowledges staff who embody the organisation's vision and values. The inaugural CEO awards ceremony was held in November 2020 and 40 staff were recognised for their contribution.

The rollout of the Speaking up for Safety program continues at Calvary, with more than 500 staff being trained in the program to date. There is an ongoing investment in the program, and all remaining staff will be trained over coming months. Evaluation of the program will commence in August.

In January Canberra Health Services commenced implementation of the Speaking up for Safety program. An initial expression of interest has been completed, and staff representatives have been identified who will undertake the train-the-trainer program. The staff representatives will then undertake training sessions with the entire CHS workforce throughout 2021 and 2022.

Calvary Public Hospital Bruce officially launched its framework for preventing and managing occupational violence on 22 February. This included a presentation from the Nurses and Midwives: Towards a Safer Culture project to talk about the linkages.

Clinician engagement was a theme across a number of recommendations. To this end, senior clinicians and administrators from across the public health system came together in early February at a networking event to discuss clinical service coordination and collaboration. This networking event was a precursor to the formal summit that is planned for June 2021. The networking event provided a significant opportunity for discussion and engagement across the system.

Given the investment so far made in culture reform and the incredible clinical engagement we have seen in management of the COVID-19 response in the ACT, the networking event aimed to explore and update the purpose of holding a summit with clinicians. We ultimately needed to understand what approach is perceived to have the most positive impact in enhancing engagement. Feedback is currently being collated and will inform the approach for the summit in coming months.

Discussion continues between the ACT and New South Wales governments in renegotiating the Memorandum of Understanding for Regional Collaboration. This is a significant commitment, requiring ongoing and continual engagement.

I spoke in August last year about Canberra Health Services' engagement with Choosing Wisely. CHS is a champion health service member of Choosing Wisely Australia and established a Choosing Wisely Low Value Care Steering Committee. Several initiatives are being trialled, designed to engage clinicians in the Choosing Wisely principles and improve the quality and safety of care. The Choosing Wisely initiative is helping to drive improvements in patient care and improve the safety and quality of care for hospital patients through the implementation of projects to reduce unnecessary tests, treatments and procedures for both inpatients and outpatients.

The review of the human resource functions in the three organisations in the ACT public health system has been finalised, with each organisation currently considering the findings. The HR review has enabled the assessment of each organisation's current state and outlines recommendations to support the maturity of HR models and their capacity to meet future organisational requirements. Further information on the HR review will soon be available online.

A total of five recommendations from the workplace culture review have been completed and significant progress has been made on other recommendations. As an indication of the amount of work happening across the system, there are a total of 92 discrete actions to deliver on the recommendations, and 50 of those have been completed.

Sustainable organisational and cultural change takes time. The partnership with the Australian National University's Research School of Management to develop the ACT public health system workplace culture framework provided an evidence-based approach to inform organisational and cultural change. This has been an important part of our deliberate investment in a systematic and coordinated approach to improving the "people" aspects of ACT public health services.

Members will recall that in early December 2020 I tabled the executive summary of the investing in our people report and the supporting rapid evidence assessments. The workplace culture framework is designed to act as a guide to develop and implement evidence-based practices that foster respect, inclusion and trust. It guides each organisation's approach to key cultural changes that support the system in the continued delivery of high-quality health care to our community and to being an employer of choice, both now and into the future.

Canberra Health Services has developed its fostering organisational culture improvement strategy, FOCIS, which identifies key initiatives against each of the five workplace change priorities identified in the workplace culture framework: organisational trust; leadership and people; workplace civility; psychological safety; and team effectiveness.

The workplace culture framework and the supporting workplace skills development model provide the scaffolding for the health system to progress recommendations 13 and 16.

In response to recommendation 16, the health system engaged Fyusion Asia Pacific Pty Ltd to undertake a review of a number of people management training programs delivered by each of the organisations. This work included assessing the training programs' alignment with the workplace culture framework. The project was finalised in mid-March 2021. Organisations are now reviewing their training programs in light of the report's findings.

Work is also progressing on the development of management and leadership training programs, with procurement activity underway to engage expertise in the design and development of training programs for the health system.

There has been significant collaboration across the system to understand the gaps in training and ensure that any investment in training will have an immediate impact for our workforce. Data-informed decision-making has become another area of focus for the health system. Managers are being supported with access to workforce data via dashboard reports. These dashboards are being further developed and matured over time, incorporating data from a range of sources, including pulse surveys, which are being conducted in Canberra Health Services.

It is essential that our workforce feels safe, supported, valued and engaged. For that to occur, communication needs to be frequent and relevant. The current communications and engagement strategy is supported by an action plan for each phase of the program. A key topic of conversation at the oversight group workshop on 25 August 2020 was how to better communicate the connection between the changes staff are seeing on the ground and system-level reform.

There is a significant amount of work underway and planned for the coming months, with deliberate investment in developing and shaping positive workplaces across the ACT public health system. The gains achieved to date have been supported by the findings of the inaugural annual review, but we note that there is more to do.

Last year I committed to providing the Assembly with an update on the progress of reducing junior doctor burnout and exhaustion, particularly at Canberra Health Services. The government is committed to providing the best possible environment for junior doctors and regularly assesses its performance and monitors feedback from the junior medical workforce through a variety of resources, including but not limited to: a review commissioned in late 2019 of the ACT physician training network; satisfaction surveys of trainees through the ACT physician training network; the 2020 Medical Board of Australia's medical training survey; and clinicians and staff across CHS through our workplace culture pulse survey.

These sources indicate that the bulk of the training offered is tracking in the right direction. For example, demand for junior medical officer, or JMO, positions at CHS remains very high, with an applicant to position ratio of four to one for 2021. The ACT's pass rate for JMO exams improved in 2020, with 80 per cent passing their exams in the ACT compared to 75 per cent nationally. According to the Medical Board's survey, improvements have been made in terms of JMOs recommending CHS as a place to train, and knowing how to raise a concern about bullying, harassment or discrimination. There has also been an improvement in JMOs reporting good work-life balance in the ACT.

Do we have more to do? Absolutely, but we are moving in the right direction. Medical Board satisfaction results for the training and professional development plans of prevocational and unaccredited trainees showed that the ACT is on par with or better than the national result, with more than 90 per cent agreeing that their plan is helping them to develop as a doctor, prepare for medical practice and advance their knowledge.

Doctors in training in the ACT also highly rated the quality of formal education programs, team or unit-based activities, simulation teaching, online modules and bedside teaching for patient care. The Medical Board results also showed positivity and collegiality among clinical staff, which is critically important to building trust and competence for doctors in training. Doctors in training highly rated the support and availability of other senior medical staff during work hours and after hours.

Despite difficulties highlighted by the physician training review, the number of trainees in the ACT physician training network has grown year on year. As of March 2021, ACT basic physician trainees are undertaking two sets of exams. The 2020 exams which were delayed due to the pandemic will likely be completed by the end of April. All registrars who trained in the ACT network in 2020 have so far been successful in progressing from stage 1 to stage 2 of this exam. In the 2021 cycle of exams the written exam has been completed, with 88 per cent of local physician trainees being successful. This is above the national benchmark of 78 per cent in 2021.

Canberra Health Services accepted all 54 recommendations of the physician training review, and most have now been implemented, with many more partially addressed. A comprehensive plan to address and monitor the recommendations has been developed with stakeholder consultation overseen by the physician training committee. Where recommendations require extra resources, the ACT network director of physician education is undertaking benchmarking with comparably sized hospitals to determine appropriate resource requirements.

More broadly, specialist training programs at CHS are very successful. For example, the pass rates in emergency medicine and general surgery are consistently at or very near to 100 per cent and among the highest in Australia, and 100 per cent of ACT trainees passed various components of exams in the Royal College of Pathologists of Australasia in 2020.

The results from radiology training exams in late 2020 were also very positive, with all junior radiology registrars passing. Five out of seven senior radiology registrars passed all or most components, noting that most radiology trainees complete their full examinations in more than one attempt. The first round of exams for 2021 commenced in March.

Significant work is underway across the health service to address bullying, harassment and discrimination. For junior doctors, CHS is addressing workplace concerns by proactively monitoring and assessing workload issues and ensuring that the rostering and leave arrangements are managed appropriately for a training setting. This includes and is not limited to: ensuring that leave is taken and used within appropriate time frames; that JMOs do not do more than three on-call shifts per fortnight; and that there is clarity during orientation on overtime expectations.

In closing, I thank everyone across the ACT public health system for their commitment to developing initiatives and approaches to support positive culture change. In particular, I thank the members of the steering group and oversight group who are driving and overseeing this work, and the professional colleges,

non-government organisations, clinical leaders and consumer and carer representatives who are closely engaged in the process and outcomes.

In doing so, I acknowledge the very important role Kylie Jonasson has played in driving this work as the Director-General of the ACT Health Directorate over the last 12 months. I know that her positive, collaborative approach has been very much embraced, not only by directorate staff but across agencies, stakeholders and the wider community. I have certainly appreciated Kylie's warmth, humour, and deep engagement with the health portfolio, as well as the leadership she has displayed in responding to a range of unique challenges.

We all recognise that cultural change will benefit not only the entire workforce of the three services, but also patients, their families and carers and our non-government partners. Our goal continues to be creating an environment where our workforce feels supported, valued, and empowered to deliver exceptional health care and enhance patient and consumer outcomes and experiences.

I present the following papers:

Culture Review Implementation—Culture Connect newsletter.

Workplace Culture within ACT Public Health Services—Biannual update on the Independent Review—Ministerial statement, 31 March 2021.

I move:

That the Assembly take note of the ministerial statement.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Revenue Legislation Amendment Bill 2021

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

Title read by Clerk.

MR BARR (Kurrajong—Chief Minister, Treasurer, Minister for Climate Action, Minister for Economic Development and Minister for Tourism) (10.43): I move:

That this bill be agreed to in principle.

With this bill, the ACT government is acting on its commitment in the Parliamentary and Governing Agreement for the Tenth Assembly to expand further the existing affordable community housing land tax exemption by removing the time limit for this exemption. The cap on the number of properties has already been increased from 125 to 250 under the Land Tax (Affordable Community Housing) Determination 2021 to support the increased supply of affordable housing, as outlined in the ACT housing strategy.

Also assisting with housing outcomes for the community, the bill provides conveyance duty concessions to pensioners who have a disability or to a special disability trust purchasing residential shares in not-for-profit supportive housing properties. This will provide that pensioners with a disability are exempt from duty through indirect acquisitions of interests in supportive housing in the same way that they would be exempt from duty if they acquire a property directly.

More generally, this bill continues the ACT government's efforts to maintain and improve the operation of our territory's tax laws as part of a series of revenue legislation amendment bills. This bill introduces amendments to protect and preserve the integrity of the revenue collection system in the territory and addresses a range of minor technical and administration matters related to tax law.

The bill allows the Commissioner for ACT Revenue to apply penalty tax provisions under the Taxation Administration Act to overdue and unpaid rates on land owned by corporations and trusts, to better support the integrity of tax administration. The bill also includes technical amendments to ensure that acquisitions of interests in short and long-term commercial leases and subleases are excluded from the application of duty, consistent with longstanding policy intent.

The bill also clarifies when duty must be paid on the acquisition of an option over dutiable property. The amendments will exclude corporations and trustees from exemptions on land tax involving an owner's principal place of residence, consistent with the longstanding intent to apply land tax to holdings of land by corporations and trusts.

To support compliance, the bill requires the payment of any deferred lease variation charges prior to registering a unit plan. The bill also makes other LVC changes, including changing the annual requirement to provide valuation advice to the Treasurer for codified LVC determinations to a three-year requirement. Proposed amendments make clear that a notice of assessment reflects the LVC tax liability of the lessee, and that an obligation to pay that liability arises upon the execution of the variation of a Crown lease.

To support payroll tax harmonisation, the bill extends the payroll tax annual reconciliation period from 21 days to 28 days, matching New South Wales requirements. The reporting requirements for the commissioner to provide information on airport rates will be aligned with processes for general rates under the bill.

The bill provides a power for the minister to determine an alternative time period for property owners to lodge objections for land valuations as part of actions being developed to improve the transparency of the valuation processes for property owners.

The bill updates the permitted disclosures arrangements under the secrecy provisions of the Taxation Administration Act to include prescribed targeted agencies. The updated arrangements will uphold the integrity of the tax system and prescribed agency functions.

Other technical amendments will further clarify and simplify tax administration. This includes clarifying the operation of provisions that applies to rating factors to mixed-use land development based on the intended proportion of residential and commercial development; clarifying and improving the operation of debt recovery provisions relating to charges over land for tax debts; and including land rent charges under the honest purchaser liability protections where a certificate of tax and other charges is provided to a purchaser.

Through this bill we are meeting our public commitments to improve housing affordability, as well as continuing to ensure that our tax system is fit for purpose. The Revenue Legislation Amendment Bill 2021 supports the functioning of government and the provision of services to the benefit of all Canberrans, and I commend the bill to the Assembly.

Debate (on motion by **Ms Lee**) adjourned to the next sitting.

Domestic Animals Legislation Amendment Bill 2021

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

Title read by Clerk.

MR STEEL (Murrumbidgee—Minister for Skills, Minister for Transport and City Services and Special Minister of State) (10.49): I move:

That this bill be agreed to in principle.

I am pleased to introduce the Domestic Animals Legislation Amendment Bill 2021 to the Assembly today. The bill will introduce a best practice, comprehensive annual dog registration from July at no additional cost to dog owners. The ACT government is putting in place the systems and processes needed to promote safe and responsible dog ownership by ensuring that we have up-to-date information on where dogs live and who owns them.

Dogs are an integral part of our Canberra community. They are sentient animals who can feel a full spectrum of emotions, whether it be happiness, hope or pain. They provide joy and enrichment to their owners' lives, but it is undeniable that when not managed appropriately, dogs can pose a public safety risk. The ACT government is committed to promoting responsible pet ownership, minimising the risks dogs pose to our community and to ensuring our city becomes a leader in animal management.

The ACT government has worked continuously over the last few years to achieve this vision. In 2017 we strengthened our laws in relation to dangerous dogs, improving both our legislative framework and regulatory processes, and now we have some of the strongest dog laws in the country. In 2018 we commissioned the independent expert review into the management of dogs in the ACT, which provided 32 recommendations on how Canberra can become a world leader in dog management.

As part of these recommendations, the review flagged the importance of annual dog registration. The ACT government listened to the experts and the community, and in May 2019 released the Canberra dog model, which provides an evidenced-based plan for achieving best-practice dog management. This model includes a list of 10 practical actions for achieving responsible dog management, with action 9 being the introduction of annual dog registration.

Annual registration is a cornerstone of encouraging responsible dog ownership and mitigating any associated public safety risks. This is a view shared by experts in the animal management field, including the RSPCA, who has recognised the important role that registration and microchipping plays in helping to reduce dog attacks. The introduction of annual registration also aligns the ACT with best-practice registration systems across Australia, including the City of Melbourne and Brisbane City Council.

The current lifetime registration system is no longer fit for purpose. It lacks triggers requiring owners to update their information when a dog passes away, when they move outside of the ACT or when dog ownership is transferred to someone else. Our dog registration data is compromised as a result, undercutting Domestic Animal Services' ability to communicate with dog owners and provide targeted services. The provisions set in the bill today are necessary to remedy the issue.

Annual registration has multiple benefits over the current lifetime registration system. Annual registration provides an effective way to develop and maintain accurate information on Canberra's dog population. From the government's perspective, this means that resources and services are able to be targeted where they are needed. For the owner, annual registration is critical, because it ensures that a lost dog found roaming can be returned home as soon as possible, using up-to-date contact information to reunite owners with their pet.

More broadly, this will lead to a more engaged community of dog owners in the ACT and will help promote responsible dog ownership. Together with annual registration, a new digital dog database will provide a platform to educate and communicate with dog owners on their responsibilities and how to keep their dogs safe and happy. Dog attacks are less likely to occur in a community that is more engaged, educated, and aware of responsible dog ownership.

Annual registration also assists our DAS rangers with compliance and enforcement measures, both under the Domestic Animals Act and also under animal welfare law. By improving the ability of rangers to identify irresponsible dog owners, it will be easier to take action, like implementing a control order.

Annual registration also helps with capacity for proactive compliance activities, as following up on matters is easier with current contact details. Without regular prompting, unfortunately, owners rarely tell the government when they change address or phone number, or whether the dog's ownership has transferred to someone else.

From July, registered owners will be required to update or confirm their dog's details each year at no extra cost. The registration renewal date for each dog will be calculated using their original registration date. If you registered your dog on 1 February 2014, your registration renewal date will be 1 February each year and so on. Importantly, the bill places the onus on the government to provide reminder notices to dog owners to inform them of how they can comply with the annual registration requirements. We recognise that life is busy for many people and so the bill has been drafted to minimise the requirements on dog owners.

At present, people registering a dog pay a one-off fee of \$57.55. To be clear, when the new system comes into effect from July 2021, there will be no additional cost to owners to update their registration. All registered owners will now receive a reminder notice from Domestic Animal Services at least 14 days before the end of the dog's annual registration.

The new scheme will take effect from 1 July 2021 and transitional arrangements will apply for dogs which have been registered on any day in July or on 1 August. For dogs with registrations on these dates, the registration renewal date will be one month after the next anniversary of the registration date. For example, a dog registered on 14 July 2015 will have a registration renewal date of 14 August each year.

The reminder notice will include all the key information needed to ensure that owners clearly understand their obligations under the annual registration scheme. Each notice will state: the date the dog's registration ends; the information a keeper must confirm or update and how to electronically access that information; details on how the keeper can comply with the notice; and the consequences for non-compliance.

Owners will be required to comply with the reminder notice by confirming or updating their pet's details. Failure to do so will result in a strict liability offence. People who do not comply with the reminder notice will face a maximum penalty of 10 penalty units or an infringement notice of \$150. We do not anticipate that this penalty will need to be used often; the overwhelming majority of Canberrans who own a dog have it registered and are responsible pet owners.

Another important component of the bill is the expansion of information recorded on the register about both the dog and their owners. This includes recording a keeper's contact details, information about a dog's former owner, and details regarding whether a keeper has been subject to any findings of guilt or convictions in relation to an animal welfare offence or offence under the act. This is an improvement on the current relationship with microchipping data, which becomes outdated overtime under a lifetime registration system. The registrar will be able to request information about registered keepers as reasonably necessary, to carry out the administration of the act.

We have also invested in a new IT system, our digital dog database, which will support and streamline the annual registration process. Owners will receive a reminder notice via email or text message and update or confirm their registration details on the database in only a few clicks. There will also be an option for people to do so in person via Access Canberra shopfronts, if that is their preference. The work

we are doing behind the scenes will ensure that it is quick, easy and simple for people to meet this new requirement for annual registration of their dogs.

The 2019 pet census found that there are more than 51,000 dogs living in our community. To ensure positive public safety outcomes, it is vital that we have a clear picture of where these dogs are located. Through annual dog registration we will have access to more reliable data, making it easier to identify and respond to instances of irresponsible dog ownership. Using this information, we will also be able to adapt and utilise ongoing education and awareness campaigns more effectively.

I am confident that the provisions in this bill will strengthen how dogs are managed in the ACT, whilst ensuring that dog owners do not face unreasonable cost or bureaucratic burden. Through annual registration and our new digital dog database, we will improve our data and better target our resources. We will be able to better educate the community on responsible dog ownership, re-home lost dogs more quickly and keep the community and pets safe. I commend the bill to the Assembly.

Debate (on motion by **Ms Lawder**) adjourned to the next sitting.

Public Accounts—Standing Committee Report 1

MRS KIKKERT (Ginninderra) (10.59): I present the following report:

Public Accounts—Standing Committee—Report 1—*Annual and Financial Reports 2019-2020; Appropriation Bill 2020-2021 and Appropriation (Office of the Legislative Assembly) Bill 2020-2021*, dated 29 March 2021, together with a copy of the extracts of the relevant minutes of proceedings.

I move:

That the report be noted.

As Chair of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts, I present the following report on inquiry into annual and financial reports 2019-20; Appropriation Bill 2020-2021; and Appropriation (Office of the Legislative Assembly) Bill 2020-2021. This is the first report of the Tenth Assembly for the Standing Committee on Public Accounts. Annual and financial reports were referred to standing committees on 2 December 2021. The following annual reports or sections of annual reports were referred to the Standing Committee on Public Accounts, the ACT Auditor-General, Office of the Legislative Assembly, and ACT Ombudsman.

On 2 December 2021 the Assembly also passed a resolution in relation to the examination of the appropriation bills by each standing committee of the Tenth Assembly. The Standing Committee on Public Accounts examined the budget outlook papers, engaging external expertise to facilitate the analysis of the budget. The committee also held two public hearings and heard from several witnesses from the relevant directorates and agencies, and 21 questions were taken on notice, with answers available on the committee's webpage. Moreover, 13 questions on notice

were received and answers to these are likewise available on the committee's webpage. In all, the committee made 29 recommendations.

Finally, on behalf of the committee, I thank the ACT government ministers and directorate and agency officials for their contributions to this inquiry and also our hard-working secretary, Annemieke Jongsma. I commend the report to the Assembly.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Statement by chair

MRS KIKKERT (Ginninderra) (11.02): Pursuant to standing order 246A, I wish to make a statement on behalf of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts relating to statutory appointments in accordance with continuing resolution 5A.

I wish to inform the Assembly that during the period 1 July 2020 to 31 December 2020, the standing committee and its equivalent committee in the Ninth Assembly considered 14 statutory appointments. In accordance with continuing resolution 5A, I now table a schedule of statutory appointments considered during this reporting period:

Public Accounts—Standing Committee—Schedule of Statutory Appointments—
10th Assembly—Period 1 July to 31 December 2020.

Territory rights—voluntary assisted dying

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) (11.02): I move the motion standing in my name and in the names of Mr Rattenbury and Ms Lee:

That this Assembly:

(1) recognises that:

- (a) the Commonwealth Government conferred self-government on the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) in 1988; and
- (b) after more than 30 years of self-government, the ACT has a:
 - (i) robust and established parliament;
 - (ii) strong jurisdictional identity; and
 - (iii) community which has an expectation that elected, local representatives should and will be able to decide on issues that matter to it;

(2) notes that while section 122 of the Constitution empowers the Commonwealth to make laws for the ACT and Northern Territory on any subject, it rarely exercises this power;

(3) notes with profound disappointment the continued existence of subsections 23(1A) and (1B) in the *Australian Capital Territory (Self-Government) Act 1988* (Cth) which exclude the ACT from the power to make laws with respect to voluntary assisted dying;

- (4) notes the stark inequity between states and territories clearly demonstrated in that, by mid-2021, all Australian states will have either passed legislation relating to voluntary assisted dying or have a bill before their parliament;
- (5) draws the Federal Parliament's attention to Australia's international human rights obligations under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights to which Australia is a party, and which guarantees citizens the right to take part in the conduct of public affairs, directly or through freely chosen representatives;
- (6) expresses its disappointment that the Commonwealth Government and the broader Federal Parliament has not resolved, with haste, this untenable situation for the territories;
- (7) acknowledges that there is a diversity of views about voluntary assisted dying in the ACT community;
- (8) affirms that, regardless of one's views about voluntary assisted dying, there should not be any controversy in allowing the ACT and Northern Territory to decide for themselves whether to introduce such legislation, and to allow citizens of the ACT an opportunity to legislate on this matter if their communities desire;
- (9) calls on the Federal Parliament to:
 - (a) resolve that no Australian citizen should be disadvantaged or discriminated against with respect to their democratic or human rights on the basis of where they live; and
 - (b) introduce and bring on for debate a bill to remove subsections 23(1A) and (1B) from the *Australian Capital Territory (Self-Government) Act 1988* (Cth) by the end of 2021; and
- (10) invites leaders of ACT Labor, ACT Greens and Canberra Liberals, responsible spokespersons and any other interested member of the ACT Legislative Assembly to sign a letter to all members and senators of Federal Parliament, which attaches this motion, by the end of this sitting week.

This past weekend, 27 March, marked 24 years—24 years—since the federal parliament passed cruel, needless, senseless legislation: legislation which restricted our democratic freedoms and democratic rights; legislation which banned the ACT and Northern Territory parliaments from deciding on the issue of voluntary assisted dying for themselves. That federal legislation was simple and it was devastating, in that straightforward amendments, new provisions in the ACT and Northern Territory's self-government acts, rendered citizens of the territories as second-class.

The legislation did not just reverse the Northern Territory's 1995 regime which legislated and regulated voluntary assisted dying for terminally ill patients; it removed the powers of either territory to legislate to allow for voluntary assisted dying ever again. By doing this, the federal parliament limited our citizens' ability to participate democratically on something so fundamentally important—choice at the end of our lives.

It should have sent alarm bells ringing among many federal parliamentarians that the parliament was choosing to limit democratic freedoms of its own citizens in its own

country, that it was choosing to treat citizens within its own country differently regarding what they can and cannot legislate for on the basis of where they live. If it did not send alarm bells ringing then, it should have since. That is because, while the Northern Territory was the first jurisdiction to consider and pass relevant legislation in the 1990s, for many, many years now states have been very prominently debating voluntary assisted dying legislation, even if unsuccessfully.

Now the alarm bells should be clanging. They certainly are for us in this place. They are clanging because three of the six states have now legislated for voluntary assisted dying—Victoria in 2017, Western Australia in 2019 and Tasmania in 2021. Ten million Australians now have access to voluntary assisted dying schemes. More importantly, 10 million Australians have been able to participate democratically, through their parliaments, in having this issue debated and voted on.

Those are just the parliaments that have passed the legislation. The remaining state parliaments are also currently debating legislation, like South Australia, or will later this year, like Queensland and New South Wales—all of them. Through their parliaments, the vast majority of Australians will be able to participate in this important democratic process, simply by virtue of living in a state. But not citizens of the ACT, and not citizens of the Northern Territory.

The thing is that the only body which can restore these powers to us is the same one which took them away 24 years ago—the federal parliament. I do speak of the federal parliament as a whole, because it is the responsibility of all federal parliamentarians to ensure that this untenable situation ends. They should have prioritised this years ago, of course. We appeal to them today to prioritise this now. This situation is needless and senseless; it always has been. They, and only they, have the power to change it. They just need the will.

In appealing to the federal parliament, it is my strong view that the federal government needs to show leadership here, first and foremost. They have the most power to introduce legislation. They have the very important power of deciding what bills, no matter by whom they have been introduced, should be brought on for debate.

While several bills have been presented over many years, just one—just one—has the federal government allowed to come on for debate. When asked about resolving this senseless situation, the federal government—ministers, including first law officers—have repeatedly said that it is not a priority. How can the rights of citizens in their own country not be a priority? How can the citizens in their own capital not be a priority?

It should not have taken the Northern Territory Attorney-General and I to have to remind the federal government that Australia is a party to international human rights obligations. These obligations extend to how they treat citizens in their own country. But remind them we have. The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to which Australia is a party, guarantees citizens the right to take part in the conduct of public affairs, directly or through freely chosen representatives. By prohibiting the citizens of the ACT and Northern Territory from deciding for themselves, through their elected representatives, whether to legislate for voluntary assisted dying, the restrictions placed on us by the Euthanasia Laws Act 1997 may be limiting this right.

Further, pursuant to the right to equality and non-discrimination in sections 2 and 26 of the covenant, individuals are entitled to enjoy their human rights without distinction or discrimination of any kind. The ACT has given effect to these obligations through the Human Rights Act. These human rights, under the ACT Human Rights Act and as a matter of international law, may be subject only to reasonable limits that can be demonstrably justified in a free and democratic society. Can what is occurring be demonstrably justified? The federal government need to very carefully, and very urgently, review their position on this. With this motion today, we are bringing this to the attention of all federal parliamentarians, and we are imploring leadership to be shown among them all.

It is one thing to not support voluntary assisted dying. There are a variety of views. I accept and acknowledge that there are some who do not, and will not ever, support voluntary assisted dying, for a variety of reasons, and that some of those people are members, representatives, in this place. I accept that. I have a different view, of course, but I accept that there is a diverse range of views, and our motion rightly emphasises this.

What I cannot accept is a view that supports Australian citizens having different democratic rights in their own country by virtue of where they live. Someone who lives 15 minutes away, across the border in Queanbeyan, for example, has more rights than any citizen who lives in the ACT. Regardless of any person's view on voluntary assisted dying, there should be no controversy in allowing the ACT and Northern Territory to decide for themselves whether to introduce such legislation, and allow citizens of the ACT and Northern Territory an equal opportunity to legislate on this matter if their communities so desire.

That is at the heart of this motion and that is at the heart of our appeal to the federal parliament—that we should be able to have the debate on voluntary assisted dying here, in this chamber, as representatives on behalf of our citizens, like the states get to do. It is what should be guaranteed to us as a democratic right, and not have a decision dictated to us.

I appeal today to federal parliamentarians to consider how they are treating Canberrans by allowing this situation to persist—the disrespect with which the ACT Legislative Assembly is being treated—and to take action with us and for us.

Finally, this motion invites leaders, party spokespersons and other interested MLAs to sign a letter to all federal parliamentarians, all members and senators, which attaches the terms of this motion. I ask that all members in this place treat this invitation in the good faith in which it is intended, to sign the letter, to set aside their personal views or beliefs on voluntary assisted dying—a different issue—and to stand up for the rights of the people that they represent. I warmly welcome this motion being co-sponsored by Mr Rattenbury and Ms Lee. Mr Rattenbury's and the ACT Greens' views are well known in this place, and I look forward to them being reaffirmed today.

In 2018, during the remonstrance debate, I remarked that I was very disappointed by how absent Canberra Liberals' voices had been in the lead-up to the vote in the Senate.

I implored them then to speak up, join up and stand up for territory rights, constantly. I sincerely hope that Ms Lee's contribution in this place marks a turning point for the Canberra Liberals. I genuinely thank her for the spirit in which she has engaged with me and Mr Rattenbury in co-sponsoring this critical motion about our rights.

I implore the entire Assembly to speak up, join up and stand up for territory rights. This is about our right to choose for ourselves, on behalf of our citizens, to end the paternalism, to end the denial of our rights and to give us back democratic opportunities equal to those gifted to every other Australian living in a state: democratic rights; human rights.

We urge, we appeal and we demand that federal parliament, a largely, but not entirely, different federal parliament to that of 24 years ago, consider exactly what they are doing by allowing this untenable, inequitable situation to persist, to look to the states and realise how senseless and needless the legislation banning the territories is, to consider democratic rights, human rights, and to do what is right.

MR RATTENBURY (Kurrajong—Attorney-General, Minister for Consumer Affairs, Minister for Gaming and Minister for Water, Energy and Emissions Reduction) (11.15): I am very pleased to have the opportunity to co-sponsor this important motion, both as a representative of the ACT Greens and as the ACT's Attorney-General. I am pleased to co-sponsor the motion, but I am also, frankly, appalled that we need to be debating this issue of territory rights again in 2021. This issue, where the Australian government restricts the Australian territories from considering laws on voluntary euthanasia, has continued for way too long. As Minister Cheyne pointed out, it is 24 years since the provision was originally passed.

In my view, it is offensive, undemocratic, unnecessary and it removes the chance for ACT citizens to engage with one of the most important issues in their lives; that is, the manner of their own death, their health and dignity, and that of their families and loved ones. These are incredibly important issues to people as humans.

Over many years, many members of this Assembly have pursued this issue of voluntary assisted dying, seeking equality for the ACT. I moved a motion in the Assembly back in 2014 condemning the undemocratic and discriminatory restriction imposed by the federal government and calling on the Speaker to write to the federal parliament on behalf of the Assembly, requesting the removal of that restriction. That motion was passed, although back then it was not with the support of the Canberra Liberals.

Sadly, these laws have still not changed. I note that a previous MLA, Mary Porter, worked very hard on this issue and was very passionate about it. My former Greens colleague Caroline Le Couteur was a strong advocate on this issue. And I acknowledge the efforts that Minister Cheyne is putting into achieving change. This demonstrates a long and committed effort from members of the Assembly across a range of political views about the importance of this reform and the rights of the territories. This Assembly has, of course, also passed a remonstrance motion, condemning the federal government.

I also acknowledge that Ms Lee is a co-sponsor of today's motion, which is very welcome. I am hopeful that this contributes to a change of mind by the federal decision-makers, recognising that this is an issue about the territory and not about a particular view or a particular brand of politics.

This situation, where we are restricted from making laws on euthanasia, is, frankly, farcical. It is farcical today, in 2021, but it was already farcical back in 1997, when the Australian parliament amended the territory's self-government act to specify that it could not make laws on euthanasia. In doing so, the commonwealth took back part of the legislative powers it had already conferred on the ACT when it granted self-government.

Our grant of power allows us to make laws for the peace, order and good government of ACT residents; to look after health, education, prisons, courts and criminal laws; to hold our own elections; and all of the other activities that this government and this Assembly undertake on behalf of the residents of this territory. But, for some reason, there is one imposed restriction. We cannot make laws, or even realistically have the debate, on euthanasia.

The only way this situation makes any sense is to understand that the imposed restriction on the territories' independence is purely political. It is not based on what is fair or what is a reasonable and consistent approach to self-government. It is simply the exercise of political power by people in federal parliament who either oppose voluntary euthanasia or who are too scared of any political risk associated with supporting euthanasia. In restricting the territories' law-making powers, they win an ideological victory for themselves; but, at the same time, they make a mockery of self-government and they tell ACT citizens that they are second-class citizens and less worthy than people living in the Australian states.

As time passes, the absurdity of this situation is amplified. In 1996 the federal government responded in a panicked way to the Northern Territory's euthanasia laws, the first in Australia. They removed the territories' ability to make laws on this topic. But now, nearly 25 years later, several states in Australia have voluntary euthanasia laws. Victoria, Western Australia and Tasmania have already legislated. Legislation is progressing or being debated in other states; yet, the ACT sits here, unable to act, and a victim of federal government politics.

We are headed for the ridiculous situation where, in a few years from now, most of Australia has access to voluntary euthanasia, but the 400,000-odd citizens of the ACT remain in a little discriminatory island. Is that where we are headed? And is that really acceptable? My message to federal parliamentarians is: it is time to give up on this issue. There are euthanasia laws in Australia. You may as well return to the ACT its democratic rights.

As I said, many of us have been campaigning on this issue of territory rights, and voluntary euthanasia, for many years. So far, we have not had the success we desire, but this is what campaigning is. We know well that campaigning successes can take many years of ongoing efforts. I guarantee to the federal parliament that I and my

Greens colleagues will continue to pursue this issue until the unjust situation concerning euthanasia is remedied. I am sure that this Assembly feels the same, and momentum is only growing.

As I said earlier, I am very pleased that Ms Lee has co-sponsored this motion. This has not previously been the position of the local Liberal Party, and this new position of recognising that it is a territory-wide issue, a matter about territory rights, is very welcome. I hope that our local senator, Senator Seselja, has the same change of heart. Senator Seselja previously voted in the federal parliament to prevent the ACT from considering and enacting voluntary euthanasia laws. That is a particularly offensive and confusing action. One can only assume that the senator thinks that his own constituency does not deserve the same rights as people in the states, and that the ACT parliament does not deserve the same rights as other parliaments.

Regardless of one's personal views on this issue of voluntary assisted dying, the question we are considering is about territory rights. You do not have to support voluntary assisted dying to support the democratic rights of your constituents. On the actual issue of euthanasia, of course, it is well known that the Greens support the right of people to make decisions at the end of their life. We support the creation of a compassionate, safe and workable scheme for voluntary euthanasia. In fact, the vast majority of Australians agree and also support such a scheme. The majority of Greens voters, Labor voters and Liberal voters agree, according to the publicly commissioned polls. Who wants to suffer at the end of their life, deprived of their dignity and the most personal choices over their own body and their own life?

This is an issue where the Australian parliament has simply failed to reflect the desires and values of the Australian population. As Ms Cheyne noted, there are, of course, other views, but I think that there is a clear sentiment among the bulk of Australians.

I emphasise that if the ACT is returned its democratic right to consider euthanasia laws, it would involve extensive community consultation, input of experts and, no doubt, vigorous debate in the Assembly. It would involve all of the parliamentary and community engagement mechanisms that are appropriate for such an important and sensitive change, and governed overall, of course, by the right of ACT citizens to vote their government in or out as the ultimate act of democracy.

It would require careful discussion, technical discussion, thoughtful discussion and, no doubt, some contested points. But, as a territory, that is the opportunity we should have—to have that debate, to have our committees scrutinise legislation and to have members engage with each other on the sensitive details.

That is a process that I hope we are able to at least engage in, in the very near future. That is why I am pleased to commend the motion to the Assembly. I thank my fellow co-sponsors for working together to develop a motion that we think reflects, importantly, on the rights of ACT citizens and residents. It sends a clear message to the federal parliament that we look to them to take the leadership here and restore to the territory the ability to debate issues, just as the other jurisdictions in Australia can.

MS LEE (Kurrajong—Leader of the Opposition) (11.24): I am pleased to co-sponsor and to speak in support of this motion brought to the Assembly today. This is a debate on territory rights. The Canberra Liberals support the right of the ACT to debate and legislate on the issue of voluntary assisted dying.

The ACT Legislative Assembly is democratically elected by the people of Canberra and it should have the right to legislate on this matter on behalf of Canberrans, just as we have the right to legislate on a whole host of other matters dealt with by state and local governments across Australia. We are members of our community, the community that we serve, and we are in this chamber because we were elected by Canberrans to be their voice in their parliament, in our parliament.

This chamber comprises Canberrans, elected by Canberrans, who have been given the privilege by others to make laws for Canberrans. In August 2018, in response to a remonstrance motion brought by the Chief Minister, I spoke on and voted in favour of expressing the ACT Legislative Assembly's disappointment in the federal Senate not passing the Restoring Territory Rights (Assisted Suicide Legislation) Bill 2015, which would have repealed the relevant sections of the so-called Andrews bill. I raised this matter with the Prime Minister at our last meeting, and I will continue to raise this matter with him.

The Labor and Greens members of this chamber at times like to assert that the limitation on this parliament being able to bring this matter on for debate and legislative passage here is to be blamed solely on the federal Liberal-National government. But it is important to note that when the federal bill failed to pass the Senate in 2018, seven Labor senators also voted against it. Mr Rattenbury has spoken about his disappointment regarding Senator Seselja's vote, but it is worth noting that there were seven Labor senators who also voted against the bill. It is worth asking what Ms Cheyne and, indeed, the Chief Minister will do to ensure that the minds of those Labor senators are changed.

The issue of voluntary assisted dying is not an easy one. The Canberra Liberals acknowledge and respect the very diverse views on voluntary assisted dying in the ACT community. I welcome Mr Rattenbury's comments about the thoroughness that will be needed in this debate if we are given the right to debate it in this chamber, including extensive community consultation and what, I agree with him, will probably be a relatively robust debate here.

I have made it very clear from the outset, as was made clear in the last term, that should this chamber be given the right to legislate on voluntary assisted dying, it will be a matter for a conscience vote for the Canberra Liberals.

I thank Ms Cheyne for her commitment to and advocacy on this issue, and for initiating this tripartisan motion to be debated in the Assembly today. I also acknowledge the way she, Mr Rattenbury and I have been able to work together to co-sign this motion, standing up for the rights of this parliament, our parliament, to have the right to make laws on behalf of all Canberrans. I commend the motion to the Assembly.

MR BARR (Kurrajong—Chief Minister, Treasurer, Minister for Climate Action, Minister for Economic Development and Minister for Tourism) (11.29): I want to take the opportunity this morning to thank Minister Cheyne, Mr Rattenbury and the Leader of the Opposition for bringing forward this motion today. It is fair to say that it is rather unusual that three MLAs from three different parties have co-sponsored a motion in the Assembly. It happens occasionally, and it is good to see. The fact that we have had this collaboration across parties today highlights the significance of this issue for ACT residents. Indeed, I want to acknowledge the significance of it for Northern Territory residents as well.

I want to thank Minister Cheyne for her leadership and her continued passionate advocacy on this issue, both as a special secretary to me as Chief Minister in the previous Assembly and now as Minister for Human Rights.

Today, as the motion indicates, is an opportunity for the leaders of all three parties, and indeed any member of the Assembly, to continue to advocate to members and senators in the federal parliament to prioritise the restoration of territory rights. Previous speakers have highlighted the history of how we are where we are now, and the various attempts over the last several decades to see change.

That change will come, but it will come quicker if we can unite in this chamber, together with our friends and colleagues in the Northern Territory parliament and our friends and colleagues in the states who support our democratic rights. This inevitable change will come quicker as a result of actions like those today. I want to thank and acknowledge everyone who will participate in this debate and acknowledge the leadership that will be necessary across all political parties.

Ms Lee highlighted that some Labor senators did not vote in favour of the Leyonhjelm bill. That was disappointing. I can say that it was not through lack of effort from Ms Cheyne and I, in terms of engagement with them. We got a high level of support from our federal Labor colleagues, but not enough. Yes, we need to shift the dial and get some more Labor senators and Labor House of Representatives members voting for this change, but we will not get there in the current parliament without some support from Liberal, National and independent members as well. We have a collective responsibility on behalf of our constituents.

Some of us will be better placed than others to lobby particular colleagues and members in different parties, but it will require a collective effort. That is how marriage equality was achieved in this country—a collective effort across parties. And we got there; but a lot of people thought we would not. I have the same confidence on this issue.

I make the observation that there is a clear distinction between territory rights and your personal position on voluntary assisted dying. Regardless of your personal view on voluntary assisted dying, everyone in this place, I believe, should be able to represent their constituents on issues that matter to them and that are appropriately within the constitutional responsibilities of subnational governments. Voluntary assisted dying is clearly such an issue.

I would encourage every member to consider signing this representation on behalf of our community. I suspect that people will be reading and discussing these representations for some years to come, though, so it is worth taking personal responsibility and signing this letter if you consider the issue to be important.

I will close with a Martin Luther King Jnr quote:

The arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice.

It has done so in the past on other challenging issues in this country. Social reform in Australia is difficult; it does not come easily, and it requires the collective work of many good people. Today, collectively, we are taking a further step towards an important reform and a restoration of democratic rights for territory residents—Canberrans and those in the Northern Territory. I commend the motion and thank each of the movers for their contributions to this debate today and into the future.

MS VASSAROTTI (Kurrajong) (11.34): I rise to support this motion and, in particular, commend this as an example of how our Assembly can come together to progress important issues such as territory rights. We come together as a parliament in a jurisdiction that was created to host our federal parliament. It is with some irony that this has resulted in our community being in a situation where we have less rights than other Australians, and we are prevented from having conversations about how we govern ourselves, particularly on an issue of sensitivity.

This is an issue that has been discussed in the Legislative Assembly for a long time, and it is really significant that today we have arrived at a point where all parties in the Assembly are coming together to ask the federal parliament to provide self-determination to its territory citizens. This is about leaving behind the shackles of paternalism and moral judgement, and instead trusting citizens of the territories to make decisions on issues that matter to them. Removing the restriction of territory rights would enable Canberrans to be able to engage and enact their democratic rights on the same terms as other Australians.

We have to acknowledge that we need to have conversations about things that are difficult and confronting, like the one that we need to have about voluntary assisted dying. It is an issue of great sensitivity, and one that needs deep and respectful community-led conversation to ensure that we get the balance right between dignity in death and respect of life.

Surveys suggest that a majority of Australians believe that there should be capacity for people to access assisted death in instances where they have a terminal illness and are facing great pain. There are also legitimate concerns regarding the shape that any laws take on this issue. I do have deep respect for disability advocates who have real fears about how these types of laws might be drafted and the impact that they might have on particular groups in the community. There are opportunities to support these discussions through mechanisms such as deliberative democratic processes.

We also need to ensure that any discussion around assisted dying and euthanasia is just one of a broader conversation about end of life and death. It is a subject that we are not good at addressing, whether it be around advanced care planning, access to and resourcing of appropriate palliative care services or how we change the reality that, while most people wish to die at home, they are more likely to die in hospital or another clinical setting.

While we are not good at these conversations, we need to have them, within families, within the community and in parliaments. The time is now, particularly given that other communities around Australia are able to have these conversations. When this issue was raised in 2014, for instance, the federal government cited the fact that no state had enacted legislation as a key reason to knock back consideration of overturning the ban in the ACT on making laws on this issue. This is now not the case. It is time for federal parliament to respect the rights of territories to make their own laws on this issue, and it is important that we come together to work out what we want as a community on this issue.

MR DAVIS (Brindabella) (11.38): Before I am a member of any one of the committees of this place, before I am a proud member of the ACT Greens, even, yes, before I am a proud *RuPaul's Drag Race* fan, I am, first and foremost, a member for Brindabella, a constituency representing 70,424 electors, many of whom did not vote for me, as you would note, Mr Deputy Speaker. However, I represent each and every one of them and, until this reform takes place, until the federal government shows respect for my constituency, for their democratic rights and for every single person that we represent in Tuggeranong, I have a responsibility to stand up and call out this inaction on behalf of the federal government.

In preparing my remarks for this debate, I considered many comments made in the context of a robust election campaign about the comparisons between living in the ACT and Queanbeyan, be it regarding accessibility to certain services, or the price you pay for land on which to build. We had that robust conversation, but the one that sticks out very boldly today, and one that I am so proud to see this parliament unifying around, is that, currently, the number one thing you enjoy in Queanbeyan that you do not enjoy if you live in the ACT is full and uninhibited democratic rights.

Your representatives are hamstrung, unable to represent you, your ambitions, your hopes, your dreams and the policy positions that you support at the ballot box once every four years. We are, in effect, less powerful, less influential and less able to serve than our New South Wales state MP counterparts, Queensland state MP counterparts and our federal parliamentarians. That is untenable. That besmirches the intellect, the voting power and the democratic freedoms of every single person in this city.

I am a born and bred Canberran. I absolutely love this city. It invoked in me a commitment to serve in this place. It was incredibly powerful and disappointing to have to take to the streets, as a proud Canberran, only a few years ago, and for many years prior, to fight for my rights as a proud gay man to get married here in the city that I was born and raised in, the city that I love. It was another example of a policy area where our federal parliament showed absolute disrespect—contempt even—for

the voters of this city, for the values that the people of this city share and for the democratically elected legislature, who, in an overwhelming majority, supported that policy change, and were unable to enact the hopes and ambitions of its electorate into law.

To see that come up again on a completely new area of public policy, where once again Canberra voters are treated as second-class, where once again the 70,424 people I represent are treated as second-class, their vote not as valuable, is frankly an embarrassment for the federal parliament. It is so disappointing that once again we have to rally just to say Canberrans are equal; just to say their vote is the same.

In closing, while my position and the position of my political party is on record, and we are proud to have been long-term supporters of legislative reform that sees people being able to make respected end of life choices with humanity and with dignity, this rises above even that. Just imagine for a moment—and I implore all of our shared constituency to imagine for just a moment—if the federal government and the federal parliament at large thought it could come into our streets and suburbs and tell us where we could build a school, what potholes we could and could not fill, what nature strips we would be allowed to mow and not mow. Naturally, uproar would ensue throughout our community.

This is a broader issue than that. This is an issue of fundamental democracy, of whether or not the people of Tuggeranong, Woden, Weston Creek, Belconnen, Gungahlin, and the latte-sipping inner north, Ms Vassarotti, are equally respected, are equally represented and are equally defended by their parliamentary representatives in federal parliament. I commend the motion, and I am proud to support it.

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) (11.44), in reply: I thank all members for their contributions to the debate on this critically important motion today, a motion that I believe is the first of its kind, on this issue at least, to be sponsored by all three parties, and that will, all going well, pass unanimously.

This is a collective responsibility. Collective work is needed from us here in standing up for the rights of our citizens, their democratic rights and their human rights. And from the federal parliament, too—from the federal parliament, especially. So there is something special, a strength, in that all parties here are united in our ask of all of parliament to unite with us to change this untenable situation, this needless situation and this senseless situation. While ever it continues, all it does is cause more harm. We are not second-class citizens, so we should not be treated as such.

In conferring self-government on us and on the Northern Territory, the commonwealth gave us powers—gave us a whole suite of things that we could legislate on; then they decided to take some away in, as Mr Rattenbury described, a panic. It was wrong then and it is wrong now. It has to change. We implore them to show some leadership. It will cost nothing to remove these provisions from our self-government act; not a cent. But it will mean so much to the lives of Canberra

citizens and to the lives of citizens in the Northern Territory. It takes people standing up with us and for us to restore our rights and, by doing so, to do the right thing.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Planning and Unit Titles Legislation Amendment Bill 2020

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

That this bill be agreed to in principle.

MR PARTON (Brindabella) (11.47): What we see going on in this chamber on a day-to-day basis is a combination of theatrics and actual government, and this bill is actually about government. This is a bill which is required. At the start, I want to basically say that it has been put together exceptionally well. This bill does a bit of tidying up on several bodies of legislation that mainly relate to purchase of property and strata title management processes. We on this side will not be having a great deal to say about this bill because we like it.

We must remain conscious of the impacts of the growing scope of legislation on affected sectors, in this case the residential accommodation supply sector. The property sector is certainly going through its growing pains at the moment, that is for sure, and so it is a sensible thing to adjust legislation to enable greater clarity or to make its objectives work easier for those affected by it.

Unit titles management has become an area of considerable challenge for unit owners and strata management service providers alike. Certainly there are aspects of this bill that have a great deal of complexity attached to them, and I commend those who have put it together for the way that they have.

In recent years we have seen very steep growth in multi-unit complexes, with attendant impacts on the strata management industry. Legislation has had to evolve, with the growing body of provisions related to the obligations and conduct of owners corporations being an increasing burden on their functions. The strata management industry must be agile enough to meet the demand to support a growing number of owners corporations but, also, owners corporations have to muster executive bodies with the skills, time and resources to perform the job or otherwise contract some of it out to a strata manager.

To illustrate the challenges on owners corporations, I think we should take for example the role of the secretary of an executive committee who is required by the Unit Titles Management Act to provide all the certificates required under that act. It is not an inconsiderable task in terms of time, in terms of cost and record-keeping. Even if the task is contracted out to a service provider, it still represents a pretty significant burden on the secretary who bears that statutory responsibility. This is just one example among the many complex responsibilities being carried by members of executive committees.

The strata management industry is no doubt also bearing most of the burden from this growing complexity. Clearly they are not a charity; they are a group of businesses and they cannot deliver their services free of charge. The cost of furnishing such things as unit titles, certificates and update certificates and oversighting all the other services that they provide—all of these complexities and obligations translate into costs that are ultimately stumped up by individual owners and many of them are stumped up by renters.

As legislators, we must be conscious of the costs being imposed on those sectors of the community that are so critical to community wellbeing, and the strata management sector is certainly an extremely potent example. If legislation keeps putting upward pressure on the cost of the sector's functionality, then eventually it will become a deterrent to investing in that sector; and of course that comes to the detriment of housing supply, and that is the last thing that we want and I think it is the last thing that anyone in this place wants.

We will not dwell on those pressures bearing down on residential property owners and those renting these but we need to keep in mind the twin monsters of combustible cladding and poor building quality. But we will leave that for another day. In the meantime, this side of the chamber will not be opposing this amendment bill.

MS CLAY (Ginninderra) (11.51): We also support this bill. It is part of the government's regular program of omnibus amendments and it just makes minor policy and technical amendments to five different pieces of legislation. We are pleased that it will improve, clarify and streamline legislation that relates to unit titles and the community concessional leases. While the amendments are minor in nature, the changes that they make are necessary and worthwhile improvements to the ACT statute book.

We are keeping a close eye on some of the bigger reviews that are happening in planning at the moment. I am very conscious that the Planning and Land Authority is conducting a fairly major review of planning and we are putting a bit of time into that. But we are really pleased to see these omnibus changes come through. The ACT Greens are happy to support this bill.

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) (11.53), in reply: I thank members for their contributions to the debate on this bill. The government is making it fairer and easier to live and work together through the managing buildings better reforms and, as part of these reforms, we are reviewing and amending legislation related to unit titles to improve the management of apartments, townhouses, mixed-use developments and commercial units.

The ACT Planning Strategy sets a target of 70 per cent of all new homes to be built in existing urban areas, which means that more people will be living and working in mixed-use developments in the future. The previous legislation governing unit titles was complex and made it difficult for owners corporations to fairly and efficiently manage the operations of buildings, including common facilities, levies and disputes.

The first stage of the reforms has now occurred, with changes to legislation to address some of these problems. Stage two will consider further reforms to unit title legislation in the future.

Stage one of the unit title reforms commenced on 1 November 2020 and the initial package of reforms included allowing owners corporations and executive committees to meet and vote electronically; requiring owners corporations to prepare a maintenance schedule of common property and buildings; introducing new default rules for all owners corporations; permitting separate budgets and different levies for parts of the building—for example, the commercial units may have different levies to the residential units; establishing building management statements which set out how more complex multi-lease buildings are to be managed; providing disclosure statements to buyers of off-the-plan units which give a greater level of information on the unit and additional rights to rescind the contract if the unit is not as described; and making it easier to keep pets in units and install energy and water-saving devices.

The minor amendments to unit title legislation in the bill before us today support these reforms and ensure that the reforms will operate as intended. Most of the unit title reforms in this bill were raised by the unit title reform consultation group. This group includes industry and community representatives of the strata and property industries such as the Owners Corporation Network, Strata Community Australia, ACT Law Society, Property Council of Australia, Master Builders Association, Housing Industry Association, Real Estate Institute of the ACT and the Legal Aid ACT group as well. This consultative group has been instrumental in the development of the first stage of the unit title reforms and will continue working on the next phase of the project.

In summary, the Planning and Unit Titles Legislation Amendment Bill 2020 makes a number of minor and necessary changes to support the unit titles reform project. It also makes a number of minor and necessary changes to the new processes for granting community concessional leases, which my friends have talked about already. I commend the bill to the Assembly.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Bill agreed to in principle.

Leave granted to dispense with the detail stage.

Bill agreed to.

Sitting suspended from 11.56 am to 2.00 pm.

Ministerial arrangements

MR BARR: As colleagues may have noticed, the Attorney-General is not in question time today. He is attending a National Cabinet committee of attorneys-general—as it is now called; I was going to say “COAG”. I will endeavour to assist members with

questions in the water, energy and emissions reduction areas of Minister Rattenbury's portfolios, and Minister Cheyne will assist with attorney-general, consumer affairs and gaming matters.

Questions without notice

Environment—climate change

MS LEE: My question is to the Minister for the Environment. Minister, yesterday during question time you said:

... the ACT government has shown a specific and leading commitment around climate change.

Yet numbers do not lie. Canberra's green infrastructure—which is critical to the reduction of the urban heat island effect and mitigating climate change—has halved in the last eight years. Minister, other than offering up platitudes, as you did yesterday, and reading from your notes, what will you do differently to reverse the harmful climate effects of the Labor-Greens government's de-greening of Canberra?

MS VASSAROTTI: I thank Ms Lee for the question. As I noted yesterday, I did take that question on notice because it was referring to a report. We are seeking some further information, because of some of the statistics in it and the methodology that sits behind it do not line up with the information that we have in hand. We have taken it on notice and we will be providing a very comprehensive report back on some of the figures. It does report some significant figures that do not align with anything that we have seen in the past.

I will talk about the fact that the ACT government are really committed to conserving and managing the environment, and we are really pleased that the opposition is also concerned about these issues.

At the moment, we have about 70 per cent of the ACT that is conserved in parks and reserves. This exceeds the Aichi biodiversity target by a significant 17 per cent. We have a range of frameworks and legislative requirements that protect our biodiversity. There are a lot of things that we are doing right at the moment. Our Nature Conservation Act is the chief legislation that protects biodiversity in the ACT. It manages the conservation reserve network. There has been significant investment in this area. There is no doubt that the bushfires put pressure on our biodiversity, and investments have been put in to protect from that and recover from it.

MS LEE: Minister, when will you table that report, and why does the government say it cares about climate change but undermine its own commitment by halving Canberra's green infrastructure?

MS VASSAROTTI: We will not be tabling a report that has been presented by another organisation.

Ms Lee: What about your response?

MS VASSAROTTI: We will be responding to the question on notice within the requirements of the Assembly. There is absolute commitment. I refer the opposition also to the *State of the Environment* report, which last came out in 2019. It has a number of indicators around biodiversity, and it suggests that the extent and condition of conservation areas in the ACT are good and improving. I refer the member to that report, but we will be responding within the time frames required by the Assembly.

MS CASTLEY: Minister, how can disadvantaged Canberrans, who are more vulnerable to the impacts of climate change than others are, trust you to improve their wellbeing?

MS VASSAROTTI: I thank Ms Castley for the question. In relation to the ACT's Climate Change Strategy, the issue of just transition is a really significant one and is extensively covered in a range of strategies, including the Climate Change Strategy. The issues of green infrastructure and a livable city are of particular concern to all Canberrans, but particularly disadvantaged Canberrans. We will continue to introduce a whole range of initiatives, as outlined yesterday and in many of the strategies.

Alexander Maconochie Centre—oversight committee

MRS JONES: My question is to the Minister for Corrections. Minister, on 24 February Christine Nixon was appointed chair of the AMC oversight committee. During estimates it was revealed she will be paid more than \$2,000 per day. Minister, beyond the \$2,000 per day salary, what other costs and expenses is the Labor-Greens government covering for Ms Nixon?

MR GENTLEMAN: I thank Mrs Jones for her question and for her interest in ensuring that we can get the oversight committee to do this very important work in the corrections space. Of course, we indicated the cost in the hearings. I will say that that is a cost for the days that she is actually in work. There is also some cost associated with the meetings of the oversight committee. We will get the detail of that and bring it back to the chamber.

MRS JONES: Is Ms Nixon already being paid and, if so, when did she start work, how many days has she worked and what work has she done?

MR GENTLEMAN: Yes, she has started work. I met with Ms Nixon and the oversight committee just last week for their very first committee meeting. I understand that the meeting went incredibly well and everyone is very keen to ensure that we can use the committee to remap these important changes for corrections across the ACT. In regard to individual costs, I will take that on notice and come back to the chamber.

MRS KIKKERT: Minister, how many times has Ms Nixon visited the AMC, and will that be part of her role?

MR GENTLEMAN: Yes, it will be, when she deems necessary. I understand she has met with AMC staff already.

Crime—antisocial behaviour

MR HANSON: My question is to the Minister for Police and Emergency Services. Minister, online noticeboards for Weston Creek and Molonglo Valley are full of discussions of firecrackers being let off at night on Rivett oval and near Cotter Road, hoons driving loud vehicles in the middle of the night, and predator doorknockers menacing people and fleecing the elderly and vulnerable for cash. People are convinced that their concerns are not being addressed by your government and by police on the ground. Minister, why is antisocial behaviour in my electorate on the rise and being allowed to continue?

MR GENTLEMAN: I thank Mr Hanson for his question. We do know that Canberra is a very safe city and that Canberrans feel very safe. I have not seen a report of any matters that have been raised on these issues in Mr Hanson's area. I will seek some advice from ACT Policing. Canberra is a safe city, as I said. We will continue to invest in our police to ensure that we have more policing and a more modern police force for the ACT. Those are the investments that we have already made in ACT Policing. It is very important that we use those investments and the new police service model to engage with the Canberra community to ensure that we can keep that level of safety in the future. On operational matters, I will leave that to ACT Policing.

MR HANSON: Minister, are police stretched too thin on the ground and based too far away to respond adequately to antisocial behaviour in parts of Weston Creek and Molonglo?

MR GENTLEMAN: I will refer to the Chief Police Officer's public statements about being well-resourced by the ACT government. He feels that they have the operational status that they need on the ground to deal with criminal matters as well as antisocial matters.

MRS JONES: Minister, what do you say to the residents of Fisher being harassed by doorknockers at 5.30 in the morning asking for money, the residents of Rivett who are woken at 2 am by firecrackers, and those who live anywhere near Hindmarsh Drive who hear constant burnouts and wheelies throughout the night? Is peaceful living not a right of these residents?

MR GENTLEMAN: I would say to all constituents in the ACT, if they see antisocial behaviour and criminal behaviour: please contact ACT Policing and they will see to their needs. What I would say to those residents is that Canberra is a safe city. We do have, of course, incidents of antisocial behaviour, as Mrs Jones has described. That is why we are investing more in ACT Policing to deal with that behaviour in the future.

Economy—performance

MR PETTERSSON: My question is to the Chief Minister. Chief Minister, can you please update the Assembly on the ACT economy, following the recent budget and the assessment by Standard & Poor's?

MR BARR: I am very happy to do so, and I thank Mr Pettersson for the question and the opportunity.

Mr Hanson: He's a good man.

MR BARR: He is indeed a good man. I am pleased to advise the Assembly that, following the release of the territory budget in February, Standard & Poor's undertook their assessment of the territory government's credit rating and have once again affirmed the territory with the highest possible credit rating, AAA. This was a result of their assessment that the ACT was well placed to recover from the economic shock of the COVID pandemic and, with our successful health response to date, had created the foundations for a robust recovery.

I am pleased to advise the Assembly that the ACT is now the only sub-national government in the Asia-Pacific that retains a AAA credit rating. We are the only state or territory in Australia with a AAA credit rating. The ACT economy is recovering strongly from the pandemic, and S&P have independently determined, in their assessment of the territory economy, that we are outperforming our domestic and international peers.

Standard & Poor's also praised the ACT government's tax reform program, which I am sure those opposite will be interested to hear. It is a program that is now very well advanced. The government had always indicated and had always been clear, in pursuing this policy agenda, that the move away from narrow transaction-based taxes like stamp duties towards a more equitable and stable revenue base would have economic benefits, social benefits and, importantly, protect the territory against the exact sort of economic shock that we have experienced in the last few years. S&P have confirmed this in their assessment, stating that our fiscal base is less volatile. *(Time expired.)*

MR PETTERSSON: Chief Minister, can you please update the Assembly on the ACT employment market?

MR BARR: We have the lowest unemployment rate in Australia, at 4.1 per cent, and we have the lowest youth unemployment rate in Australia, at 10.3 per cent. This is significantly better than the Australia-wide rates of 5.8 per cent for general unemployment and 12.9 per cent for youth unemployment.

I am pleased to advise the Assembly that over the month to 13 March 2021, total employee jobs increased by 1.3 per cent and are now 0.6 per cent above the levels reported one year ago, at the start of the pandemic. What this means is that the jobs that were lost—and there were tens of thousands of them at the peak of the economic impact of the public health directions and the pandemic—have now been recovered.

Despite the ACT's very strong employment figures, we do know, and we recognise, that there are a number of industries and workers across Australia who are still very much feeling the economic impact of the pandemic. Arts and recreation services, transport, accommodation and food services remain the most impacted and we see

that in their employment levels being lower than was the case a year ago. So, whilst most of the economy has recovered and some areas are in fact in a much better position than they were a year ago, we do acknowledge that there is still quite a journey ahead for those impacted industry sectors.

MS ORR: Chief Minister, what measures has the ACT government undertaken to support growing industries here in the territory?

MR BARR: I thank Ms Orr for the question. There is no doubt that the ACT's strong public sector has been a key part of the stability of our economy and our economic recovery, but maintaining confidence outside the public sector is fundamental to the territory's future. The government aims to reach our target of more than 250,000 local jobs in our economy by 2025 by supporting employment growth in a range of growing industry sectors outside the public sector.

The government has already commenced work and provided funding towards our future jobs fund to protect and create jobs in our university sector, as well as key growth industries like renewable energy, health technology, the arts, tourism, cybersecurity, defence and space industries. This includes facilitating, with the Academy of Interactive Entertainment, the expansion of their campus in north Canberra to deliver world-class capability in game design, 3D animation and visual effects; as well as our partnership with the University of New South Wales Canberra on their city campus development, not far from where we are today, and our ongoing partnership and expansion of the Canberra Institute of Technology and the University of Canberra.

Higher education is Canberra's first billion-dollar export industry. It is a very large employer of Canberrans, and it is fundamental to a skilled and highly paid workforce into the future in many other industry sectors. That is why it is a high priority for this government.

Municipal services—community gardens

MR DAVIS: My question is to the Minister for Transport and City Services. Minister, as you would be aware, community gardens provide an awesome social and environmental dividend for our community. However, I am concerned that waiting lists for the community gardens in my electorate of Brindabella are in some cases more than a decade long. What work is the government doing to ensure the provision of more spaces for community gardens?

MR STEEL: I thank Mr Davis for his question, and I also acknowledge that we have not only a fantastic tree canopy in Canberra but fantastic parks and open spaces. The community gardens groups certainly play a role in providing vibrant places for social connection in the community and we want to encourage more people to come together to use our fantastic parks and spaces, potentially to grow vegetables but other plant species as well.

The ACT government released nature strip guidelines for communities to utilise in looking at developing, on public open space, vegetable gardens and the like that are

compliant with the guidelines and can be done safely. We have put in place a place coordinator who can work with community groups on the use of public land for planting trees, like they are doing in the micro forest at Downer and also a huge range of other community projects, including community gardens.

I encourage community groups that want to come forward to undertake that type of work on public space to get in touch with the place coordinator in TCCS. I know there are already some vibrant groups that are undertaking community garden work in Brindabella, and that includes at Kambah and at Erindale. I am happy if Mr Davis wants to get in touch with me directly and raise those issues.

MR DAVIS: Minister, as more Canberrans are making the choice to live up instead of spreading out—that is, to take advantage of the benefits of apartment living—what advice do you have to residents in medium and high-density living who wish to develop their own community garden?

MR STEEL: Of course they can do so if it is on private land, and that is a matter for them to manage with their body corporate. In relation to public land we certainly encourage them to look at the nature strip guidelines about what can be done on public land that is safe and does not interrupt utilities under the ground, whether that is a vegetable garden or something else—a compost heap that they want to support. We have been working with Capital Scraps to allow them to do composting on public land in the inner north, and there are a range of different groups that want to do a huge variety of different activities that will help with social connection in the community. And, of course, the place coordinator is the central space to go to if they have ideas and they want to work with the government to use open space more effectively and have more community groups utilising our fantastic parks.

MS CLAY: Hawker community members have approached me about creating community gardens near their local shops, and I would like to know how Hawker community members can access vacant government leased land near their community shops to create a community garden?

MR STEEL: In the same way that I have outlined in the previous answer.

Public housing—safety

MR PARTON: My question is to the Minister for Homelessness and Housing Services. Minister, I refer to the frightening state of affairs for terrified residents at a particular public housing complex in Canberra which I do not intend to name here today. The minister knows the complex that I am speaking of, and we did discuss this complex at recent hearings. Several residents recently approached me, indicating that very little has changed and that, while there are some security patrols, apparently patrol staff do not get out of their vehicles and it seems that the threatening environment has escalated. Minister, what will you do to quell the fears of residents who are living in constant stress at this particular complex?

MS VASSAROTTI: I thank Mr Parton for the question. Managing antisocial and illegal activity is a significant issue across our community that we need to deal with,

not just in public housing complexes. As Mr Parton notes, it is not appropriate to talk about individual complexes. What I can talk about is the work that we have been doing through the Connecting Communities program, which is working particularly with multi-unit sites in order to provide specific support and engagement in activities. I have been engaging personally in relation to some of the issues that residents have suggested.

As Mr Parton notes, there are some physical security measures in place in particular areas. There is also some work that is being done in terms of responding more quickly to maintenance issues that have been occurring on site. In addition, in particular sites there is work that is being done in relation to engaging with support services that may be able to provide ongoing work on particular sites, as well as working with tenants to work out some forms of tenant engagement activities. In relation to individuals, if individuals are having particular concerns, they can work with their housing manager in terms of providing arrangements. That could include a transfer if there are personal safety issues that need to be put in place.

MR PARTON: Minister, will you, as a matter of urgency, fast-track the requests that are on the ground for residents to be transferred to a safer housing environment—these residents who do not place a great deal of faith in the Connected Communities program?

MS VASSAROTTI: I thank Mr Parton for the question. Absolutely, we work with all tenants on their particular circumstances and their arrangements. If there needs to be a change to those arrangements that includes, at particular times, a transfer, then Housing ACT will work closely with those tenants.

MS LEE: Minister, why do you continue to ignore the requests for action from residents living at that complex and also other public housing complexes?

MS VASSAROTTI: I thank Ms Lee for the question. There is absolutely no ignoring of issues that particular housing tenants are facing. There is actually a very proactive body of work that is occurring, primarily through the Connecting Communities program. That includes a range of responses, such as changes to physical spaces, engaging with residents on services that might be required, visibility of housing managers on site and other measures such as security.

Planning—land use

MS CLAY: My question is to the Minister for Planning and Land Management and relates to the current program of development, infill and greenfield targets. The parliamentary and governing agreement requires that at least 70 per cent of new housing development be built within Canberra's existing footprint. The 2018 ACT Planning Strategy also commits to this target. I was surprised to hear at estimates recently that, of the Suburban Land Agency's indicative 3,043 dwellings released last year, 41 per cent of dwellings would be built in existing suburbs. How is the government as a whole measuring all of our land releases and developments against our 70 per cent target to make sure that that target is met from one year to the next across all developments?

MR GENTLEMAN: I thank Ms Clay for the question. It is a very important strategy that the government announced a number of years ago now to ensure that we can stop urban sprawl—

Mr Parton: They love it at Googong.

MR GENTLEMAN: and provide an economical way forward for housing in the ACT, looking at the strains on planning into the future. We have a limited border. As Mr Parton says, the people of Googong would love to come and live in the ACT but choose not to.

As Ms Clay said, the strategy worked off a previous planning strategy and, before that, the statement of planning intent by me, as minister. We went through quite a number of workshops to gauge how the people of Canberra wanted to see Canberra grow. All the people in those workshops wanted to see more densification along transport corridors and around town centres. As to how we measure it, I am very pleased to say that we are on track—

Ms Clay: On a point of order, I was actually asking about how we are measuring our land releases and developments against the strategy, not how we developed the strategy.

MADAM SPEAKER: I think the minister was talking in broad terms on that policy. You have 40 seconds left, Minister, and you may be able to get to that.

MR GENTLEMAN: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Yes, I am very pleased to announce that already, in 2019, 76 per cent of new dwellings were in the denser areas. That means we exceeded our target in the very first year of implementation. I am very pleased to see that. But this is ongoing and includes not just the SLA's releases but the private sector as well. It is a very important move forward and one that we have to keep track of.

MS CLAY: Are new developments that are built on rural leases and the Molonglo western edge investigation area counted as infill development under that 70 per cent target?

MR GENTLEMAN: No, that would be greenfields. What we are looking at for urban infill is within the current brownfields environment, as I have mentioned, particularly with densification around town centres and transport corridors. It has been successful. It has given the Canberra community quite a bit of choice about how they would like to live in the ACT, whether they want to live in a denser area, close to family and friends on transport corridors, or whether they would like to live on bigger blocks of land—for example, where I live in Calwell or where Mr Parton lives in Theodore.

MR PARTON: Minister, when is the government intending to release residential land, as mentioned by Ms Clay, in those areas west of Molonglo?

MR GENTLEMAN: The due diligence work needs to go ahead before land is released. This was raised in the hearings recently. There is quite of bit of work to do there to ensure that that land can be passed over to the SLA for residential development. It is quite some time away.

Municipal services—public amenities

MR MILLIGAN: My question is to the Minister for Transport and City Services. The Labor-Greens government has revealed plans to upgrade the Kaleen south shops, nine years after it promised that a \$1 million upgrade would happen in 2013. The government says the changes will revitalise the shops and make them vibrant places that more people will enjoy. It also says that community needs have changed since the early 70s, when the shops were built. Minister, the community's need for toilets has not changed, so why does the upgrade not include public toilets, which the Canberra Liberals have been championing now for several years?

MR STEEL: I thank the member for his question. We are actually out consulting with the community at the moment, because we understand how important local shopping centres are as community hubs. We want to hear from the community what they think needs to be provided at the shops. A feasibility study was undertaken, in the last term, of upgrades at the Kaleen south shops, at Gwydir Square. As a result of that feasibility study, we have now developed some draft plans to get some more community feedback, after taking some feedback last year as well.

The Labor Party and the Greens committed to an ambitious infrastructure program at the last election. That compares with the opposition, who did not come forward with a range of projects. We are getting on and delivering it, and we will do so in consultation with the community.

MR MILLIGAN: Do you know how many locals currently use the shops, and how much of an increase do you think there will be with these upgrades? How many other locals will be using the shops? Where do you expect locals to go when they need to go to the toilet?

MR STEEL: As I said in my previous answer to Mr Milligan, we will be consulting with the community about what their needs are before we go ahead and construct the upgrades there. Our government is making a significant investment to upgrade these shops, because we understand how important these local shopping centres are. We have already heard from businesses like the local chemist, who have been saying that they would like to see some more parking. That is part of the draft plan, and we are looking at how we can provide even more access to the shops. These have been very popular during the pandemic; we have seen more people using their local shopping centres rather than going, necessarily, to shops in the city, in the CBD, as more people have been working from home. They play an important role in the community, and we will work with the community to make sure that the upgrades meet their needs.

MS CASTLEY: Minister, do you agree that this is not a wee problem? Can you explain why toilets were not included, and will you go back to the drawing board, as these are vital public amenities?

MR STEEL: Madam Speaker, I think that breaches the standing orders. I have outlined our approach, which is that we will consult with the community. We have put forward funding for the design of these upgrades in the budget, and we are getting on with it. We are the ones that committed to do this project. The opposition did not commit to a range of different infrastructure projects. They are not even prepared to put a commitment forward to see infrastructure built in our city. Only our government is making sure that we meet the needs of the community—creating jobs, making sure that we are supporting local businesses during the pandemic recovery and making sure that we have thriving local centres.

Transport—Lawson bus services

MRS KIKKERT: My question is to the Minister for Transport and City Services. For five years Lawson residents have been told they must await the completion of stage 2 to have a bus service in their suburb, but the government has failed to find a buyer for stage 2. In hearings we learned that the land will not be back on the market until early to mid-2022, pushing the expected completion of the suburb to 2026 or later. For houses in western Lawson the nearest bus stop is in Bruce, but there is no direct developed footpath that people can use. Lastly, the Labor-Greens government announced in June 2018 that Lawson would be getting a demand-responsive, flexible transport service, but this service has never been implemented. Must Lawson residents wait another five years to get a bus route in their suburb?

MR STEEL: I thank the member for her question. The ACT government is committed to providing good public transport throughout Canberra, including to new suburbs. There are existing bus routes that service the Lawson suburb, which was built in the established broader region of Belconnen. So there are a range of bus stops available, both across the road in the University of Canberra and on adjacent streets. At the moment the buses, because of their size, cannot easily access the streets in Lawson. That is why the stage 2 development is so critical. We will continue to work with the Suburban Land Agency on the timing of future network planning and making sure that the suburb has access to bus stops. We are also currently looking at further work around footpath connections between Lawson and public transport stops. We will continue that work.

MRS KIKKERT: Minister, what happened to the demand-responsive, flexible transport service that Lawson residents were promised in 2018?

MR STEEL: I thank the member for her question, but we do have a flexible bus service currently available for those who have mobility issues and maybe cannot walk down to the local bus stop because it is too far away. That is already available for all residents across the ACT to use. It was our government, our Labor Party, that committed at the last election to consider an on-demand transport system to enhance the existing flexible bus service. We look forward to doing that feasibility work over the term.

MR BRADDOCK: What other suburbs in Canberra have been designed where buses cannot easily traverse those streets?

MR STEEL: I thank the member for his question. During the estate development planning that is undertaken on new greenfield suburbs the Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate works with both the SLA and Transport Canberra and City Services to look at the future planning of bus routes. There has been significant work undertaken in areas like Molonglo, for example, which I have spoken about in previous sitting weeks, where we have undertaken work looking at the future connections so that we can make sure that the road geometry can accommodate bus services on the major arterial roads and connections within suburbs. Not every single street can accommodate the larger buses, but certainly every suburb will be planned to ensure that it has good public transport connections as early as possible in the life of the suburb.

Mr Parton: On a point of order, the question was specifically about what streets currently cannot accommodate buses. I am not sure that the minister has answered that.

MADAM SPEAKER: The minister replied in a broader policy sense, so the question was in order. Do you have anything to add, Minister?

MR STEEL: No, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: Before I give you a the call, Ms Orr, I remind members that we may be moving to a more active way to score the third supplementary. I saw that you had the jump, Mr Braddock, but it would be useful to call for a supplementary as well.

Mr Braddock: Apologies, Madam Speaker.

Work safety—government priorities

MS ORR: My question is to the Minister for Industrial Relations and Workplace Safety. Minister, are the commonwealth's reforms to industrial relations protecting ACT workers?

MR GENTLEMAN: I thank Ms Orr for the question and for her interest in workplace safety across the ACT. The commonwealth government have shown time and again that they do not care about protecting workers in the ACT. They are unable to protect workers in their own house, as recent events have shown. How can we expect them to do better for workers in the ACT and indeed the country! Yet they are responsible for model work health and safety laws. They have the power to strengthen these laws, but they will not. They have taken no action on the recommendations of the Boland review, which has been with them now for over two years. This important review of course contains recommendations for vital worker protections.

Recently they had the opportunity to pass legislation on wage theft but instead, when it became clear that there was no support for other aspects of the industrial relations changes, they spitefully withdrew this commitment from their bill.

I have no confidence that the new federal minister will behave differently to her predecessor when it comes to protecting workers. She is part of a government that at every opportunity has attacked workers and their rights. They decimated workers' protections, especially for vulnerable people in casual and insecure work. They refuse to discuss paid domestic violence leave, despite more than one member of their cabinet being on extended paid leave, following allegations of rape and the denial of rape retrospectively. They are not on the side of workers and they are not on the side of Canberrans.

MS ORR: Minister, what is the ACT government doing to keep Canberrans safe at work?

MR GENTLEMAN: I thank Ms Orr for the supplementary. I note that many Canberrans work in the federal parliament, not just as staffers but as cleaners, security guards, catering staff and providing parliamentary support. It is very disappointing to see the lack of action from the federal government or even the lack of acknowledgement of the important work that these Canberrans do, especially over the last couple of weeks.

Everyone has the right to return home safely from work every day, and we take this right very seriously in the ACT government. This is why we have the Secure Local Jobs Code and this is why we have portable long service leave. This is why we have a strong and independent regulator, because every Canberran has the right to be safe at work. This government will always stand up for the right to be safe at work and for entitlements that provide safety and security. We also work closely with industry and with employee representatives in work health and safety forums on the important issue of workplace safety.

DR PATERSON: Minister, can you please update the Assembly on the commitments made by this government to protect Canberra workers?

MR GENTLEMAN: I thank Dr Paterson for her interest in workplace safety across the ACT. The government has a strong record on protecting the rights of Canberra workers and, in the current Assembly, will continue to deliver on these commitments. Work is well underway on establishing industrial manslaughter as an offence in the Work Health and Safety Act in order to strengthen protections for workers and to increase penalties to include jail time for industrial manslaughter. We are working to expand the portable long service leave scheme to cover more workers in the ACT and ensure that they receive entitlements that recognise their long-time service in the workforce.

Protecting tradespeople from silica dust is another important commitment made by this government, and I have tasked the Work Health and Safety Council to find an appropriate training course for mandatory silica training, similar to what is already in place for asbestos awareness training. The government is also working towards introducing regulations under the Work Health and Safety Act to protect tradespeople from silica dust.

The ACT government has committed to reviewing and amending work health and safety laws to keep Canberra's workers safe on worksites. I look forward to the upcoming meeting of industrial relations ministers, where the Boland review recommendations concerning the model work health and safety laws will be finally discussed.

Parking—Greenway

MS LAWDER: My question is to the Minister for Transport and City Services. I refer to the parking debacle at Cynthea Teague Crescent in Greenway, adjacent to the Geocon development. Residents from apartments in this area have been continuously stymied as they have approached numerous ACT government directorates to find a solution to the parking and traffic issues. In the meantime, residents cannot have packages delivered, have visitors at their home or enjoy their own neighbourhood. Minister, can you advise when these ongoing parking and traffic problems at Cynthea Teague Crescent will be resolved?

MR STEEL: I thank the member for her question. I am happy to take some detail on notice in relation to that matter and have a look at the parking issues. It has evolved as the construction work has been occurring. I will seek an update as to where it is up to at this point in time. I know that there were issues in relation to construction vehicles parking in the neighbourhood. I will get a sense of where that is up to and come back.

MS LAWDER: Minister, why is it that parking and traffic at construction sites more generally are not properly planned for and managed from the outset?

MR STEEL: I thank the member for her question. There are traffic management plans put in place with construction sites that look to manage those issues.

MR DAVIS: Minister, on the question of parking issues in Tuggeranong, there is only one disabled car space on the main street, Anketell Street. Are there any plans to install additional spaces?

MR STEEL: I thank Mr Davis for his question. I am happy to consider that matter and come back to him directly, not through the Assembly.

Gungahlin—swimming pool

MS CASTLEY: My question is to the Minister for Sport and Recreation. On 10 March you spoke to the Gungahlin Community Council about the pool debacle and promised fortnightly updates. The contract with the company Kynetic had been signed that day, but during your presentation you were unable to tell the meeting how much the job would cost or whether Kynetic is a Canberra company. FOI documents have since revealed that WorkSafe inspectors attended the pool, following complaints of silica dust. Minister, given that it has been three weeks since your promised fortnightly updates, when will you provide your first one?

MS BERRY: I thank Ms Castley for the question. There are updates available, and there is a noticeboard at the Gungahlin pool.

MS CASTLEY: Other than silica training, what health and safety processes has the Labor-Greens government put in place to guarantee workers' safety on this site?

MADAM SPEAKER: Ms Berry, I think you are left with the call.

MS BERRY: Yes. I was just asking a question of my colleagues about work safety more generally, and silica dust. For this particular site, silica dust was not found to be an issue, as Ms Castley is aware. Workers who are contracted to work on this site will have to meet the requirements that the government sets to ensure that they have the appropriate qualifications and safety standards to meet the building requirements of the ACT government.

MR MILLIGAN: Minister, when is Kynetic required to have the job done, given that the contract puts the completion date at December 2022, not this summer? What penalties will Kynetic face if they run over time?

MS BERRY: I appreciate that Mr Milligan might not have all of the information about the Gungahlin pool site, the nature of the contract and why the contract runs until the end of 2022. That is to take into account that, after a contract is completed and the work has been completed, where issues arise, the contractor can, as part of their contract, in that two-year period, do the repairs or maintenance that is required, following the work that will be completed by the end of this year.

Trees—removal

MR CAIN: My question is to the Minister for Transport and City Services. Minister, the Labor-Greens government just this week cancelled plans to cut down a large number of trees on a block in Holt, citing an "administrative error". Minister, what was this administrative error and how did this occur?

MR STEEL: I thank the member for his question. Yes, I understand that a mistake was made in putting up some signs saying that trees were going to be removed in Holt. Those have subsequently been removed. It was an error made by officials. The government does not currently have plans to cut those trees down at this time.

MR CAIN: How many administrative errors have led to the removal of trees or other plants across Canberra?

MR STEEL: I thank the member for his question. That administrative error did not result in those trees being removed.

MRS KIKKERT: Minister, why is the Labor-Greens government providing misinformation and causing distress to local residents?

MR STEEL: I thank the member for her question. This was a mistake that was made by officials. It has been rectified. This may have caused some people distress, but I do not think that it is going to result in any outcome which will see those trees removed. The community can rest assured that those trees will not be removed at this time.

Planning—Gungahlin

MR BRADDOCK: My question is to the Minister for Planning and Land Management. Following community concerns about the planning outcomes in the Gungahlin town centre, the government commenced the Gungahlin town centre planning refresh process with draft variation 364, which has now expired. What is the government's plan to ensure that the remainder of the undeveloped land in the Gungahlin town centre meets the Gungahlin community's needs?

MR GENTLEMAN: I thank Mr Braddock for his question. There is ongoing interest by people in Gungahlin in how their town centre is going forward. Mr Braddock gave some information on DV364, which was the town centre planning refresh initiated on 18 November 2019, I think. DV364 went forward and the Assembly passed a resolution, members will remember, by Ms Orr, Mr Braddock and Ms Castley seeking government support for further development in the town centre. That resolution does not require a report back, but we are doing work and we are sending 364 to the standing committee as well.

MR BRADDOCK: How will you ensure that the revision to 364 actually meets community needs, unlike the previous iteration?

MR GENTLEMAN: I remind members that 364 has not expired. That is why I have had to send it to the planning committee. Once it is signed, there is an opportunity for members from the Gungahlin community and anybody else that has an interest to talk to the committee about what they would like to see for the future of Gungahlin.

MR DAVIS: Minister, is the government satisfied that the current level of community-zoned land is meeting demand?

MR GENTLEMAN: I thank Mr Davis for his question. There is a challenge with community-zoned land right across the ACT, and we need to make sure that we have enough, as we densify across the ACT, for people to do what they want to do with community facility-zoned land. We know that there is a very strong interest in it, particularly in Gungahlin. I would like to see the work the committee will be doing, and the input from the community on that, to decide whether we need more community facility-zoned land in that area but also generally across the ACT.

Business—Better Regulation Taskforce

DR PATERSON: My question is to the Minister for Business and Better Regulation. Minister, I understand that the Better Regulation Taskforce recently commenced. What will this mean for small businesses operating in the Murrumbidgee electorate and Canberra more broadly?

MS CHEYNE: I thank Dr Paterson for the question. The job of the Better Regulation Taskforce is to make interactions between government and business better, faster and simpler. The BRT, as it is known, will put in place the best settings for business recovery, longer term growth and regulation in the ACT.

The BRT will make starting, running and growing a business easier in the ACT. Through engagement with businesses, broader industry groups and the community, the BRT will identify the priority areas for improving rules and regulations, government processes and available information and supports. The BRT will examine lessons learned from our response to COVID-19 about how we can better communicate with businesses, be adaptable and engage to achieve best outcomes.

The BRT will also draw on lessons from previous reform programs from across the country and will lead the ACT's involvement in national reforms emerging from the commonwealth's Deregulation Taskforce.

DR PATERSON: Minister, what work has the Better Regulation Taskforce undertaken to date?

MS CHEYNE: The taskforce has just commenced. The first step is a discovery phase which will involve a broad program of consultation and engagement right across Canberra. The BRT will seek to use as many different channels and approaches as possible to engage with businesses and the broader community. Acknowledging how busy business owners are and the demands on their time, the BRT will engage with people in the way that suits them. Engagement will be focused and respectful of people's time. The BRT has already engaged with a variety of small businesses and industry bodies and is planning a broader program of engagement.

MR PETTERSSON: Minister, what are the next steps for the Better Regulation Taskforce?

MS CHEYNE: I thank Mr Pettersson for the question. The immediate focus is on identifying the issues, be they large or small, emerging from regulation or processes that are a burden to business. Once an issue is identified, the taskforce will work across the whole of government to seek to develop solutions and improvements wherever possible. An important part of the work of the BRT will be to stay in contact with businesses and to provide progress updates on work underway on the issues raised. They look forward to doing so.

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

Supplementary answer to question without notice Naas Valley—bridge

MR STEEL: Yesterday I took on notice a question from Ms Lawder about the Naas Road bridge. I am pleased to provide the Assembly with an answer today, after checking the facts. Construction is currently underway to build a new two-lane bridge on Naas Road over the Gudgenby River to replace the old one-lane timber bridge,

strengthening it to cater for the increased size in approved heavy vehicles. This project is co-funded with the commonwealth under the Bridges Renewal Program.

In a preamble, Ms Lawder stated that she understood that construction of this bridge was expected to commence in early 2020 and suggested that the project had been delayed. I would like to correct the record and clarify that this project has not been delayed. The City Services website stated that construction of the new bridge was due to commence in late 2020. I am pleased to confirm that works on the site commenced in December with site establishment, and by the end of September a temporary bypass over the river for vehicle access by nearby residents had been constructed.

To date, the project team has demolished the one-lane bridge, and completed the piling, which is the installation of posts to support the upgraded bridge structure, as well as the abutments at the southern end, which is the substructure to support the bridge deck. This temporary bypass was inundated by flooding on Tuesday, 23 March and closed to the public. Once safe, works to reinstate the temporary bypass will commence. I am pleased to advise the Assembly that it was reopened to traffic from Monday evening, 28 March. Works have now recommenced. It is expected that damage to the works from the two significant rain events this year will result in a delay of two months to the project, and the City Services website will be updated accordingly.

Papers

Madam Speaker presented the following papers:

Auditor-General Act—Auditor-General's Reports—2021—No 3/2021—Court Transport Unit Vehicle—Romeo 5.

Inspector of Correctional Services Act—Pursuant to subsection 30(2)—Report of a Review of a Critical Incident by the ACT Inspector of Correctional Services—Riot and serious fires at the Alexander Maconochie Centre on 10 November 2020, dated 21 March 2021.

Mr Gentleman presented the following papers:

Coroners Act, pursuant to subsection 57(4)—Report of Coroner—Inquest into the death of Filippo Onorato—Report, dated 10 January 2020.

Freedom of Information Act—Pursuant to section 39—Copy of notice provided to the Ombudsman—

Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate—Decision not made in time (CMTEDD2021-242 and 243), dated 28 February 2021.

Commonwealth Ombudsman—Decision not made in time, dated 2 November 2020.

Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate—Decision not made in time, dated 10 March 2021.

Health, Ageing and Community Services—Standing Committee—Reports presented (9th Assembly)—2020—No 10—Inquiry into Maternity Services in

the ACT—Recommendation 2: Implementation plan for Woman-centred care—Strategic directions for Australian maternity services (the National Maternity Strategy), Government Response.

National Environment Protection Council Act—Pursuant to subsection 23(3)—National Environment Protection Council—Annual Report—2018-2019.

Trees—urban canopy

Pursuant to standing order 128, Mr Davis fixed a later hour for the moving of the motion.

Crime—forensic sexual assault services

MRS JONES (Murrumbidgee) (2.57): I move

That this Assembly:

(1) notes that:

- (a) at present Canberra's forensic sexual assault clinic operates out of The Canberra Hospital (TCH);
- (b) the Canberra Rape Crisis Service which supports victims is only funded to have a support person available 7am to 11pm daily;
- (c) in order for sexual assault victims to receive the forensic services they need they are asked to not wash, eat or change their clothes until after the forensic procedures have been undertaken; and
- (d) this is something which, when experienced after hours or on the weekend, women who have not involved the police have been referred to TCH to be swabbed during business hours which can mean not eating or washing overnight or longer; and

(2) calls on the Government to:

- (a) ensure that the 24 hours a day 7 days a week forensic sampling service is reasonably accessible;
- (b) make sure information about what to do in the event of a rape or sexual assault is made easily available including a number to phone directly to access the forensic service;
- (c) consider staffing arrangements at the Canberra Rape Crisis Service so that their support workers are available to counsel victims through this process and other support needs are met 24 hours a day 7 days a week;
- (d) investigate the possibility of this service being mobile and able to attend a private residence or workplace or other public place if there is a need or that is the preference of the victim of the sexual assault; and
- (e) report back to the Assembly on the progress of these matters regarding the Canberra Rape Crisis Service and TCH forensic sexual assault service by the first sitting day in August 2021.

I rise to speak to my motion about improvements to services for victims and survivors of sexual assault in the ACT. On Monday, 15 March I joined the women and men

protesting for an improved system for women in the workforce prompted especially by the experiences of Brittany Higgins.

I have worked in the federal parliament, as have many Canberra residents. That time was both positive and negative, some of which I have referred to in speeches in this chamber earlier in my tenure here as an MLA. Some of what I saw annoyed me. Some of it shocked me. And yet I learned a lot in my time there.

I can empathise with Brittany that her opportunity to work in the office of a federal member—in fact, a minister in her case—was a great career opportunity. Having worked in and had meetings in those offices in the federal parliament, I can picture exactly the situation she must have been in, how distressed she must have been by the assault that was done to her, as it slowly seeped into her mind and heart and she started to retrace the steps of what had occurred.

I returned to a job in the federal parliament after leaving another one in a rather unhappy way. I remember that my return to the building was hard for me—and I had not been raped. I had been very angry about my treatment when I left. I imagine that returning day after day to the building in which the assault had occurred, seeing couches like the ones she saw, must have been difficult and traumatising and reminded her of all the thoughts she had around those events.

When I listened to her speak at the March 4 Justice rally at Parliament House and re-watched the interview she had done with Lisa Wilkinson, I realised that her accused attacker being able to move on and get another job, and possibly not being charged with the crime, was one matter that affected her very much. It is no wonder that the idea that she was so heavily impacted by his actions but thought that his life had not been particularly heavily impacted must have stuck in her mind as an absolute injustice.

We know that in her case she did not involve the police at first, and what the statistics tell us is that this is by far the most normal thing for a survivor of sexual assault to do. We know that nine out of 10 survivors do not involve the police. She said in her interview that it was still dawning on her 48 hours after the attack that she had in fact been raped.

I started looking into our responsibility, being the local government in the ACT, and I was asking myself how our system could be better for situations like hers: to be empowered to take legal action, even if some time after the events, and have a fair chance of a conviction in cases like this. I have come to realise that it is absolutely imperative to get forensic samples, swabs of sexual organs and the mouth immediately. This is so that correct and uncompromised samples are correctly taken, stored and analysed so that they can form a part of the evidence in a case in the future, in our justice system.

Justice for victims of sexual assault may not be able to occur instantly, but without this evidence it is my understanding that convictions are very difficult and victims, survivors, go on suffering while their perpetrators walk away and go on, often, to assault further people and inflict additional harm. Actions like those of her accused

perpetrator are calculated, well thought through and not accidental. That is what I find most menacing about her explanations.

In order to assess what more we can do here, I started asking questions of and listening to those with lived experience as survivors themselves, or bystanders and friends of survivors. It quickly became apparent to me that there are three major issues we face in having the best service for the appropriate support of those not involving the police and for the correct collection of forensic samples, if that is the wish of the person who has been through the assault. Firstly, we need a single point of contact phone number available 24 hours a day, seven days a week—ideally, a really simple, easy to remember number. Secondly, we need to have it well known. We need people to know what to do and where to go as soon as possible after the assault.

Thirdly, we need to organise our system such that the experience of survivors is smooth and seamless from the moment they look for assistance to the end of counselling, and a process which can be offered. This might mean that women like Brittany in particular have more power as they consider what has happened to them, what has been done to them, and they can choose whether they want justice and a courts process and that, when it comes time to make those decisions, they have every option at their disposal to get convictions and stop abusers who exist in our system.

In our system at present we know that the best option for immediate aftermath counselling is the Canberra Rape Crisis Centre, which has stood with those experiencing rape and sexual violence for generations. The next thing we know is that Canberra Hospital has a very good forensic sample collection service in the Forensic and Medical Sexual Assault Care service, known as FAMSAC. This service is informed by outstanding forensic medical clinicians and academics who are able to ensure that samples are taken and stored appropriately.

We also know that survivors have to give consent for samples to be collected and that all the impediments to consent have to be considered, which is why, for example, someone with alcohol in their system may not be able to give consent and may have to wait some hours before the sample can be taken. During the time waiting, it is better if survivors do not eat, wash or change their clothes, as samples might be compromised. The process of waiting in cases like this needs to be best practice and in the best location. If someone is sent home and told not to eat, change or wash, this is potentially further traumatising. Therefore, with the input of the Rape Crisis Centre, which is survivor centred, a system should be designed which gives the survivor total control and the very best options for waiting out that period.

We know that the services of FAMSAC are located at the Canberra Hospital but that people are also presenting at Calvary hospital. It is the view of some survivors and experts that I have spoken to that the set-up at Calvary is not as expert or well designed as the one at Canberra Hospital. There have been situations where those presenting at Calvary have had to go to the Canberra Hospital the next day, having not eaten or washed in between.

The system could be better, smoother and more seamless. If the service can only be provided in the best way at TCH then I would support that being the one place where

samples can be taken. Again, that is the point of a motion like this one. We need to get to a position where all these things have been discussed and carefully considered proactively and we are confident that we have done all in our power to get the evidence preserved for the empowerment of survivors.

Some survivors may be too afraid to even take themselves off to hospital, which is why I think it would really assist if we considered a mobile service. If that is not found to be possible, I understand, but it is a reasonable thing to consider. Police have told me that, in their view, best practice is to allow the survivor to leave the site of the offence. When police are involved, that process is managed by taking survivors in an unmarked police car to the Canberra Hospital. However, when police are not involved, are we making things as smooth for survivors as possible? If one is elderly or has a disability, can they easily get to a facility like the Canberra Hospital, or is a mobile option for them at least a possibility? These questions we should ask and answer.

Turning to funding for the Canberra Rape Crisis Service, I understand that this service was funded to have a counsellor on call 24 hours a day, seven days a week. That is not the case now. For whatever reason, the funding has changed and the service has been reduced to 7 am to 11 pm daily. This must be rectified immediately. As I said earlier in this speech, there must be a single, professional and completely appropriate point of contact for those who have just been assaulted. It must be a simple number, very well advertised and known, that will necessarily involve our specialist counsellors in these situations.

The Canberra Rape Crisis Service is our expert service. It cannot completely be available for those in this city if it cannot get to those who need it 24/7. I would suggest that the Canberra Rape Crisis Service be funded for two counsellors on call 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Counsellors cannot easily attend people's homes unless there are two of them and in some cases, like for those people with disabilities and in aged care, this is still necessary. Therefore, as I said, I would ask the minister to fund two counsellors 24/7.

To recap, in relation to the Forensic and Medical Sexual Assault Care service, which operates out of the Canberra Hospital, and the Canberra Rape Crisis Centre counsellors, I am asking that a single phone number be available for those and that it be accessible 24 hours a day, seven days a week for people in Canberra who have lived through sexual assault or rape. I am asking that this service be geared towards giving survivors the empowerment of having samples taken and appropriately stored, if that is their choice, and analysed so that, should they choose at some time in the future to take a matter to court, there is every chance of a conviction. Because of the nature of forensic sample collection, survivors need to get to this service as soon as possible after the assault and they need to preserve the evidence; they cannot change their clothes, wash or eat before samples are taken.

Let us do everything in our power to get this information out into the mainstream of our community so that it is known that rapid response after a sexual assault is absolutely vital. Every friend, every flatmate, every manager, everyone who is a bystander immediately after an assault, as well as the security service personnel at Parliament House: this is something we must all be aware of. Let us get it into every

piece of training material that we can in our society. Let us get to a position where the phone number to call to be guided through the system and to access the most specialised counsellors we have is well-known, easy to remember and everywhere—on social media, on toilet doors, in manager’s training packs and on emergency fridge magnets.

Justice must be served. It is our role here in the ACT Assembly to ensure that every person who puts their hand up and says that they have experienced sexual violence is taken seriously and given the very best we can manage in our system for them. I believe we can do better. I believe that this minister can make this happen. I believe that we can, together, stop these perpetrators from moving from one person to another and harming more people.

I will be supporting the amendments presented here, which are a mix of amendments from the Greens and Labor that have been through a process of detailed discussion with my office. I make special mention of Mr Davis; the minister; and Catherine Bergin in the minister’s office who, as well as assisting us in all things pandemic, has professionally worked through these matters and this motion with us.

On a final note, I want to say thank you to Brittany. I went to the March 4 Justice to listen and to add my presence to that of so many others to be a voice for those who are voiceless. I listened, I did my research and I tried to put myself at the service of those who Brittany believes the system is failing. I know that this has been an excruciatingly painful time for her. I know that day to day it must be very harrowing to live the experiences that she has had over and over. You are courageous and a leader. For all this, and for all you will do for others who are abused, and to see justice done, thank you from the heart.

MS STEPHEN-SMITH (Kurrajong—Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs, Minister for Families and Community Services and Minister for Health) (3.10): I want to start by thanking Mrs Jones very much for moving this motion and for her constructive engagement with me and my office, and also Mr Davis and his office. I am seeking to move an amendment that provides some clarifications and additions that have been discussed with Mrs Jones and her office. I understand it is the agreed process that Mr Davis and I will move our own amendments. They simply reflect the good-natured negotiations that just went on until a bit late in the day yesterday. I thank Mrs Jones and Mr Davis and their offices for the constructive approach that everyone has taken. I seek leave to move the two amendments together.

Leave granted.

MS STEPHEN-SMITH: I move:

(1) Omit paragraph (1) and substitute:

“(1) notes that:

- (a) at present Canberra’s Forensic and Medical Sexual Assault Care (FAMSAC) service operates out of The Canberra Hospital (TCH) –

with the ability to see patients at Calvary Hospital - 24 hours a day 7 days a week;

- (b) the Canberra Rape Crisis Centre, which supports people who have experienced sexual assault, is funded to have a support person available 7am to 11pm daily, however patients who present at the FAMSAC are able to contact the Centre for in-person counsellor attendance; and
- (c) clear and timely access to forensic services is important for people who are reporting a recent sexual assault, because they are asked to not wash, eat or change their clothes until after the forensic procedures have been undertaken.”

(2) Omit paragraphs (2) (c), (d) and (e) and substitute:

- “(c) consider staffing arrangements at the Canberra Rape Crisis Centre and Victim Support ACT so that their support workers are available to counsel victims of sexual assault through this process and other support needs are met 24 hours a day 7 days a week;
- (d) investigate the possibility of the FAMSAC service being mobile and able to attend a private residence or workplace or other public place if there is a need or that is the preference of the victim of the sexual assault; and
- (e) report back to the Assembly on the progress of these matters regarding the Canberra Rape Crisis Centre and the FAMSAC service by the first sitting day in August 2021.”

I also, of course, attended the women’s March 4 Justice. It was a remarkable experience to stand with all those women, and many men as well, who were there in solidarity, to hear Brittany and the other speakers and to hear people like Biff Ward who have been talking about this issue for a long time. This is not a new issue but, as others have said, women and our allies are standing up now and saying enough is enough; something must be done about the prevalence of sexual harassment and sexual assault in our community.

As the Deputy Chief Minister has said, and many others, there would be very few women who have not had this experience. I know there was a debate about this yesterday in this chamber and many of the women here made the same point. There would be very few of us who have not experienced at least sexual harassment and many of us would have experienced what would be accurately described as sexual assault at some time in our lives. For many people, myself included, the last few weeks have been a difficult time of reliving those experiences. As others have said to me—and certainly in my experience—in some ways it is more traumatic when we reflect on it and realise what happened to us than it was at the time, when it was a part of life and something that you just got through and got on with.

The types of sexual assault we are talking about here today—where people experience a sexual assault or rape and need the supports of our amazing Forensic and Medical Sexual Assault Care services at Canberra Hospital or the Canberra Rape Crisis Centre—are incredibly serious matters. Mrs Jones’s motion is very timely and very important in bringing forward a case to ensure that those who have been sexually assaulted have access to the support and care they need when they need it most. When

these awful crimes are committed and people are at their most vulnerable, it is critical that the services they need to support them, protect them and help them are easy to find and to access.

Information about what to do in the event of a rape or sexual assault is currently available on both the ACT government's Health and Community Services websites as well as the Canberra Rape Crisis Centre website. I certainly acknowledge that regular checking to ensure that public information is correct, accessible, clear and fit for purpose is always worthwhile, particularly on such important issues. Indeed, when I looked yesterday morning, the two ACT government websites actually did provide different telephone numbers. I am sure they both work. But the point that Mrs Jones is making of having one very clear number to call—I think FAMSAC actually had a different business hours and after-hours number—is something that we are certainly very happy to look at. I am advised that the directorates have already begun the process of reviewing and aligning this information. So already, Mrs Jones, we have had a positive outcome from this motion.

It is critical as well that services are in the right place to deliver the right service in the right environment. Mrs Jones's motion talks about the Forensic and Medical Sexual Assault Care service that runs out of Canberra Hospital. I am pleased that the motion brings to the Assembly's attention the critical importance of our expert forensic and medical services and our victim support services. FAMSAC, as it is known, based at Canberra Hospital, is a best practice service that provides a highly specialised medical service to those in times of need. The forensic medical facilities led by senior specialist in sexual health and forensic medicine Vanita Parekh AM at Canberra Hospital's emergency department are world's best practice, with many national and overseas clinicians—not during COVID but in normal times—visiting the unit when they are setting up their own units.

I would also note that Dr Parekh and the forensic medical unit have been heavily involved in the initial preparation and design work for the new emergency department at the Canberra Hospital expansion, at the new critical services building, to ensure that our world's best practice team continue to have a facility that is absolutely built and fit for purpose and is sensitive and discreet for patients who are at their most vulnerable.

FAMSAC provides services 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year to people at both public hospitals. While it is based at Canberra Hospital, the services can be provided at Calvary. The expert team collects many types of evidence, including DNA, injury, toxicology and historical evidence. Initial advice from the experts indicates that the locations outside of Canberra and Calvary hospitals are not generally best placed to reduce the risk of DNA contamination. However, we will be happy to revisit that to ensure that we continue to have the best forensic support possible for people who are in a time of need. Our experts who run this vital service provide the best chance to build the forensic evidence base to prosecute perpetrators and bring some sense of justice to victims who choose to access this option. Both Calvary and Canberra Hospital emergency departments have processes in place to provide sexual assault patients with expert medical assessments, to ensure their health and safety prior to being referred to FAMSAC.

Of course, people who have experienced sexual assault will come through in different ways. I think Mrs Jones's point about a single phone number is important, but it is also important to recognise that people will do different things. Some people will go to the emergency department and the people at the front of the emergency department will be the first people they tell that they have been sexually assaulted. Other people will go to the police and then they will be guided to the forensic service. Other people will ring the Canberra Rape Crisis Centre. Others may ring 1800RESPECT. We will not be able to dictate to people that they access a single port of call, and it is appropriate that there are a range of support services available. The important thing is that all of those services are working together and that, as Mrs Jones says, we can have one phone number that people know that they can ring when they need access to a service as well as support.

The FAMSAC team and both emergency departments have well-established links with the Canberra Rape Crisis Centre and other support services and processes in place to ensure that there is support in place for victims who attend either clinic. All sexual assault forensic medical examinations are undertaken by FAMSAC staff, due to the significant level of training required to undertake this type of work to meet the subsequent court requirements.

There were some comments from Mrs Jones in the *Canberra Times* this morning and I want to correct some of those things. I know that this is an ongoing conversation so, again, this is not a criticism of Mrs Jones. My strong advice is that it is not the case that access to FAMSAC is more difficult if police are not involved. For those people who turn up to the emergency department, they will also get access to that service. As I have said, there is a direct phone number. I found that by putting into a search engine "Canberra sexual assault service" it was relatively easy to find. I recognise that may have been the feedback that Mrs Jones has received, but that is not the advice that I have. Again, I am very keen to work through those issues.

FAMSAC has designed the service to ensure access for patients who are unsure whether to report to police. I think that is a really important point: it is not simply a forensic pathway for people who have made a decision to report to police and made a decision to pursue that course of action. In this case, patients may be offered a forensic medical examination where evidence is collected and stored just in case they subsequently go on to report their assault to police. There are, however, time limits on the storage of this evidence, due to evidence degradation. All patients are seen initially by the FAMSAC triage nurse, and if the patient is not able to provide consent initially for forensic medical evidence collection, the FAMSAC nurse will leave contact details with the person if they want to report within the time frame for evidence collection to be arranged. As Mrs Jones's motion notes and my amendment continues to note, there are obviously some constraints on the time and the way in which forensic evidence can be collected and what happens if people have washed et cetera.

FAMSAC also provides clinical care after acute injury needs are met. While it does not provide counselling or counselling advocacy services, the Rape Crisis Centre and the Victim Services Scheme do provide those services and FAMSAC will connect

people with those. The Victim Services Scheme helped 2,100 clients in 2019-20 by providing counselling, case coordination, advice information, court service and justice advocacy. The scheme provides support, alongside the critical and ongoing work delivered by the Canberra Rape Crisis Centre to support sexual assault victims every day.

Ensuring that our victim support services are provided with flexibility in their arrangements to best help those in need is critical. I know that the Minister for Women's tripartisan sexual assault prevention and response working group that she announced on Monday—if my memory serves me correctly—is an excellent initiative. It will look closely at these arrangements as part of its broad scope and will provide further key insights into the on-the-ground lived experience of victims of sexual assault, and also existing services to support those people.

In closing, again I want to thank Mrs Jones for bringing this timely motion to the Assembly. I also want to thank Brittany Higgins, Grace Tame and the incredibly strong women, including Dr Paterson—who has spoken out about her own experience of sexual harassment in the workplace—for the incredible strength they have shown in pursuing their cases and in speaking publicly about what happened to them. While it is distressing for women and, I have no doubt, many men around the country to be hearing these stories again and again and to be reflecting on their own experiences, it is incredibly important that we are talking about this. I hope that we see real action at the commonwealth level.

As a former staffer in Parliament House, I really hope that there is real action in Parliament House. I do not think anyone who has worked in Parliament House could be genuinely surprised. We can be shocked; we can be appalled. What allegedly happened to Brittany Higgins is absolutely shocking and appalling, and it is surprising. But some of the other behaviour is not surprising and it does not just happen in Parliament House. Those young men whose sexual exploits have been shared with one another really have taken everybody aback. They did not start that behaviour when they became staffers in Parliament House. That behaviour was accepted in other places, whether it was at university or in their school. This is a whole-of-community conversation; it is not just about politics. This motion is very important. It is good to have an opportunity to talk about it and it is good to have an opportunity for this focus to be on the very important services that support victims of sexual assault every day, unfortunately, in our community.

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) (3.24): I also want to thank Mrs Jones for this timely motion, and I commend it, but I particularly commend the amendments moved by Minister Stephen-Smith. To echo Ms Stephen-Smith's comments, we are just three months into the year but the last six weeks of those, for many people around this country, have been a particularly traumatising, triggering experience.

I absolutely commend the bravery of people who have spoken up. I think we are seeing something like we have never quite seen before, in that the power of people

speaking up has opened doors for other people to speak up, and suddenly there is a tsunami of voices. Many more are perhaps reliving some of these incredibly debilitating experiences and are not yet comfortable speaking up about them. By having this conversation, there is something quite powerful happening in this nation. I think there is a real sense of unity emerging. Some people have a bit of a way to go but, bit by bit, we are getting there and shining a light on this, however difficult it might be for many and, indeed, all of us. It is just so important, but I do want to acknowledge that this has been a particularly dark period for many people.

In speaking today and in noting the support and the services that are available, I wanted to shine a light on Victim Support ACT and how it works and perhaps amplify its services. But I also want to talk about what they mean for the community. For those who may not know, Victim Support ACT provides services to victims of crime in the ACT to promote their recovery and continued participation in the social, economic and cultural life of the community. This is through a range of services, including free counselling and other therapeutic services. That is provided by professional, trained counsellors, psychologists and social workers. It includes financial assistance, and this is often urgent financial assistance to victims of crime, as well as economic loss and recognition payments to victims too.

There is a court support program which provides trained and highly skilled volunteers who support a victim's engagement in the criminal justice system. There are culturally responsive services and specialist staff who are able to engage highly responsively with people living with disabilities who have been affected by crime. Importantly, there is an intermediary program to assist victims who have communication difficulties, including young children, to communicate their evidence to police, lawyers and in courtrooms so that they are able to communicate evidence of crimes perpetrated against them when they engage in the justice system. Finally, there is advocacy, to ensure that victims' rights are protected during their engagement with criminal justice agencies, in line with the ACT's new charter of victims' rights which, I note, is the most comprehensive legislated set of rights for victims of crime in Australia.

Victims of crime in the ACT have approached Victim Support ACT in unprecedented numbers recently, with recent years being the busiest. The surge in demand reflects community confidence in its ability to ably assist victims of violent crimes such as sexual assault, particularly given the tailored approach that is provided. Sexual assault and family violence comprised over half of the offences reported by Victim Support ACT's clients in the 2019-20 financial year. Victim Support brokers counselling and other therapeutic services for eligible victims of violent crimes. Support is provided by professionals such as psychologists, counsellors, therapists, social workers and educational tutors.

In the last financial year, over 2,000 victims of crime were provided with assistance, including information and referrals to other appropriate services and support. COVID-19 significantly increased demand, with a 13 per cent increase in clients in April 2020. This also included a 130 per cent increase in new family violence matters and a 50 per cent increase in new sexual assault matters in June alone, compared to

the previous year. In the financial year, 99 per cent of referrals to Victim Support were actioned within five days.

Victims' demand for financial assistance has increased rapidly since the financial assistance scheme was introduced in the ACT in July 2016. In the last financial year, 69 per cent of the received applications were made by women, the majority of which related to harm caused by family violence or sexual assault. Financial assistance has a crucial role in recognising and repairing harm inflicted on eligible victims of violent crime, including via urgent financial assistance such as to relocate victims to safety or improve the safety of victims' homes, economic loss payments in recognition of the costs incurred as a result of the violent crime or recognition payments to acknowledge the harm caused by the violent crime.

The intermediary program is what assists people with communication difficulties—this includes children, young people and people with disabilities—to communicate their evidence of violent crimes perpetrated against them to the criminal justice system. This was introduced in the ACT just over a year ago, in January 2020, to assist vulnerable children and adults to communicate their most clear and comprehensive evidence to police and lawyers and at court.

As at March this year, 248 referrals have been received from police, lawyers and courts requesting this assistance so that vulnerable child and adult witnesses can communicate evidence of sexual assaults, family violence and homicides. Every request for an intermediary has been met, often within the hour, which is particularly important—as I think we would acknowledge—in urgent policing matters. Over 40 per cent of requests for intermediaries occur out of the standard business hours. Intermediary services are provided 24/7, including public holidays and weekends, and at various locations across the ACT, including police stations, schools, nursing homes, care facilities, hospitals and in courtrooms.

In speaking today and in shining a bit of a light on Victim Support ACT, I commend all of the work that is done through Victim Support. What we are collectively talking about here today highlights just how incredibly important this is. I commend the amendments to the motion, but I particularly want to thank Mrs Jones for bringing this important issue to the attention of the Assembly and the broader community.

DR PATERSON (Murrumbidgee) (3.33): I would also like to thank Mrs Jones for bringing this motion to the Assembly, and I thank Minister Stephen-Smith and Minister Cheyne for also talking about these challenging issues. As highlighted yesterday, it is imperative that we continue to keep a focus on gender-based violence in the ACT to ensure that we address this very significant problem in our community. Enough is enough. A holistic, evidence-based approach is needed to ensure that we have meaningful and effective responses to sexual assault reform. I commend the Minister for Women, Yvette Berry, for yesterday establishing a sexual assault prevention and response working group that will go some way to a coordinated approach to this multifaceted problem. As I said yesterday, I will be a strong advocate for victims and survivors and I am personally committed to talking to the community broadly about this issue. Culture change will come from education and from having these hard conversations.

In bringing about reform, there are many aspects and angles to come at this. Mrs Jones's motion focuses on the frontline services that work with people who have experienced sexual assault. We need to be looking at best practice in other jurisdictions and internationally in the models of service we offer. As expressed in the motion, perhaps flexible, mobile models of support are appropriate in some contexts. Earlier this week I met with the ACT Victims of Crime Commissioner, Heidi Yates, the Canberra Rape Crisis Centre chief executive, Chrystina Stanford, and associate professor and director of sexual health and forensic medicine Dr Vanita Parekh to hear their concerns and priorities for improving sexual assault services and support provisions in the ACT. These are women at the front line of this work.

A key message that came from that meeting was that we need to lead with a message of hope. This in itself is challenging because survivors of these crimes, at times, can feel so isolated, so alone and so hopeless. I want to flip this; I want the perpetrators of these crimes to feel no hope and no control. They know what they did; what they do not know is when they might be called out, exposed, charged. I want them to fester in a world of uncertainty.

To the victim survivors, I want you to feel hope, to be secure in the knowledge that what happened to you was wrong; it was a criminal act. I want you to know that you will be supported to move forward with your lives. I would like to finish with a quote from Grace Tame:

When we share, we heal, reconnect and grow, both as individuals and as a united, strengthened collective. History, lived experience, the whole truth, unsanitised and unedited, is our greatest learning resource.

Amendments agreed to.

MR DAVIS (Brindabella) (3.37): I move:

(1) Add to paragraph (2):

“(f) consider whether resourcing for, and the development of, specialist expertise within the ACT Policing of the Sexual Assault and Child Abuse Team is adequate.”

I wish to speak to the extremely important issues raised in Mrs Jones's motion—the accessibility, appropriateness and timeliness of the services we offer to people who have experienced sexual assault. The ACT Greens will proudly be supporting this motion.

One in five women from the age of 15 has experienced sexual violence. In 2018-19 the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare reported that 97 per cent of sexual violence offenders were men. There is no doubt that sexual violence is an issue of gendered violence, of violence predominantly experienced by women at the hands of men.

My initial reaction was to feel ill-placed to comment on the assault of women by men. But as a man with a position of influence and as a representative of over 35,000 women it is my responsibility to support systemic change to the places and spaces in which women in our community experience violence, oppression and discrimination. Unfortunately and heartbreakingly, it has been evidenced that these spaces and places include but are certainly not limited to our houses of parliament.

As a queer man and somebody who has experienced sexual assault, I have a complex and close relationship with the issue of gendered violence. While in the significant minority, men who experience sexual assault are at significant risk of social isolation and mental health issues due to fear of ridicule and shame. Services such as Canberra Rape Crisis Centre's service assisting male survivors of sexual assault are vital to ensuring that these men are supported to tell their stories and work through and with their experiences.

Sexual violence in the queer community is rarely spoken about, but it is prevalent and it is most definitely influenced by gender. People who are gay, bi or lesbian experience intimate partner violence at similar rates to the general community, yet our experiences and our relationships are so rarely represented in the public conversation or policy responses to gendered violence.

There is little research into the experiences of sexual assault by trans and gender-diverse people. However, a 2018 study by the Kirby Institute at the University of New South Wales found that trans men, trans women, and non-binary people are experiencing sexual assault at four times the rate of cisgender women. This is a particularly poignant point today on the International Transgender Day of Visibility.

A local piece of research on the experiences of queer women in Canberra, undertaken by the Women's Centre for Health Matters and Meridian ACT in 2018, found that 62 per cent of queer women have experienced domestic, family and sexual violence in their lifetime. Underlying the importance of a nuanced system response to the needs of queer people, one participant is quoted in the report as saying:

I've never felt safe to disclose my experiences of childhood and adult sexual abuse, and domestic violence, or my sexual orientation. No health professional has ever seemed even remotely aware that either could be a factor, or what long term physical and mental health implications can follow. No awareness at all of the differing general or sex specific health needs of queer/lesbian/bi women ... not even my female gynaecologist is that sensitive. They never say or ask anything that gives you a hint that it would be ok to disclose to them without being more traumatised by their response. That combined with heteronormative at best or homophobic at worst makes the whole thing a tightrope.

As this woman explains, homophobia, transphobia and heterosexism affect the experiences of and responses to intimate partner violence in the LGBTQIA+ populations. As a feminist, I am deeply moved by the stories that have been told over the last few years and particularly moved by the stories I have heard from my colleagues in the past few days. Sitting in this chamber the past few days, listening to the strong, courageous women who I serve with, makes it very difficult for me to understand how anybody can make a living as an empathy consultant.

In the last few years the #MeToo movement has torn open the silences we continued to condone and enforce. It is to some extent unsurprising that the moment has finally come to expose the misogyny of some of our federal counterparts on the hill, thanks most recently to Brittany Higgins. It has become clear that a space where there is competition, highly demanding working conditions, nepotism and traditional patriarchy in traditional positions of power builds a working environment in which women are disrespected, mistreated and assaulted. That can and must change.

I am grateful that the culture and conditions of this Canberran parliament have been developed and worked on over time to build appropriate systems and accountability measures that have made our workplaces safe and respectful. I am strongly supportive of all the moves this week by the feminists in this chamber, regardless of their party affiliations, to take actions that will support people who are experiencing sexual harassment and assault in their workplaces or otherwise to report and seek care. I am also grateful to my colleagues who have shared their personal stories here with us.

It is our job to work together in this place to ensure that Canberra is somewhere where people who experience violence are supported to seek care and justice for these violations. This motion acknowledges the great work of Victim Support ACT, the forensic and medical assault care team at the Canberra Hospital and the grassroots advocacy and care provided by the Canberra Rape Crisis Centre. It calls on the government to continue to provide information about these services and to investigate whether the funding and support provided to these organisations is adequate and meets demand.

Victim Support ACT has seen a 304 per cent increase in the provision of hours needed for sexual assault counselling, from 486 hours in 2016-17 to 1,964 hours in 2020-21. It is vital that any investigation includes whether current supports are adequate to meet the demands for specialist therapeutic support.

My amendment adds to the motion by calling on the government to consider whether the resourcing and development of specialist expertise within the ACT Policing sexual assault and child abuse team is adequate. It is vital that the system designed to help people seek care and justice for sexual assault can and does meet the needs for which it was designed.

It was disappointing to read in the *Canberra Times* over the last few days that the rates of criminal prosecution of sexual assault have gone down in the last five years, despite an increase in reports to victim services and police. These units need to be resourced and supported to ensure that people are given hope and respect when seeking advice and support from our systems. More broadly than what this motion can and is intended to do, it is clear that the systems that are intended to bring justice for those who have experienced sexual assault require radical transformation. I look forward to seeing, commenting on and supporting the outcomes of the newly established sexual assault prevention and response working group.

Since being elected in October, I have made a point of meeting with a wide range of stakeholders from the gendered violence sector, including crisis housing support, peak

advocacy bodies, commissioners, family planning groups, LGBTQIA+ organisations, and, most importantly, real women who have experienced violence. From these conversations and from my own experiences it has become clear that fundamental to the cause of eliminating gendered violence is investing, supporting and making decisions to focus on the prevention of violence in schools, in workplaces and in people's homes. I look forward to continuing these conversations, using the new mechanisms and forums that have emerged throughout our important conversations this week. I appreciate the opportunity to speak on these important issues.

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) (3.46): I want to speak briefly on this today. The last couple of days and the weeks before this sitting period have been quite an intense time for the Australian community and in the ACT. I want to acknowledge the stories that have been shared in this place around sexual assaults and violence and also those that have been shared outside of this place that have opened the door on an issue that had been hidden for decades and decades in the past.

I particularly want to thank and acknowledge the patience of all of the experts in this space that have met with a number of us and have taken our calls out of hours and in their own time to provide us with the advice and guidance that we need. I say "patience" because I know they have been advocating on behalf of victim survivors of sexual assaults and rapes and violence for decades and decades before we have come to this point today.

This is not an unlimited list, but I do want to recognise the Victims of Crime Commissioner, Heidi Yates; Associate Professor Venita Parekh AM, a senior specialist in sexual health and forensic medicine; the CEO of the Women's Centre for Health Matters, Marcia Williams; the CEO of the Canberra Rape Crisis Centre, Chrystina Stanford; and anybody else works to support individuals who have been affected by sexual assault or violence in the ACT. It is all of those services that are supporting the people that have been affected by sexual assaults and violence at Parliament House. The people that work at Parliament House have been coming into the ACT and getting those support services as well, and I want to recognise that as well.

I thank Mrs Jones for this motion and I thank everybody for their contributions. These are exactly the conversations that mean that, with the guidance of those expert groups that we have set up, we can address the gaps that have been identified and really listen and provide that hope and respect for the victim survivors that Dr Paterson referred to.

I also want to acknowledge and thank all political parties in this space for their responses on this issue and for their enthusiasm with regard to the new working group. The Liberal Party, the Greens and the Labor Party are all working together on something that is obviously very, very, important and needs action. We need to ride this momentous time together and start seeing some results. It is good to start having these conversations in this place about some of the gaps we have already identified,

and we can now take those conversations to the working group and come back from there.

As to some of the matters identified by Mrs Jones and Mr Davis, we might work our way through how they can be responded to in a shorter period of time, but it might be something the working group needs to address in more detail. I am sure you will be open to a conversation about what that might look like in the future. Thank you once again, and we will keep the conversation going and provide that hope that is so needed in our community.

MRS JONES (Murrumbidgee) (3.50): I am happy to support Mr Davis's amendment. I do not see that there is a particular lack in that area, but there is no harm in having a look at it and for the minister to have a look at it, even though it is in a different ministry to most of what is mentioned in the motion.

I also thank the experts who have been working in this space for decades. As much as it is the people on the ground that I generally tend to start my conversations with, they have been an excellent source of information and a sounding board. They are keen to see outcomes—of course they are. Their patience is phenomenal. When I discovered that the rape crisis service does not have that 24/7 availability that it used to, I thought they were incredibly humble in the way that they dealt with it, but I really think we should fix that.

As a result of this discussion today and the media that will accompany it, the conversations will be had at home. Since the rally there have been lots of conversations in my home, with my friends, with my children and with my husband. There have been some very robust discussions in my home about what I think versus what my amazing husband thinks and what our initial positions are, and our children hear all of it. The up and the down side of being in Family Jones is that they are exposed to all of those conversations so that they can have them themselves as well and come to their own conclusions.

All over Canberra and Australia these conversations are happening in homes. I think that is because there is a fuss, and you have to have a fuss in order to have those conversations. People sometimes think we should not discuss these things because of other implications for people, but it is really too important. The substance has to be dealt with because those who are dealing with this stuff often do not have much strength at the time and need as much community backing we can offer them to take the right actions.

I am glad we are discussing this today. I am really grateful to my Liberal colleagues for supporting this discussion wholeheartedly—every one of them. I am really grateful that we might see some change as a result. As Ms Berry says, it is the ACT's services that service the federal parliament. That is the experience of one or two people we are talking about there, but ultimately it will benefit everyone in the ACT. That is also why it is a positive conversation.

I am glad to hear that the department is already looking at the phone numbers scenario. The minister and I had a little bit of a chat about it in estimates, where I asked, "Who

should I call? Who would I call? What number would I call?” The fact that we needed to have that conversation means that it is not as well-known as it could be. The minister and I are some of the more informed people in the community about government services and yet I would not necessarily know what to search for. Maybe I would have, but not everybody would. I have said in public that I would love to see social media advertising of this number and I would like to see it on the back of toilet doors and all of that stuff so that someone’s friend can say to them, “Well, if you’re concerned about that you should call this number for the ACT and someone will make sure you know what’s available to you.”

I am grateful for the work the police do in this space. I am grateful for the fact that people also will and do turn up to the ED. They need to be treated with appropriate respect and given options if they do—and I am sure they are. I just want us to have another look at it, and it is good that the minister is supporting that.

I also want to mention Victim Support ACT, which Ms Cheyne raised. I know Mr Davis was keen to see that supported as well. The information that has come back from the rape crisis services is that when they have finished dealing with the initial issues around the person’s needs it is often Victim Support that they go to. So the transition from one service to the other needs to be smooth. Then we have to make sure that there is capacity. My understanding is that there may be a bit of a backlog in Victim Support ACT. So when we are looking at the upcoming budget it might be possible even at this late stage to make sure that Victim Support has enough capacity to do the counselling required after the initial help from the Rape Crisis Centre.

It is always good to focus on the great work being done by FAMSAC at the Canberra Hospital and the numbers of clients they are seeing. I suspect there are a lot more that they are not seeing, and I believe we can improve that number. The number of people who go to FAMSAC and get those samples taken and get the support that FAMSAC has to offer is a reflection of how much we are empowering those people once these events have occurred. A greater number would be something to celebrate.

I thank Minister Berry for the conversation that she is starting via the sexual assault and prevention response working group. I obviously started my work on this motion before I knew about that, but that is all part of the same conversation and we are so pleased to be involved.

I thank all those who are a part of this conversation and I also acknowledge those who find this conversation really stressful. In every workplace there will be people—perhaps more blokes than ladies—who find this conversation horrible and do not want to listen to or talk about it. I thank them for putting up with it. You cannot make somebody want to have a conversation, but it is happening and I thank them for engaging with it. It is not easy to know what to say sometimes, but I am happy to do the heavy lifting on this one; I am very comfortable talking about these things. But thank you very much to all those who have had the grace to keep this conversation going, even though it might not be their preferred topic.

I thank all members who have spoken today: to the health minister, Ms Cheyne, Dr Paterson, Ms Berry for the ALP’s support; to Mr Davis for the Greens’ support;

and to me for the Liberals' support. We are a good chamber, and though we have different recipes there is a lot of desire here to see improvements for the people of the ACT. Sometimes we can and we should and we will work together. Some people might not like it, but I think that is the right thing. Sometimes it is time for a big disagreement; sometimes it is time for a big agreement, and this is time for a big agreement. I look forward to seeing if any of these changes are achieved, and I will celebrate them when they are.

Amendment agreed to.

Original question, as amended, resolved in the affirmative.

Trees—urban canopy

MR BRADDOCK (Yerrabi) (3.58): I move:

That this Assembly:

(1) notes that:

- (a) the ACT government's ACT Climate Change Strategy 2019–25, *Canberra Living Infrastructure Plan: Cooling the City*, and Urban Forest Strategy, recognise the increasingly critical role that living infrastructure plays in our city, with a key commitment being the "30% tree canopy cover (or equivalent) and 30% permeable surfaces in Canberra's urban footprint by 2045" (the targets);
- (b) urban trees are recognised for their role in micro-climate regulation, including reducing the urban heat island effect, reducing air pollutants, increasing carbon sequestration, improving resilience in a changing climate, conserving and enhancing biodiversity and providing recreation and wellbeing benefits to residents;
- (c) all three major parties of the ACT Legislative Assembly support an increase in the urban tree canopy of the ACT to at least 30 per cent. To date, the differentials are delivery of the targets (timeframe), budget allocations and exact measures; and
- (d) achievement of the targets will require coordinated, long-term and active participation from ACT residents and many different parts of government and tri-partisan support; and

(2) calls on the ACT government to:

(a) present to the Assembly:

- (i) by the end of 2021, detail on the estimated contribution actions within each objective of the strategy will make towards achieving the canopy cover target;
- (ii) by the end of 2021, detail on the estimated contribution different regions of Canberra will make towards achievement of the canopy cover target;
- (iii) by the end of 2021, detail on suburbs identified for priority action to improve equity of canopy cover across Canberra;

- (iv) annually, a progress update on all initiatives and their contribution towards the targets; and
- (v) every five years, provide a report on the current tree canopy cover percentage, by suburb, for Canberra's urban footprint;
- (b) actively support community-led contributions towards the targets; and
- (c) ensure that the urban forest provides for habitat and resources for wildlife (flora and fauna) including threatened species and ecosystems, mature native trees, and culturally significant trees.

Mr Assistant Speaker Pettersson, I thank the house for its flexibility earlier. It is embarrassing when the whip misses his own motion, when you are seeking water to be able to keep talking for 15 minutes. I thought I could get it just before the Chief Minister stopped speaking.

Today I want to talk about trees. We know that trees provide priceless benefits for those who live near them. The research shows that adults with 30 per cent or more of their neighbourhood covered in some form of tree canopy had a 31 per cent less chance of developing psychological distress and a 33 per cent less chance of developing fair to poor general health. We know that walks through tree-filled spaces reduce blood pressure, improve mental acuity, boost memory recall and reduce feelings of anxiety. These are just some of the benefits for humans. Once we open up the scope to those many different species that we share our city with, the habitat and biodiversity outcomes from trees multiply.

In stark contrast, suburbs with lower tree canopy cover experience a greater urban heat island effect, with consequential impacts on dwelling comfort, energy use and costs. The 2017 CSIRO study, *Mapping surface urban heat in Canberra*, found that in built-up areas the surface urban heat island at night was around eight degrees warmer in summer months than in surrounding rural areas. As we move into the winter months, it is also worthy of note that trees reduce cold extremes as well, because of their impact on wind chill.

In Canberra, the central suburbs with the highest wealth are generally the leafiest, greenest suburbs with the highest level of tree canopy cover, whilst locations such as apartments and town centres, or newer outer suburbs, are more vulnerable to the heat island effect. Indeed, of the 16 suburbs in Canberra that have less than 10 per cent tree canopy cover, half are in my electorate of Yerrabi.

This is an environmental justice issue. It is a climate justice issue. It is a safety issue. It is a public health issue. It is also a personal issue, as a resident of Bonner. We must confront the fact that our unique urban ecosystems are threatened by overdevelopment, habitat and biodiversity loss, and inadequate resourcing of conservation. It is a losing battle if we plant a million saplings while developers can still cut down mature trees that provide essential shade, habitat and food for the people and animals that call Canberra home.

The ACT government has already put the right frameworks in place, following years of advocacy. The Living Infrastructure Plan, the Planning Strategy and the

just-released Urban Forest Strategy all have the right values and targets in place. This includes the 30 per cent tree canopy cover target—happily, the same threshold that results in the considerable mental and physical health benefits that I mentioned earlier.

As the policies state, to meet these targets we need to “enhance and maintain” our urban forest. In other words, we need to plant more trees as well as keep and look after the healthy ones we already have. I commend and thank those who have contributed to creating and refining these documents, be it through advocacy, research, policy advice or providing comments through consultation. I also want to take the time to thank everyone who has worked tirelessly to protect and enhance our urban forest, whether it is through mulching, planting, watering or laying the groundwork for the implementation of this ambitious policy framework.

A target in a glossy brochure is all well and good, but now we need to drive real increases in the tree canopy cover target across Canberra’s suburbs, particularly in those suburbs which have the lowest levels of tree canopy cover. That is why I am looking for certainty and clarity about who is going to do what heavy lifting to get us up to that 30 per cent target, starting with the most vulnerable and poorly covered suburbs.

What contribution is our planning system going to make? Is 15 per cent really enough? With the upcoming opportunities to make real and welcome changes through the planning review, we shall see. How are we going to ensure compliance and enforcement to avoid any further tragic losses to our urban forest? What contributions are our communities and volunteers going to make, and how are we going to support them with stable, secure and sufficient funding, and easy, accessible and responsive approval processes? What contributions are private leaseholders and developers going to make, and with what safeguards and incentives? How are we going to efficiently and effectively report on our progress? How are we going to ensure that our tree canopy cover is equitable, so that we do not create tree-rich and tree-poor suburbs?

The 30 per cent target applies across the entire urban footprint, increasing the risk of inequities, where one suburb may have 45 per cent cover whilst another suburb may have only one per cent. This is unfair, unsafe and unhealthy. Whilst there are some suburbs such as industrial areas which do not need to reach 30 per cent, I call on the government to apply the 30 per cent target to each and every residential suburb. Also, I would like to know how we plan to get there.

Significantly, we must confront where our planning system has not allowed for enough existing trees or room for new trees to be developed around new houses and developments. I want to draw attention to the critical importance of getting the planning right, especially in the context of a justifiably cynical public after many disappointing outcomes. In addition, the ACT government cannot achieve these goals on their own. They require action on public and private land and will therefore be heavily reliant on collaboration and connection between ministers, First Nations and traditional owner individuals and organisations, land managers, directorates, professionals, community organisations and volunteers.

We have heard from many frustrated community members who want to dedicate their creativity, innovation and precious spare time and energy to make Canberra's suburbs greener, and have found obstacles in getting permission to realise their visions. I also call on the government to turn its attention to "green tape", a term usually cynically applied to environmental regulation, but which here refers to the myriad risk-averse and difficult to navigate formal processes that community groups currently have to battle to get their local conservation projects off the ground.

We need to regularly hold the government of the day to account. The method for accurately determining tree canopy can be laborious and expensive, but once every five years is not sufficient to track whether or not we are moving towards our goals. We need a reasonable estimate with regard to gains and losses in trees, provided regularly enough so that we can correct our course if programs and policies are not working as intended.

Today I am proud to carry on the work of my Greens forebears in this area, leading to this motion to support an urban tree canopy target. The Greens have been advocating for Canberra's trees since we first entered the Assembly. In 1995 Kerrie Tucker was on record advocating for resources for our environment directorates and asking for community funding to be commensurate with the responsibilities and expectations put on them with regard to trees. She also said—and this is just as relevant today as it was then:

Community-based action is vital if we are to overcome the political, bureaucratic and psychological barriers to change, and community-led processes must be supported by government if plans are going to be implemented. Strong vertical links between community and government also have to be supplemented by horizontal links across all spectrums which cover community interest groups both within and across geographical boundaries.

A decade later, in 2005, Dr Deb Foskey said:

The Greens support tree legislation which moves towards retaining and protecting a certain amount of tree cover, not just individual trees.

A decade later, in 2015, Shane Rattenbury said:

As we undertake urban renewal we need to make sure we maintain and invest in our green infrastructure ... the key to urban renewal in the face of climate change is the development of green infrastructure in the city and our town centres. Trees in our urban areas are an important component of Canberra's identity and also a significant means to provide a more tempered climate on hotter days.

The trees and green spaces in our town centres have multiple benefits, including growing food in community gardens, holding community gatherings and encouraging active lifestyles.

In 2013 Caroline Le Couteur pushed a motion through this Assembly calling for a review of the Tree Protection Act, the Territory Plan and government infrastructure standards to "make room for trees" in development and to get better protection for

existing trees. Finally, Shane Rattenbury, as Minister for Climate Change, set the 30 per cent tree canopy target for our urban area in 2019.

Of course, great work has already been done around our city, our country and the world. Other examples include New South Wales, where Greening Australia's Cooling the Schools program is empowering children to plant trees and look after them as they grow. Their Biodiverse Corridors program offers great potential in making the currently unpleasantly exposed routes to schools and community activities enjoyable, beautiful and ecologically beneficial.

Closer to home, the microforest programs spearheaded by local landscape architect Edwin Robinson are creating biodiversity hubs that help regulate microclimates and provide critical habitat in our suburbs. In fact, a microforest might be a great option for the recently reprieved Coolo Park, especially given the mental, physical and environmental wins that you have already heard about today. As an aside, given the number of trees needed in Gungahlin, there may also be scope to consider a second public nursery a little closer to where the plantings need to happen.

In summary, the past work of our public servants, community groups, volunteers and researchers has made this the bush capital. This motion is to reaffirm the Assembly's commitment to support this work and ensure that it happens. Every party here took significant policies to the people during the last election campaign with respect to trees. Today is a chance for all parties to affirm the hard work of significantly increasing Canberra's urban trees for the benefit of the people of Canberra.

This motion is about how we create the accountability measures to ensure that we deliver for those people of Canberra. I look forward to working together to realise the vision of making every Canberra suburb green and leafy, and walking through Gungahlin's urban areas in years to come under the shade of the trees.

MR STEEL (Murrumbidgee—Minister for Skills, Minister for Transport and City Services and Special Minister of State) (4.10): I thank Mr Braddock for this motion on an important matter that has widespread support throughout the Canberra community and in this place. Our government takes seriously the responsibility to maintain and enhance our urban forests, not only to mitigate the impacts of climate change but also to enhance the livability and amenity of our city, improve biodiversity and protect Canberra's special character.

Just this week I released the *Urban Forest Strategy 2021-2045*, and I am pleased to table it in the Assembly today. I present the following paper:

Urban Forest Strategy 2021-2045—Report.

This strategy was informed by experts, contemporary best practice and the best available data. Equally importantly, it was influenced by the values and priorities of the Canberra community. Consultation on the draft strategy in 2020 resulted in 199 online survey responses and 48 written submissions, of which 92 per cent agreed with the vision and 97 per cent agreed with the six objectives outlined under the plan.

Each of the strategy's six objectives has a series of actions with specified time frames. The objectives provide for a wide range of actions, including protecting the urban forest, such as through reforms to legislation, which I look forward to bringing forward later in the term; ensuring a resilient forest, including through the renewal of ageing trees and the planting of species suitable for a changing climate; ensuring a balanced and diverse forest through the prioritisation of planting locations and species selection; fostering biodiversity, such as through enhanced management of remnant trees and the establishment of wildlife corridors; providing space for trees to foster a livable city, such as through better urban planning and design and increasing the proportion of permeable surfaces; and partnering with the community through our community engagement team, citizen science, and incentives for retaining trees on private land.

Pursuing these six objectives together will mean that we can protect and maintain our existing green canopy, make it more resilient and diverse, and continue to expand it over time towards the clear 30 per cent tree canopy target or equivalent that our government has set, both in the Living Infrastructure Plan and in the Urban Forest Strategy.

Ensuring that the clear actions in the strategy are measurable and transparent is essential. Many actions in the strategy have already commenced, with others to be implemented or expanded according to the time frames laid out in the document. By the end of this year, I look forward to presenting the Assembly with an implementation plan that will provide a more detailed account of how each action will be achieved.

Equity is a really important value underpinning the strategy. We know that some parts of Canberra benefit from greater canopy cover than others do. Accompanying the Urban Forest Strategy implementation plan will be an estimation of the contribution that different geographic regions of Canberra will make to achieving the canopy cover target, as well as the list of high-priority suburbs that will receive targeted efforts to increase their canopy.

A very clear part of the plan was making sure that we plant new trees in areas that have low canopy cover. That is our greenfield suburbs, like areas of Gungahlin and, particularly, the Molonglo Valley, but there will be others in the future. It takes time for trees to grow up, but we also need to make sure that there is room for trees in those suburbs, going forward. That is part of the work that has been undertaken in parallel, in consultation with the community on DV 369, which would look at at least 15 per cent of tree canopy cover being on private land. We also need to factor in the contribution on public land, to make sure that we can reach that 30 per cent tree canopy cover or equivalent right across the suburbs.

It is a key feature of the strategy that we focus on areas with low canopy cover as well as replacing trees in the existing canopy cover that have died. There are a number of trees that are expected to die over the coming years, as they reach the end of their natural life and as a result of climate change. As we plant our new species, we will need to make sure that they are species that can grow and adapt to a hotter and drier climate, going forward.

The ACT government will report on progress against the actions in the strategy annually and will draft a report for public release and tabling in the Assembly. The measurement of canopy cover relies on a remote sensing technique known as LiDAR. I am pleased to advise the Assembly that updated LiDAR data has been collected recently and is in the process of being analysed. While the results are not yet available, I look forward to announcing the results in due course. Further to this, LiDAR surveys will continue to occur every five years, with a designated report on urban canopy cover being published following each survey.

That is consistent with the slow growth of the urban forest. It is not possible to see significant changes in a short period. This is a long-term strategy to grow our urban forest, and it is appropriate to look at it every five years to make sure that we are evaluating how the actions under the plan are contributing to the growth of the canopy right across the city and the impacts of the growth of the city on our urban canopy.

When undertaking a commitment like that within this strategy, it is hard to overestimate the importance of engaging with the community, which is a key part of the strategy. Earlier this month, I announced that the government has implemented a trial street forestry initiative to work with local residents at an individual street scale to get them involved in decision-making about trees planted in their street and to engage them to care for those trees. We know that that is important. People want the trees to be planted in their community. That gives them the best opportunity to grow up to maturity so that their neighbourhood, as well as the broader community, receives the benefits.

This program will complement other community-led initiatives that encourage Canberrans to get involved and share ownership of the forest around them. The strategy clearly identifies the need to renew our ageing urban forest and expand canopy cover through planting additional trees. Already the government has committed to a very dramatic increase in tree planting compared to previous years, with 25,000 trees to be planted from now until 2023, including 9,000 being planted in 2021 alone. The government will, of course, continued to invest in planting more trees. We know that hundreds of thousands of trees will need to be planted in order to replace the trees that are ageing and coming to the end of their life, but also we need to make sure that we do not just replace those trees but actually grow the overall urban forest from the current level of 19 per cent up to 30 per cent tree canopy cover or equivalent by 2045.

I look forward to working with members and the community in the coming months and years to ensure that our urban forest is well maintained, healthy and enhanced, for the benefit of Canberrans today and our future generations.

MS CASTLEY (Yerrabi) (4.18): The Canberra Liberals are ambitious for our territory's environment and future. As the Canberra Liberals' shadow minister for the environment, I am pleased to speak on Mr Braddock's motion about Canberra's trees and green spaces.

I agree that this is an important issue. I cannot help wondering why we need such a motion. As Mr Braddock has noted, the Labor-Greens parliamentary agreement lists as a key priority “continuing work towards reaching a 30% urban tree canopy”. Mr Braddock is a member of that government—the Greens party whip, no less. That begs the question of whether Mr Braddock doubts whether his own government will achieve this target. Does the Greens MLA for Yerrabi have such little faith and confidence in this hybrid Labor-Greens government honouring its election commitments that he resorts to a motion in the Legislative Assembly to remind them, to hammer home the importance of what they have promised?

We know not to invest too much in the Labor-Greens parliamentary agreement, not to mention the Labor-Greens election commitments that were not included in the agreement. These commitments, such as much-needed funding for our community catchment groups, are subject to budget considerations, we are told.

While Canberrans are rightly proud of our bush capital—a city of clean air, trees, lovely gardens and well-maintained parkland and reserves—we cannot take this for granted. Sadly, 20 years of Labor-Greens governments have led to a decline in Canberra’s environment. Consider these points. Canberra is losing 3,000 trees each year, and the tree canopy is shrinking. Parks and reserves are poorly maintained, and nature strips are often weed infested. Many streets in Canberra’s newer suburbs are almost treeless, and communities are deprived of their much-needed green space.

Consider a recent report from the Conservation Council and Monash University that reveals that since 2013 urban vegetation in Canberra has almost halved, from 60 per cent to 35 per cent. The report shames Canberra as the worst-performing major city in Australia when it comes to urban vegetation decline. Shame. What is the point of the Labor-Greens government trumpeting climate change as its number one priority when the same government has presided over the largest reduction in urban vegetation in any major Australian city?

Another report was released last year by RMIT University and Greener Spaces Better Places. It found that since 2016 in the ACT, green spaces—trees, grass and shrubs—increased by just 1.3 per cent, while grey spaces—roads, cars, car parks and roofs—increased by 1.4 per cent. The *Where will all the trees be?* national tree canopy benchmarking document has warned that the ACT could face problems just maintaining green cover as our population grows and new suburbs are developed.

The Canberra Liberals support the Greens motion calling on its own government to achieve tree canopy targets set by the Greens and adopted by Labor. As I have said, such a motion, by a government member holding his own government to account, should not be necessary. Perhaps the junior government partner knows more than we do about this government’s real priorities.

The Canberra Liberals went to the last election with strong environment policies, including planting one million trees to increase our urban tree canopy, provide guaranteed green space, improve our parks and reserves and conserve water and reduce emissions. The Liberals’ commitment to plant one million trees over a 10-year

period, at the rate of 100,000 trees a year, would have achieved a 30 per cent tree canopy by 2026. How good would that be?

A Canberra Liberals government would have also given every child a tree on their first day of kinder. That contrasts with the government's poor record on tree planting at schools, which equates to fewer than five trees per school since 2017. Put simply, Canberra's tree canopy and precious green space have gone backwards under this government.

The Canberra Liberals understand the importance of achieving at least a 30 per cent urban tree canopy sooner rather than later and want to emphasise the tripartisan support for this worthy environmental goal. On that point, I would like to acknowledge and thank Mr Braddock for adopting amendments that I planned to move to this motion that stress the tripartisan support for this target. We also support annual updates to the Assembly about the government's efforts towards the target and a report on the current tree canopy percentage by suburb.

It is the Canberra Liberals who will hold the government to account—the government Mr Braddock is a member of—just as the Canberra Liberals have been demanding answers from the Greens leader and minister for emissions reduction, Shane Rattenbury, about when the government will begin work on a major review of the climate act. It should have started last year.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Canberrans are concerned about the loss of trees. You only need to read the letters page to know that. We know how much our trees add to our environment, wellbeing and quality of life. Tree canopies are under threat, particularly in our older suburbs, with development leaving only postage stamp sized gardens and no canopy plantings.

Too many Canberrans are mourning the loss and lack of trees in neighbourhoods that increasingly appear barren and grey. We are not out of the woods. We can see the grey cover mounting and we need the green cover increasing alongside it. A tripartisan effort to achieve at least a 30 per cent urban tree canopy is a worthwhile ambition that would make a positive difference to the places Canberrans call home.

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) (4.24): I thank Mr Braddock for bringing this important motion here today. I think we all agree that the ACT needs a greater tree canopy, and that is why we are working towards a 30 per cent tree canopy for 2045.

Prior to urban development in the ACT, what is now urban Canberra was largely a treeless plain. Developers are not clearing forest to build houses; they are building on former paddocks. We are protecting our forests and hills by preventing urban sprawl. We saw during the election campaign plans to bulldoze our surrounding forests. Having a compact city means that we are able to protect our surrounding hills.

Our commitment to increased urban density needs to be balanced with green integration of city and environment, green spaces and trees. We need to respect our natural environments. Our tree-lined suburbs are not here by accident; they are here through careful planning through Canberra's history.

This government is continuing that legacy and improving our tree coverage. The government is seeking to increase tree coverage on private blocks, which is why we have been working at the Territory Plan variation level to have more living infrastructure—trees, grass and shrubs.

However, it is not just our private blocks that need trees. Our public streets, our verges and our parks all have a role to play, as my colleague Minister Steel has outlined. The ACT government is committed to ensuring that we will play our part in increasing the tree canopy.

MR BRADDOCK (Yerrabi) (4.26), in reply: I would like to thank Minister Steel, Minister Gentleman and Ms Castley for their words and their support for trees in the urban landscape. I thank all parties here for their support of this motion.

I agree with Minister Steel that there has been a large increase in the number of trees being planted, and I thank the government for that. I look forward to working with the government to determine whether that is enough to achieve our 30 per cent canopy cover target by 2045. I also recognise that the long-term nature of that goal requires regular reporting to track progress and change where necessary.

I am bringing on this motion because that is such an ambitious goal. Gungahlin's tree canopy cover is currently four per cent. We have a long way to go and we must act now. When I am old, retired and perhaps even a grandfather, I want to be able to walk in the cool shade of the trees in Gungahlin. That is why I have moved this motion.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Crimes Legislation Amendment Bill 2020

Debate resumed from 3 December 2020, on motion by **Mr Rattenbury**:

That this bill be agreed to in principle.

MR CAIN (Ginninderra) (4.28): I would like to start by thanking the Attorney-General for responding to concerns raised by me and the shadow attorney-general in line with the Standing Committee on Justice and Community Safety's scrutiny report No 2. The Canberra Liberals support the amendments proposed by the Attorney-General to the Crimes Legislation Amendment Bill 2020 pertaining to the Bail Act 1992.

The inclusion of a provision for an accused person to nominate their preferred way to receive service of notice is a necessary improvement to the act. Regarding the other aspects of the bill, I understand that, through the JACS committee inquiry into

sentencing between 2013 and 2015, and additional consultation undertaken by the directorate in 2019 and 2020, there is support from stakeholders for the amendments. The amendments deal largely with improving clarity in the legislation, of which I am very supportive. As I have said before, we, as legislators, have an obligation to ensure that laws are clear, unambiguous and not in conflict with commonwealth legislation.

There is currently some ambiguity in the Confiscation of Criminal Assets Act 2003 as to whether a person whose property is subject to such an order can apply to have property excluded. The amendments to this act will ensure that the unexplained wealth scheme operates as intended. Importantly, the court cannot exclude property from an unexplained wealth restraining order unless the court is satisfied that the property is not required to satisfy an unexplained wealth order.

The amendments to the Crimes (Sentence Administration) Act 2005 relate to intensive correction orders and improve the operation of the requirement to bring offenders before the appropriate sentencing court. Lastly, the proposed amendments to the Magistrates Court Act 1930 remove uncertainty for defendants when determining whether to appeal a conviction by changing the time frame for appeals to apply 28 days after sentencing, rather than after conviction. On the grounds that these amendments improve clarity in our laws, the Canberra Liberals will not be opposing this legislation.

MR RATTENBURY (Kurrajong—Attorney-General, Minister for Consumer Affairs, Minister for Gaming and Minister for Water, Energy and Emissions Reduction) (4.31), in reply: This omnibus bill amends five acts to make minor but valuable improvements to the criminal law. The need for the amendments has been identified through direct consultation with government agencies and the legal community to identify a range of amendments to improve the administration and operation of the territory's criminal laws. These improvements are compatible with and promote human rights.

The bill amends the Confiscation of Criminal Assets Act to clarify an aspect of the ACT's unexplained wealth scheme. Under the Confiscation of Criminal Assets Act, the court can make an unexplained wealth restraining order. These orders prevent the disposal of assets if there are reasonable grounds to suspect that some or all of a person's wealth was not lawfully acquired or all or some of that wealth was derived from serious criminal activity and the assets may eventually be needed to satisfy an unexplained wealth order. A person can apply for an order for some or all of the property to be excluded from an unexplained wealth restraining order. The court can make an exclusion order if it is satisfied of a number of factors, including that the property does not need to be restrained to satisfy an unexplained wealth order.

The amendments will clarify which process a person must use to seek an exclusion order for properties subject to an unexplained wealth order. The amendment resolves an ambiguity about whether a person can apply for an exclusion order in relation to property the subject of an unexplained wealth restraining order using the process that applies to exclusions from other types of restraining orders. These other processes do not require the court to be satisfied that the property does not need to be restrained to satisfy an unexplained wealth order. The amendments will confirm that if a person

seeks an exclusion order in relation to property subject to an unexplained wealth restraining order, they must satisfy the court that the property does not need to be restrained to satisfy an unexplained wealth order. This will ensure that the scheme operates as intended.

The bill also amends the Crimes (Sentence Administration) Act to make process improvements to the intensive correction order scheme. An intensive correction order allows an offender to serve a sentence of imprisonment in the community under strict conditions. One of the core conditions of intensive correction orders is for offenders not to commit or be convicted of a new offence punishable by imprisonment. If an offender is convicted of a new offence punishable by imprisonment, the court which imposed the intensive correction order must cancel that order and order the offender to serve the rest of the sentence in prison unless it would not be in the interests of justice to do so.

The amendments made by the bill clarify the process for bringing an offender who is serving an intensive correction order when convicted of a new offence punishable by imprisonment before the appropriate court. The amendments also clarify which court must deal with the intensive correction order breach, depending on which court made or amended the intensive correction order and which court convicts the offender for the new offence.

The bill amends the Criminal Code to correct a drafting anomaly in the provisions for the offence of serious vilification. The offence prohibits the most extreme or threatening forms of discrimination. The bill does not make any substantive change to the offence but corrects a cross-reference to one of the elements of the offence which arose when an additional form of discrimination was added to the list of types of discrimination relevant to this offence. The bill does not change the nature of the offence or the types of behaviour this offence covers. The anomaly addressed by the incorrect cross-reference has not affected any potential prosecutions of the offence.

Finally, the bill amends the Magistrates Court Act to change the time frame for appeals against convictions. The Standing Committee on Justice and Community Safety recommended this change in 2015, as part of its inquiry into sentencing reports. This amendment gives effect to that information. Currently, an appeal against a Magistrates Court conviction must be lodged within 28 days of conviction. In some cases, this time frame has expired before sentencing, which means that the accused cannot take the sentence into account in deciding whether to appeal. It also means that the defendant sometimes needs to lodge two appeals, one against the conviction and another against the sentence.

This amendment provides that a defendant can appeal against a Magistrates Court conviction in the 28 days after sentencing. This has benefits for defendants, who can make an informed decision about whether to appeal. It will also streamline the appeals process, as fewer defendants will file separate appeals against conviction and sentence.

As flagged by Mr Cain, I will also be moving amendments in the detail stage of the debate, to include amendments to the Bail Act to support a more flexible and

contemporary approach to the way the courts can notify an accused person that their bail has been extended. Like the amendments in the bill as introduced, these proposed additional amendments will improve the operation of provisions supporting our criminal justice system. I commend the bill to the Assembly.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Bill agreed to in principle.

Detail stage

Bill, by leave, taken as a whole.

MR RATTENBURY (Kurrajong—Attorney-General, Minister for Consumer Affairs, Minister for Gaming and Minister for Water, Energy and Emissions Reduction) (4.36): I seek leave to move amendments Nos 1 and 2 circulated in my name together.

Leave granted.

MR RATTENBURY: I move amendments Nos 1 and 2 circulated in my name together and table a supplementary explanatory statement to the amendments [*see schedule 1 at page 763*]. As I have flagged in the previous comments, this bill makes minor technical amendments to the provision of several acts to improve the efficacy and clarity of criminal justice legislation.

I want to speak specifically here about the amendments around bail. They are an attempt to address an issue highlighted by a recent decision in the ACT Magistrates Court and relate to provisions of the Bail Act to deal with the service of notices to continue bail. The amendments follow consideration of these provisions in light of the decision in *Elder v Metyang* that the court has a mandatory legal obligation to immediately, personally, serve an accused person with a notice to continue bail.

The primary purpose of bail is to ensure that an accused person reappears in court, either to face charges or to be sentenced. The purpose of a notice to continue bail is to notify the accused person of the place, date and time to which the proceedings are adjourned or postponed and/or to notify the accused person that proceedings are adjourned or postponed to a yet to be determined place, date and time.

The decision in *Elder* highlighted an inconsistency between an expressed legal requirement to immediately serve notices to continue bail personally and the established practice of the law courts registry to post notices to continue bail to an accused person in some circumstances, including where an accused person is absent from proceedings due to illness or accident. It also highlighted that the methods of service available for notices to continue bail were unduly limited and did not reflect contemporary methods of communication. The government will shortly amend the bail regulation to provide for more flexible and contemporary methods by which bail notices can be communicated.

These government amendments complement the amendments to the bail regulation for service of bail continuation notices. The amendments replaced a requirement for immediate service with a requirement for service as soon as practicable. There are circumstances in which an accused is not able to be served immediately following the court continuing bail, including when the accused person is not present at court.

In addition, the amendments allow an accused person to nominate one of the methods of service prescribed by the updated regulation other than personal service on the person or any other person. The court must then use the method of service. If the accused person does not nominate a method of service, the court may use one of the methods of service in the regulation. A consequential amendment to the regulation is also made by these government amendments. I commend the amendments to the Assembly.

Amendments agreed to.

Bill as a whole, as amended, agreed to.

Bill, as amended, agreed to.

Mental health—veterans

MS DAVIDSON (Murrumbidgee—Assistant Minister for Seniors, Veterans, Families and Community Services, Minister for Disability, Minister for Justice Health and Minister for Mental Health) (4.41): I move:

That this Assembly:

(1) recognises that:

- (a) mental health is a long-standing and prevailing concern for the Veteran community;
- (b) overall, Australian Defence Force (ADF) personnel have a suicide rate nearly twice the rate of suicide after leaving the ADF;
- (c) women who have left the ADF are 127 percent more likely to die by suicide than the average Australian woman;
- (d) there is currently an absence of robust data on the factors contributing to Veteran suicide; and
- (e) the public data currently available on Veteran suicide shows an urgent national crisis;

(2) recognises that the ACT is home to a significant population of current and ex-serving ADF members and they are valued members of our community;

(3) notes that:

- (a) there is significant community-led advocacy and appetite for a Royal Commission into the rate of suicide among current and former serving ADF personnel, with over 397 000 signatures on a public petition (<https://www.change.org/p/a-royal-commission-into-the-veteran-suicide-rate-in-australia>);

- (b) on 18 March 2021 a motion was passed, unanimously, in the Australian Senate, calling on the Morrison Government to establish a Royal Commission into Veterans Suicide; and
- (c) on 22 March this motion passed the House of Representatives; and
- (4) calls on the Australian Government to urgently establish a Royal Commission into Veterans Suicide, noting the Ministerial Advisory Council for Veterans and their Families have expressed a desire for a “standing”, or “rolling” Royal Commission, which allows for actions while any inquiries are undertaken.

I would like to acknowledge the thousands of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who are currently serving, or who have served, in the Australian Defence Force. I would also like to recognise and pay respect to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Veterans and Services Association of Australia, who work closely with other ex-service organisations to seek out Indigenous veterans and ensure that they receive the support they are entitled to.

I rise to seek the support of this Assembly to endorse and back growing calls from the community for a royal commission into veteran suicide. In doing so, I extend my deepest condolences to the parents, partners, children, friends and colleagues of veterans who have died by suicide. On 18 March 2021 the Australian Senate unanimously voted to support a royal commission. On 22 March the House of Representatives also voted to support a royal commission. This is due in no small part to Julie-Ann Finney’s tireless advocacy and her courage in sharing her very personal pain at losing her son to suicide.

The ACT has a significant veteran population, estimated at around 26,000 veterans and their families. I pay tribute to the organisations and groups that support our local veterans—ex-service organisations, local RSLs, the Veterans Support Centre, Canberra Legacy, Open Arms, Soldier On, the ACT Totally and Permanently Incapacitated Ex-Servicemen and Women Association, and many community-led groups that form a network of support on the front line of this issue. I thank them for their work and commit to supporting them in this.

The rate of mental ill health and suicide among veterans is much higher than in the broader community. Available estimates vary and, due to under-reporting, do not give us the full picture. Australian Institute of Health and Welfare data shows that nationally there has been an average of one suicide death of a veteran per fortnight since 2001. I understand that since October 2020 that number is more like one per week. This data also does not take into account the “near misses”—those who have suicidal ideation but have not died by suicide.

The devastating impacts of suicide on families and the broader community are incalculable. For every life lost, a family and community experience the distinct grief and bereavement associated with suicide. Such bereavement can increase the risk of physical and mental health problems. It can be isolating and stigmatising.

Each and every death leaves a family anguished and searching for answers. Each loss exposes a chasm of complex systemic and institutional failings. Each death leaves a

stain on our national conscience. We know that the rate of suicide in ex-serving men is 18 per cent higher than in the broader population of men. The rate of suicide in ex-serving women is 127 per cent higher than in the broader population of women.

Just take a moment to let that sink in. The rate of suicide in women who have left service is 127 per cent higher than in the broader population of women. Let me state again that we believe the rate of deaths doubled from October last year, around the time that media coverage of the Afghanistan files intensified—coverage that included public discussion of Australian Defence Force culture.

I do not often speak publicly about my work at Navy. I want to be able to speak positively about a place where I really felt that I could make a difference, both in technology and in workplace culture. But I cannot unsee what I have seen, I cannot unhear what I have heard, and I know that there is a deep problem within Defence culture.

I wish I was shocked at the disproportionate impact on women, but I have heard senior officers say that serving women would not be sexually assaulted if the Navy just never let them on ships in the first place; that there were serving women who found a boyfriend on board as soon as they went to sea, as protection from other men on board; lawyers' briefs dismissing a civilian woman's complaint of sexual assault because she chose to go onto the base; the women I worked with who talked about the days, earlier in their career, when some women hid the fact that they were married because that would have meant not being allowed to go to sea and limiting career progress; and the man who was physically assaulted and bullied at sea because he did not perform masculinity in a way that conformed to the extremely narrow standard of some of his colleagues.

Have we learnt nothing in recent weeks about dangerous workplace cultures, how they relate to power and how this is informed by ideas about gender? When the Brereton report was published in November, it felt like a kick in the guts to all of us who worked so hard to try and create a positive workplace culture and keep serving personnel connected and whole as human beings.

I can claim that I am not responsible because the offenders were not Navy and I did the best I could where I worked, but it does not feel good enough to me and it does not feel true. I do not have language suitable for this place to express what it feels like. Navy culture at its best encouraged us to set a high standard, to work hard, to show respect and support our team, and to take the right action when we saw a problem.

Governments, too, need to take the right action to support our veterans. A defence force is not made up of trucks, tents or guns; it is made up of people. What kind of society are we if we do not care for and support our people? This is an urgent national crisis. Many reviews and inquiries, narrower in scope and lesser in power, have failed to stem it. Every time we have an inquiry where independence, scope and powers are questioned and which fails to produce change, trust in those positions of authority is eroded. And veterans keep dying, every week. This cannot continue.

In February 2020 Prime Minister Scott Morrison announced he would establish a national commissioner for defence and veteran suicide prevention. While this was a promising first step, the position does not provide the independent oversight needed. A royal commission would afford the issue of veteran suicide the status, resources, powers and scope that the issue demands. A royal commission would pick up the threads of prior and ongoing research and inquiries, while ensuring community input and participation, and placing it at the highest level of inquiry and on the public record.

The community is advocating for a royal commission because they are, by design, fearless and independent. The royal commission's broad-ranging investigatory powers, including powers of compulsion, the capacity to offer protection for witnesses and the ability to identify systemic and institutional failings, would get to the truth. The process would be broadly respected and the outcomes would be trusted.

A royal commission will not press pause on current and continuing responses to this crisis. We can and should continue to resource veteran mental health, wellbeing and suicide prevention while the work of the royal commission continues. Our defence forces have great power, and with great power comes great responsibility. We have a duty to ensure that those who have given the commitment to serve are not left to fall through the cracks. We owe it to the veteran community, to those who have died by suicide and to their families left behind to establish the highest form of truth seeking on this issue.

A royal commission is also an important symbol of hope. To look unflinchingly at the truth requires courage. In calling for a royal commission, I ask all of us to have the courage to open an honest discussion about how we, as a government and as a community, can understand and address the issues. It is time for us as a nation to respond to the community's call to action and establish a royal commission into veteran suicide. I commend the motion.

MR HANSON (Murrumbidgee) (4.49): I thank Ms Davidson for bringing a very important issue to the Assembly, one close to my heart. I will start by talking about my experience. I spoke about it in 2017 and I will quote from that speech, as a lot of members would not have been in this place when I spoke then. I said:

I also know firsthand from my own experience the impact of defence service and how it can affect families. As an Army wife with limited family support, Fleur held our family together in 2007 when I spent about 10 months away from home as a result of my job. With a very young child who was sick for much of the time, an older stepson, and a job to hold down, she would often find herself in tears at night from loneliness, worry and exhaustion. This is not an uncommon event.

I have also experienced firsthand the effects of returning from active service. It is now about a decade—

this was back in 2017—

since I returned and it is only now that I have the confidence to talk in this place about how hard that was. I am not sure entirely why, I do not dwell on it, but a

few weeks after my return from active service I fell into a deep slump. I do not know that it was depression. I do not know what it was. But at that time I had regular thoughts of taking my own life. With the support of Fleur, I picked myself up and moved on, and our story has a happy ending. Sadly, for many vets and their families there is no happy ending.

Many vets are not coping by themselves. They need our help as a community and they need the support of government at all levels. This crusade that I have been on—and I am glad to see that Minister Ramsay is seemingly joining that crusade, and I congratulate him again on that and urge him to continue to do so—to improve the lives of veterans and service members and their families is personal for me. I will continue to fight for veterans and their families as long as I am in this place.

So this is an issue that is close to me. And it is not just my own experience but the experience of many of those I have served with. Those who were under my command in Iraq have struggled with issues, as have many as others.

We have enjoyed in this place a very bipartisan approach to this issue. I worked very closely with Gordon Ramsay. If there were issues to be dealt with, we would communicate well. I must say that I was bitterly disappointed to see the motion on the notice paper today. That was the first I was aware of it.

I spoke to veterans groups and rang them to see what they thought about this issue. The veterans groups I spoke to had not been consulted and were not aware that this motion was being brought before the Assembly today. Given the complexity of these issues and the emotion that can be caused around them, it is very important, as we have these debates, to make sure that those who are affected by them in the ACT have that involvement.

When it comes to the issue of a royal commission, there are mixed views. There are significant mixed views. I spoke to a number of veterans organisations today. Personally, I do not mind a royal commission; I will go to that. I do not think there is anyone that I am aware of on my side who is opposing it. But we need to understand the complexity of this environment.

As Ms Davidson alluded to, the government looked at this issue some time ago, considered a royal commission and consulted and discussed with veterans groups and veterans on what is the best way forward.

A royal commission certainly serves a purpose. The Minister for Veterans' Affairs and the Prime Minister do not oppose it. The problem is that it is a snapshot in time. Think about the veterans issues that have been plaguing this nation from World War I, when we called it shell shock, through World War II to the real trauma suffered by veterans from Vietnam and in later conflicts. Each conflict is different. Each circumstance is unique. Ms Davidson talked about the role of women. That is not something that was occurring significantly in Vietnam, World War II or World War I, but it is a genuine, important issue now. A royal commission only looks at a snapshot in time.

The government started a process of consultation in February 2020 and announced the National Commissioner for Defence and Veteran Suicide Prevention. At that stage, it was supported in a bipartisan way. It has been through consultation. It has been through a committee process. It has all the powers of a royal commission. It is independent. It makes findings and recommendations. It has the power to require documents, summon witnesses, take evidence on oath, receive information and evidence in private, and refer potential breaches to the law. But it is established as a permanent body. The concept is that as veterans issues emerge—as they develop, as they progress—that can be looked at by the commissioner. Dr Bernadette Boss, who is a former magistrate in the ACT, has been appointed as the interim commissioner.

This has broad support. Mental Health Australia supports it. It said:

Mental Health Australia strongly supports the objectives of the National Commissioner for Defence and Veteran Suicide Prevention Bill.

Suicide Prevention Australia said:

We believe the commissioner will drive accountability, transparency and systemic change to prevent suicide and suicidal behaviour ...

The Defence Force Welfare Association said, in referring to the Prime Minister:

... his initiative in doing so was widely applauded within both the veteran community and among serving ADF members. DFWA and its Alliance of Defence Service Organisation (ADSO) partners welcomed it.

There was a view that, notwithstanding some staunch continued support for a Royal Commission into veterans suicides, a National Commissioner would serve veterans far better than another inquiry that many felt would do little more than lead yet again to a lengthy process of inquiry and result in a series of tedious conclusions.

And there is a list: the Vietnam Veterans Federation of Australia, the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists, RSL Australia, Legacy Australia, the Air Force Association, Soldier On, RSL National, RSL Queensland, Mates4Mates, Suicide Prevention Australia, and others.

As I said, I have spoken to veterans today about this process. There are mixed views. I have circulated an amendment that seeks to encapsulate those mixed views and have a win-win. If we are going to treat veterans issues as a bipartisan issue, I do not think we want to have barneys. If they are having that barney on the hill, good luck to them. I do not think they are, because the words from the Prime Minister indicate that he is open to a royal commission, as is the minister. They have not opposed it. Based on what I am aware of, that there were coalition members voting for it, this is not something that would be opposed.

The minister and the Prime Minister are of the view that what is very important is to have something that has those powers, that has that ability as a standing body so that

in 10 years we are not having to have another royal commission—that we are not having to come back to deal with these issues again but that issues can be dealt with on an ongoing basis.

I have circulated an amendment. It is a pretty simple one. It takes on everything that Ms Davidson has put into her motion up to “calls on”. It strengthens the motion. It notes that the National Commissioner for Defence and Veteran Suicide Prevention has the powers of a royal commission and has the additional benefit of being ongoing. It notes that the national commissioner has received strong support from veterans, medical, suicide prevention and mental health organisations. It notes that Dr Bernadette Boss CSC was appointed as the interim commissioner in November last year. It calls on this Assembly to support the National Commissioner for Defence and Veteran Suicide Prevention. It calls on Ms Davidson to write to the federal Minister for Veterans’ Affairs supporting the national commissioner and asking that he consider a separate royal commission into veteran suicide following the successful passage of legislation for the national commissioner.

As ministers here would be aware, it is not for an Assembly to establish a royal commission—or, as it is here, an inquiry under the Inquiries Act. It is for a minister. Establishing a permanent, ongoing process and then looking towards a royal commission is a win-win. It achieves everything that we are seeking to do in this space.

Importantly, it deals with the potentially mixed views out there. When I spoke to people today, the view expressed by the Defence Force Welfare Association was that the last thing we need is another royal commission that is just a snapshot in time and takes a whole bunch of resources, time and effort out of what they are doing. I do not necessarily share that view. I am not opposed to a royal commission in any sense. But why not do this in a collaborative way, in a way that unites the veteran community, rather than seeking to, in a sense, pick a winner and say to those other veterans who have a view, “No; I am going to impose what I want to do”?

I will be disappointed if the government will not support my amendment, because it is an action that will result in something constructive. It will be constructive rather than what we have at the moment, which is calling on the federal government to do something. We have had this many times in this place. We all agree that that is not within the remit of this Assembly. We cannot call on another parliament to do something. It just does not happen.

Ms Cheyne: Yes, we can. We absolutely can. We did it today.

MR HANSON: We are writing a letter. Exactly the process that you followed, Ms Cheyne, is what I am suggesting. What I am saying is, “Rather than just this bunch of words here that do not result in anything, do exactly what Ms Cheyne did, exactly what she did.” Let’s have a letter expressing the view of our Assembly as a way forward that is a united view of this place and seeks to address all the views of veterans that are expressed out there that I have spoken on. There is a way forward. There is a way forward that is bipartisan and that addresses the broader expression of concern from veterans. I hope that is the will of this Assembly.

As I have said in this place before, I think the veteran community has benefited from a united team, with all three parties working together on veterans issues. I have commended the previous minister on regular occasions for doing so. I can speak again where I have spoken before. I offer my support to the minister in a genuine way to advance this important cause. I thank the former minister for the genuine interest that he showed in this portfolio. I also congratulate him on the appointment of Alison Creagh as the chair of the veterans advisory council.

I hope that we can have bipartisanship and that there will not be a refusal to engage in discussion on the motion that has been brought before this place, a refusal to engage with the veterans community in a significant sense on motions that are going to be brought in this place and the ones I spoke to, and a refusal to address the substantive issues before veterans. I hope it is not just a matter of trying to play wedge politics, trying to pick one side of this debate and come in here and make proclamations because you think there is some political gain in that. I really hope that is not what you are intending to do. I hope that we can work together on veterans issues, but let me say that I am disappointed in the way that this has played out today, without my even knowing that this was coming before the Assembly and with no engagement on the amendments—just a simple no.

I will continue to do everything I can to fight for veterans in this place. I will do that. I would like to do it in a bipartisan way, working together, because that is the best thing we can do for veterans. If it is the will of the Assembly, of those opposite, that that is not the way they want to proceed—if they want to bring political fights from elsewhere into this place so that they can score some political points, have a fight in this place on veterans issues and not discuss these issues with the opposition and with people who have already spoken in this place about how they had suicidal thoughts following their deployments—then shame on all of us.

I move:

(1) Replace all words after paragraph (4), substitute:

- “(4) notes that the Federal Government has announced the National Commissioner for Defence and Veteran Suicide Prevention which has the powers of a royal commission and has the additional benefit of being ongoing;
- (5) notes that the National Commissioner has received strong support from Veterans’ medical, suicide prevention and mental health organisations;
- (6) notes that Dr Bernadette Boss CSC was appointed as the interim commissioner on 16 November 2020;
- (7) calls on this Assembly to support the National Commissioner for Defence and Veteran Suicide Prevention; and
- (8) calls on Ms Davidson to write to the Federal Minister for Veterans’ Affairs supporting the National Commissioner, and asking that he consider a separate Royal Commission into Veterans’ suicide following the successful passage of legislation establishing the National Commissioner for Defence and Veteran Suicide Prevention.”

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) (5.03): I rise tonight to speak in support of the motion, and I commend it being brought today. I acknowledge especially Ms Davidson and the power of her voice as minister and as a veteran in moving this motion and speaking to it so candidly. I also acknowledge Mr Hanson for speaking candidly and sharing again his experience. I remember very vividly his speech in 2017—was it an adjournment speech or MPI?—and the profound effect that it had on me and the insight it gave me to Mr Hanson as well. I thank you again for ensuring those words are heard and that that is understood.

I do not think that any of us in this place today, and certainly not any of us speaking, mean any disrespect. In fact, it is the opposite. I want to recognise the service of members past and present of the Australian Defence Force. Thank you for your service, and I acknowledge that this conversation is emotional and is triggering. I want to assure Mr Hanson that this is not about wedge politics; certainly not from me. This is supported by both houses of parliament on the hill, and I hope that, going forward, we can all work together in that spirit.

Members will recall that in this place almost exactly two years ago I spoke about the extraordinary life and contribution of David Stafford Finney. Dave served in the Navy for 20 years, a long career as a marine technician and electrical engineer, where he was deployed and did tours in Bougainville, East Timor and the Middle East. He lived a life helping others. He was internationally acclaimed as a hero, and it is well-known that he directly and indirectly saved the lives of many. Dave also shared candidly that his service medals were not free. Dave wanted to stay alive. You can still read his powerful words, his stories, where he discussed his service and the impression that it left on him and how it changed him.

Dave wanted to stay alive. Dave died by suicide. This is a tragedy, and it is a national tragedy because one veteran a week is dying by suicide. I said at the time that Dave's story could not be over and that it was not, and since then his mother, Julie-Ann, has made abundantly sure of that.

Since Dave's death, Julie-Ann has bravely called for a royal commission, nothing less; a royal commission, properly funded, properly resourced. It is not about issues that will emerge; we know what the issues are now, and I think that was reflected in both of the speeches before mine. It is not something to look into the future deaths of veterans, like the national commission proposes. How will that help? Not something that has a smidgeon of the funding that a royal commission would have. Not a royal commission lite, not some token set up to appease. What is needed is a royal commission to examine the deaths that have already occurred—to determine why they happened, what changes need to be made to the system, how we can do better by our past and current veterans and future veterans—and turn this absolute tragedy around.

Saving lives. That is the heart of this motion—to save the lives of veterans who have already sacrificed so much of themselves in serving their country. This does not mean that other work to support veterans cannot continue through the mental health and

support services and the many, many organisations that Ms Davidson mentioned and thanked. Of course they can, and rightly should. But a royal commission, properly funded and with a genuine and not token terms of reference, will have the powers and the scope to amplify this work and deliver real change—to save lives.

In her campaign, Julie-Ann has not been alone. Her voice has been joined by hundreds and thousands of voices—voices who have never spoken before; voices from some who have never before felt comfortable doing so despite privately sharing their view; voices who know that they might be drawing ire but now speak up because it is people like Julie-Ann who have created the space for them and because it is the right thing to do; voices from unlikely corners; voices from across the political spectrum and now from both houses of parliament, calling for a royal commission, nothing less.

It is an all too common theme of this year that we, all of these voices united, are asking the federal government to do just two simple things: to listen and to act on what it hears. Listen to the hundreds of thousands of voices calling for a royal commission. Listen to the majority of members in its own parliament. And, by doing so, do better for and by our veterans.

I cannot speak today without touching on some of the appalling, deeply unfair, unfounded and, frankly, odious comments that have been directed towards Ms Finney, in the last few days in particular. Women are sick of being belittled by men in suits. Julie-Ann is a woman and a proud mother who is sick of being belittled by men in suits. Just the other day the RSL president said that Julie-Ann had done immense damage to the cause. That is absolute nonsense—and wrong. Rather than causing damage, Julie-Ann has brought a national spotlight to the cause. She has given people courage. People are caring who might never have understood what an incredible national tragedy this is without her work. People are listening. That the Prime Minister has even started to listen is because of her.

The RSL president unfathomably commented that Julie-Ann's campaign is to assuage her guilt about Dave's death. How dare he? This is about achieving accountability for her son, a mother achieving accountability for her son. And it is not just Julie-Ann. There are mothers across the country wanting accountability for their children. There are people across the country wanting accountability for their brothers and sisters, for their friends, for their colleagues. Yet men—and it has been men—are using their platforms to try to undermine a woman, to somehow describe her campaign as less because she is a mother. That is beyond the pale. I challenge them to speak to her and with her. I hope that perhaps after today Mr Hanson might speak with Julie-Ann too, and I am happy to help arrange that.

I know and understand why some people might be attracted to the idea of a national commission, but they need to actually read what is proposed. I do not support Mr Hanson's amendments, even though I understand the intention. I do not think that there has been a barney on the hill. Two houses of parliament have agreed that there should be a royal commission. The point of having a royal commission now is to deal with the issues we already know about. We know what they are.

The national commission can come after the royal commission. That is what would be logical here. It is illogical to have an ongoing commission before a royal commission. Consider the royal commission into child sexual abuse. Royal commission first, with wide-ranging, incredible powers, fully scoped, properly funded. What has come from that is long-lasting change, things that will have an ongoing effect like the redress scheme. And that is the right order here.

In closing, I thank Ms Davidson for the opportunity to speak on this today and for bringing this forward. This is a critically important issue. I think that we are united about how critically important it is; we just have a different way of going about it. I think, perhaps with further conversations, we can agree, and I hope that might be the way forward in the future.

MS DAVIDSON (Murrumbidgee—Assistant Minister for Seniors, Veterans, Families and Community Services, Minister for Disability, Minister for Justice Health and Minister for Mental Health) (5.13): I acknowledge that there are a diversity of views out there, and that is actually the reality when we have approximately 26,000 veterans and their families in our city with diverse experiences and views. I thank Mr Hanson for pointing out the excellent work done by the Ministerial Advisory Council on Veterans and their Families. They are an incredibly high-performing advisory council, and I appreciate all of the work that they do. The advice they have given me is that there is support for a standing or rolling royal commission and that they would like to see terms of reference for the standing commission being very broad.

As the minister responsible for veterans, I recently wrote to the federal Minister for Veterans' Affairs, outlining issues relating to mental health service access for the local veteran community. The ACT government is also a member of the veterans wellbeing task force, an intergovernmental forum on veteran mental health and wellbeing issues and responses.

When I spoke to the Liberal Party leader recently about this motion, I also spoke about the urgent and ongoing need for mental health services for our veterans. The ACT government is committed to supporting the mental health and wellbeing of veterans and reducing the incidence of suicide. The ACT government provides a range of clinical and non-clinical mental health, suicide prevention and postvention support services to veterans, including the Way Back service delivered by Woden Community Service. We also have free inpatient care through Hyson Green, the private psychiatry unit operated by Calvary Bruce Hospital, and through various veterans cards.

The access mental health team administered through Canberra Health Services provides a 24/7 phone intake, assessment, information and referral service and each call is triaged and prioritised according to the individual's needs and specific circumstances. We also provide Step Up, Step Down services across the ACT, both residential and outreach supports.

Given the relatively high population of serving and ex-serving veterans in the ACT, there is a strong need for us to work closely with the commonwealth government to

improve veteran mental health and prevent suicide. The ACT government and the Department of Veterans' Affairs have undertaken a joint feasibility study into the potential for a national research centre and a telehealth or digital health hub in the ACT. The results of the feasibility study may provide an opportunity to enhance mental health research and link services from the ex-service organisations and broader community support to veterans and their families.

It is my intention to continue to do this work and to work in collaboration with the federal government to ensure that we are able to deliver services in the ACT that meet needs. I am hopeful that a royal commission will help us to better understand the issues.

Question put:

That the amendment be agreed to.

The Assembly voted—

Ayes 9

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

Noes 16

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

Amendment negatived.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Adjournment

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

That the Assembly do now adjourn.

National Association of Women in Construction ACT 2020 Awards

MS LAWDER (Brindabella) (5.21): I rise today to recognise the National Association of Women in Construction ACT, also known as NAWIC ACT. NAWIC has a growing membership here in the ACT and they provide many services to women in industry, including professional networking tools, awards, education, mentoring, programs and scholarships. All these initiatives help NAWIC ACT to achieve their goals of breaking down stereotypes surrounding women in construction and providing support to the women doing so.

It is important work, considering that as at 2020 women make up only 12.7 per cent of the construction industry's workforce. These statistics are why it is so important to recognise the contributions of the 2020 ACT NAWIC award winners. The NAWIC award celebrates the achievement of members in a male-dominated construction industry and has the help of generous members of the Canberra industry who support the NAWIC ACT chapter with financial sponsorship. The winners are exciting examples of what a more diverse, gender-balanced future in the construction industry can achieve, and some of those are here today. Welcome to your Assembly.

Last year 12 deserving women received awards. The prestigious Crystal Vision Award went to Rebecca Power, the first female branch manager of commercial infrastructure at Major Projects Canberra who has personally prioritised the promotion of women through parental leave. The Emerging Leader in Construction Award was given to Satomi Honda, a qualified geotech engineer and current site manager at Kane Constructions. She is dedicated to challenging stereotypes surrounding women in construction.

Construction Businesswoman of the Year went to Tush Gerebtzoff. She founded two businesses in the construction industry, including Queen Bee Construction. Within her businesses she is dedicated to the elevation of women through opportunity, promotion and work experience. The Capital Region Student of the Year went to Ashleigh Johnston. Originally a receptionist, she was inspired to commence her bachelor of construction management because she observed incredible women in the industry.

The Leadership in Construction Award went to Jillian Rheinberger, a senior project manager who is passionate about diversity, actively promoting discussion surrounding gender issues. Tradeswoman of the Year went to Anita Hac, who has made an outstanding contribution in the construction industry, including a role in the short film *Redraw the Balance ACT*. And mentor of the year went to Lucie Hassall, the general manager for Invasive Species Solutions. She founded the Women in Lend Lease Program, a female-led network which aims to improve the retention of women in the workforce.

The Achievements in Engineering Award went to Michelle Dimoski, a geotechnical engineer who has a reputation for prompt and precise consults. She has been instrumental in providing opportunities and courses for women. The Innovation in Construction Industry Award went to Vanessa Brady, the project director of the COVID-19 surge centre. You may recall this project was completed to a high standard in only seven days.

The Achievement in Design Award went to Belinda Barnes, whose design for the Stromlo Leisure Centre was notable for its incorporation of future planning considerations. The Achievements in Safety Award went to Rhiannon Sutherland who, in her capacity as work health and safety coordinator at Kane Constructions, has taken on a mentor role at the Canberra Institute of Technology.

Finally, but by no means least, the Diversity and Inclusion Award went to Kane Constructions who, over the past year, have transformed themselves into a company focused on championing gender and equity, with 44 per cent of their staff now female.

All of these women have shown strength and initiative through their work in the challenging field of construction and are very much deserving of our commendation. Last year, when they received their awards, was a difficult year to celebrate the awards in a range of events that might otherwise have occurred and that is why I thought it was important to recognise their achievements here in the Assembly.

Finally, I give a big thank you to the committee of NAWIC ACT for all of their hard work and dedication. This is a volunteer role for them in addition to their day jobs, if you like, so thank you to them for their passion in helping other women in the construction industry.

Multicultural affairs—International Mother Language Day

MS VASSAROTTI (Kurrajong) (5.26): Today I rise to reflect on the significance of a special event I attended on 21 February organised by the High Commission of the People's Republic of Bangladesh. It was the commemoration of Language Martyrs Day and International Mother Language Day.

As members may know, Bangladesh was formerly part of the Dominion of Pakistan. In 1948 the ordainment of Urdu as the national language sparked protests in East Bengal where Bangla was the language of the vast majority. On 21 February 1952, five students lost their lives while demonstrating for their mother language, Bangla.

A memorial was erected a few days later and since then Language Martyrs Day has been observed each year. The language movement was key for the struggle for independence and self-determination. Known as Ekushey—meaning 21st in Bangla—on this day homage is paid to the martyrs. People from all walks of life take part in a procession to place flowers at Shaheed Minar—or the Martyrs Monument—to pay respect.

The idea to celebrate International Mother Language Day was the initiative of Bangladesh, and on 17 November 1999 the United Nations Education Scientific and Cultural Organisation, or UNESCO, recognised 21 February as International Mother Language Day. It has been celebrated around the world since and recognises linguistic and cultural diversity and multilingualism.

I was very pleased to join the High Commissioner, His Excellency Mr Mohammed Sufiur Rahman, as well as many from the Bangladeshi community to observe Ekushey here in Canberra. We made the language walk around Manuka Oval to the Shaheed Minar to lay flowers.

My former colleague in this place Alistair Coe was also present, and I acknowledge his motion of 2017 calling on the ACT to celebrate International Mother Language Day. In his motion Mr Coe noted that approximately 170 languages are spoken in Canberra. This rich linguistic and cultural diversity matters. As UNESCO notes, multilingual and multicultural societies exist through their languages which transmit and preserve traditional knowledge and cultures in a sustainable way.

Sadly, we are seeing the loss of mother languages. As many as half of the world's 7,000 languages are expected to be extinct by the end of the century. It is particularly important for us in our own context as we reflect on the impact of the loss of language of our First Nations Peoples. We know the significance of loss of language in relation to the impact of a sense of identity, self-determination and connection to culture.

It is extremely exciting to see in our own community the reintroduction of the Ngunnawal language in a range of settings including in this chamber, with our acknowledgement of country spoken in Ngunnawal language by you, Madam Speaker. I wish you all a belated happy International Mother Language Day.

Yerrabi electorate—community events

MS CASTLEY (Yerrabi) (5.30): I rise today to highlight two fabulous events that have impacted my electorate of Yerrabi over the last week or so. I congratulate Michelle from Belconnen Arts, and her team. They ran a fabulous Celebrate Gungahlin Festival and had many marquees for satellite events across the week, despite crazy weather challenges. It was wonderful to see the community come together with an orchestra and music and talent concerts and all sorts of wonderful things.

Also, at the AHA Hospitality Awards this week two of our local businesses won awards. Siren Bar won the best beer quality draft and the best pub eatery, and BentSpoke won the best beer quality craft local and the general division for the year. So BentSpoke being my favourite, I was very pleased to hear both those businesses called out, and I congratulate them.

ACT Down Syndrome Association

MRS KIKKERT (Ginninderra) (5.31): Elizabeth Lee and I had the privilege last Friday evening of attending the Alderson Awards held at the Canberra Southern Cross Club in Woden hosted by the ACT Down Syndrome Association. What a fantastic event that so many looked forward to attending, especially after the delays that COVID-19 brought last year. As a result, awards for both the 2020 and 2021 years were presented, recognising, showcasing and celebrating the personal achievements as well as community contributions of Canberrans with Down syndrome.

There were nominees and winners of all ages, and I was humbled by the vision, optimism and dedication of all of the award participants. The attendees were met with good food, entertainment, a silent auction and games, with the enthusiastic support of local businesses and other community members.

The evening was also an opportunity to celebrate World Down Syndrome Day, which was observed on 21 March. It is estimated that there are 13,000 to 15,000 people living with Down syndrome in Australia and hundreds of them are beloved Canberrans. I was grateful for the opportunity to meet so many individuals and families and to listen to their stories of courage and faith and love. People with Down syndrome want to and absolutely can live fulfilling lives, and the lives of others are

enriched by them as loving family members, as well as valued and respected members of the community.

I thank the ACT Down Syndrome Association for all their patience and hard work in organising this special occasion and for all the good work that they do to provide enduring support and information to people with Down syndrome, their families, carers and the wider community. I also extend my thanks to each of the sponsoring businesses who supported the event, the volunteers and the families and individuals who contributed in any way, including by attending. I felt blessed to be amongst such inspiring and devoted members of our community.

I take this opportunity to express my love and gratitude to all our Canberrans with Down syndrome, both young and old, and also their families. Thank you for all that you do.

Multicultural affairs—Sakyamuni Buddhist Centre
Multicultural affairs—India Australia Association of Canberra

MRS JONES (Murrumbidgee) (5.34): On 11 February I hosted a Lunar New Year event here at the Legislative Assembly. The event began with a speech by Liberals leader Elizabeth Lee about her Korean heritage and how important Lunar New Year is for her and her family. Elizabeth emphasised how lucky we are in the ACT that we can come together with the Chinese and other Asian communities to celebrate in this special way, despite COVID-19.

Next, Chin Wong outlined the foundations of the Chinese Australian Association in Canberra and how it has evolved over the years. Lastly, I spoke about the meaning of the Year of the Ox, that this year is about putting our heads down and working hard, with no expectations of glory—something that the Canberra Liberals will be doing this term, as always.

The major highlight of this event was the spectacular lion dance performance. It was a feast for the eyes and ears. We all enjoyed the lion's cheeky sense of humour and energetic rhythms. I would like to thank Sam and Chin Wong of the ACT Chinese Australian Association, and my office, for organising the event.

Later that evening I had the honour of attending the Buddhist temple in Lyneham to celebrate another Lunar New Year event with the Sakyamuni Buddhist Centre community. This centre has been a part of the local Canberra community since 1984 and provides religious services, cultural and charitable works, and community housing to assist vulnerable and disadvantaged Canberrans.

I was warmly welcomed by the monk of the temple for a delicious meal. He also told me the history of the temple and about some of the pictures on the wall. Ms Cheyne was there with me. We had an interesting time. As I entered the temple, I was amazed to see so many people in attendance, including, as always, many of my parliamentary colleagues.

For the Vietnamese, this year represents the Year of the Buffalo, the second animal in the 12 Vietnamese zodiac animals. As an example of the temple's charitable works, last year the temple raised \$100,000 to assist flood victims in Vietnam. When I spoke, I had a strong message for the children present: that they are our future and will play a truly important role in the community's future. Afterwards my colleagues and I handed out new year gifts to the children. That was a great joy.

Recently the centre has been undertaking construction work to expand its facilities to meet growing demand. Part of the building work has required the temple to sponsor Vietnamese Buddhist artisans to craft traditional Buddhist designs, carvings and sculptures that are central to the Buddhist faith. Unfortunately, they were only allowed to come to Australia for a short period and were unable to finish the building project. It has since been a struggle for the community to find the appropriate body to complete the remaining works. The Buddhist temple will appreciate our support for the continuation and completion of their new facilities. I certainly will be lending my support to help bring the skilled workers from overseas once it is safe to do so. I hope others in this place will also lend their support to this Buddhist centre and our local community.

On 20 February I had the honour of attending the Indian Association of Canberra event for their 75th anniversary, at the Weston Creek community hub. I would like to thank the president of the association, Sandi Mitra, for organising the event and speaking about the significance of Australia Day as a double celebration for Indian Australians, as it is also Indian Independence Day, celebrating their motherland of India and their current land of Australia. This association was established in 1973, with its main purpose being to promote understanding between the members and the local community, as well as assisting families to settle in the ACT and to develop contacts.

I also wish to thank my colleagues here in the chamber who were in attendance: Nicole Lawder, Elizabeth Lee, Mark Parton, Peter Cain, as well as Ms Cheyne—

Ms Cheyne: And Mr Steel.

MRS JONES: And Mr Steel; thank you, Ms Cheyne. I thank Nishi Puri, Amardeep Singh, Dr Krishna Nadimpalli, Ratesh Gumbar and Jacob Vaddekadathu, and our former colleague in the Assembly Mr Deepak-Raj Gupta. I also wish to thank Gladys Liu, the federal member for the electorate of Chisholm, who gave a speech on the importance of building strong relationships with the Australian Indian community.

We watched a variety of dance performances, including a traditional dance by Krishna Shukla; a Bollywood dance by a young boy called Ahan; modern pop by the Wonder Kids group; and Taj Sidhu, who encouraged everyone to get up and dance to his amazing acapella music. I had the privilege of singing *I am Australian*, by the Seekers. All leaders then gathered around the stage for group photos while singing the Indian and Australian national anthems. I would like to thank the Indian Association of Canberra for a culturally rich event, and delicious biryani, for those who waited for it. I wish them every success in 2021.

Arts—Phish and Phreak Productions

MR DAVIS (Brindabella) (5.38): On plenty of occasions, Madam Speaker, I will get up in this place wearing my hat either as the Greens spokesperson for business or as the Greens spokesperson for LGBTQIA+ people. It is rarer that I get to address you wearing both hats at the exact same time, so it insisted on an adjournment speech today.

I want to acknowledge and pay homage and respect to a small Canberra business, Phish and Phreak Productions, Madam Speaker—no doubt you have heard of them—who have managed to thrive and succeed and employ plenty of local queer artists in this COVID era. To be able put on live productions and live shows, start a small business, have that small business sustain itself, employ people from a marginalised community and present a place of belonging and a sense of home during the last 12 months, when, as we all well know, public gatherings have been particularly cumbersome, is worthy of note indeed.

Phish and Phreak Productions is the brainchild of Corey Passlow and drag queens Toni Kola and Faux nee Phish—fantastic drag names. They have provided entertainment for the community of Canberra for many, many years now in their own individual guises but have collaborated in this collective event.

Now, you know me very well, Madam Speaker. You know that it takes a very, very good reason to get me out of Tuggeranong. But on Friday night I did venture to the north side, the dark side as it were, and I went to the Boardwalk Bar in Belconnen. Ms Clay knows it well, but I had to go and experience it for myself to take in one of Phish and Phreak Production's shows, a drag takeover. I absolutely recommend it to you and to everybody here in the Assembly. If you have not already been, I am more than happy to shout you tickets and take you along to what is a formative queer culture experience.

I see Mr Milligan's eyebrows raise with enthusiasm, as if to say, "I didn't know I was getting free tickets first day back on the job." Mr Milligan, I will pick you up and take you out there because you will learn a thing or two about a thing or two and see some awesome small business people, some awesome Canberra artists. As art is supposed to do, Madam Speaker, it may challenge you. It may present some new ideas. It may provoke thoughts and feelings, not unlike the *Skywhale* does to me. I know it is unpopular. It is unpopular to get up in this place and say that the *Skywhale* does not tickle my fancy in the way that it should, but it does exactly what it is supposed to.

Mrs Jones: What about *Skywhalepapa*?

MR DAVIS: I will leave that one right alone, Mrs Jones, lest my contribution get unparliamentary. But, yes, art is supposed to provoke. Phish and Phreak do that uniquely well. But what they do exceptionally well, Madam Speaker, and it bears noting and drawing to the attention of this house, is business. The cut and thrust of the business world, not unlike the cut and thrust of the world of politics, they say, is a man's game. It is particularly challenging to present your differences in areas where

they often are not celebrated. To develop a small business where it is the things that make you different that exactly make you special, that have allowed them to manifest profit and to employ people and to entertain Canberrans is an incredibly exciting thing indeed.

Let me make it very, very clear to all of my fellow members who I have gotten to know in the few months that we have all been here. All of you know I have a penchant for *RuPaul's Drag Race*. Check it out on Stan if you have not already. I will stress the point that if you end up watching it and you end up enjoying it, you are not a drag fan unless you actually come along and see some local drag talent. There are *RuPaul's Drag Race* fans and actual fans of drag, and if you want to be an actual fan of drag, flick me a message and I will bring you along to the next Phish and Phreak show. You can find them online and buy tickets. See, once a salesperson, always a salesperson. Thank you.

Women—International Women's Day Multicultural affairs—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) (5.42): As we have touched on this sitting week, for many women the last few weeks have been shocking, dismaying, frustrating and triggering. But among these difficult times, women have also come together, from calling out unacceptable behaviours to providing support and inspiration, and in numbers like I have certainly never seen before. In addition to the March 4 Justice, some of the best local examples I have seen of this have been around International Women's Day.

I want to particularly note three organisations who hosted events, some for the first time, to mark the day. These are Alo-Enlightened Women, the Multicultural Association of Canberra, and the Canberra Labor Club group. All three were sold out, even in these COVID times. This is a testament to the organisation and leadership of each of these groups, but it also underlines the strength and the unity of our community. It was an honour to speak at each of these events, but I want to particularly highlight the work of Alo-Enlightened Women.

For those who do not know, it is a relatively new organisation, formed around 2019. Alo believes in gender equality for men and women across all walks of life, from personal to professional, in family environments, in the community or within organisational structures. Alo aims to provide a platform to engage on various issues that particularly touch women's lives within the culturally and linguistically diverse diaspora. It aims to broaden our understanding on significant gender issues and unconscious biases that exacerbate gender stereotypes within our societies and has a particular focus on the areas of women's leadership, the financial inclusion of women, women in tech, and violence against women and girls. I look forward to continuing to work with them closely, not just as a woman but also as Minister for Multicultural Affairs.

It was also very special to come together on Harmony Day just the other week to celebrate the launching of the peace pole for Canberra. This is a partner initiative between the Canberra Multicultural Community Forum and the Rotary Club of Canberra, which, as we know, is celebrating 100 years. It was launched by the Governor-General of Australia and the president of the CMFC, Chin Wong. Harmony Day, familiar to many of us here, promotes social inclusion and racial harmony, the strength of our diversity and inclusivity. The peace pole shares the message “may peace prevail on earth” in many languages—a simple message, but a physical reminder, too, that peace does not just occur but is something that we must always be working on together, united.

Finally, I also want to acknowledge that last week marked the 50th anniversary of the independence of Bangladesh. Australia enjoys a strong relationship with Bangladesh. Here in the ACT we are home to many people from Bangladesh or who are of Bangladeshi heritage. Our community is thoroughly enriched because of it.

I really do want to acknowledge that this anniversary is one of mixed emotions. It marked considerable loss, including an incredible loss of life. Some estimate that up to 500,000 people died in the liberation. I know that there are some very difficult memories that this anniversary can bring up, whether people lived through it or whether it brings up memories for their families too. But it is also an anniversary of strength and unity and what it means to come together, including as a relatively young nation.

It was special to be able to come together through celebrations last week. I was able to attend one which was organised by Kamrul, who is known to many of us—and Mr Braddock—who I absolutely commend for an excellent event where many stories were shared and songs were sung. Most importantly, we were able to reflect on what that anniversary meant and how important it was. Thank you.

Ginninderra electorate—community engagement

MR CAIN (Ginninderra) (5.47): I would like to reflect on my early time as an MLA and highlight some of the wonderful people, businesses and groups in Ginninderra and elsewhere that I have been very fortunate to meet and, at times, have helped to make a real difference. I say “my early time”, which does lead me to occasionally introduce myself as a baby MLA. I hope to move on in the next six months as a more mature version of that.

Most weeks I spend Friday and Saturday mornings out at local shopping centres, where I have some enlightening and, at times, challenging conversations with the residents of Ginninderra. But the people are the best part of the job and I am looking forward to hearing more from Ginninderrans over the coming months and years. I do get greeted strangely sometimes, one common greeting being, “Don’t you know the election is over?” and another being, “When is the election?” I give my most diplomatic response to those.

I would like to highlight a few of my constituent contacts and what I consider some notable achievements. It was great to meet with Lindsay, for example, out the front of his home in Latham, where construction trucks were parked in common area bushland, spoiling it in several ways. I met Paul in Hawker, near the Pinnacle nature park, where, rather unusually, a government-maintained drain ran uphill. I guess one should call that a pond rather than a drain. Robyn and Ian in Florey were concerned about mowing and the neglect of the local shops. Murray and Chris talked broadly about green space, planning and development.

I will give some snapshots of assistance I have been able to give to residents. I was glad to get the Minister for Planning and Land Management on record that the Margaret Timpson Park would be left as a green space. I helped a Weetangera resident, whose garden had been spoiled by weed spray, to get a good outcome after I wrote to the minister about that, despite there being a no-spray indication for that site.

I helped a student living in Dunlop with her request for improved car park conditions at CIT Reid and I helped with a Holt constituent's request to have potholes on Southern Cross Drive fixed. That is one of Ginninderra's main traffic routes that strangely develops potholes after light to medium rain. I supported several constituents with commonsense resolutions of parking infringement notices. I assisted a Page resident with a bulky waste removal request and ended up getting what should have been an original and correct decision. And I discussed road safety at the Jamison centre.

I have been fortunate to meet with local businesses, including Liquor Legends at Charnwood, Fraser Grocer, Duncan's Plumbing, Page Tavern, Evatt Pharmacy, INSKIN Care Beauty Salon, Evatt Takeaway and Pizza Bar, and Evatt Butchery. I would like to give a particular shout-out to Herbert's at Evatt, which is celebrating its first birthday this weekend. Come along and enjoy some local cheer.

I have also engaged with other organisations, both local and more broadly. It was a privilege to attend the Pakistan High Commission to celebrate Pakistan and, in the same week, to attend the Bangladeshi flag-raising ceremony. I have had the privilege on several occasions of attending men's sheds in Belconnen, including at Hawker and at Page, and discussing planning uses with the Ginninderra Falls Association, the Friends of Hawker Village and Emu Creek Landcare group. I also attended the whole of Canberra Neighbourhood Watch gathering in Belconnen last week.

I had the privilege of attending the Belconnen Arts Centre and having a tour there and of being involved, as I have been for several years, with the Belconnen Community Council and participating in several clean-up events and weeding in the local area. I have also had the great privilege of attending, with Minister Cheyne, the launch of the future vision document at the University of Canberra. Thank you.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

The Assembly adjourned at 5.52 pm until Tuesday, 20 April at 10.00 am.

Schedule of amendments

Schedule 1

Crimes Legislation Amendment Bill 2020

Amendments moved by the Attorney-General

1

Clause 3

Page 2, line 9—

insert

- *Bail Act 1992*
- *Bail Regulation 1992*

2

Proposed new parts 1A and 1B

Page 2, line 13—

insert

Part 1A Bail Act 1992

3A Written notice of conditions of bail Section 34 (4)

substitute

- (4) A court continuing bail on an adjournment or a postponement of a proceeding must give the accused person written notice stating—
 - (a) that bail is continued until the proceeding resumes; and
 - (b) the place, day and time at which the proceeding will resume or, if that is not yet decided, that the proceeding will resume at a place, day and time stated in an additional written notice; and
 - (c) the conditions on which bail is allowed.
- (5) A notice under subsection (4) must be given—
 - (a) as soon as practicable—
 - (i) after deciding to continue bail; or
 - (ii) for an additional notice—after deciding the place, day and time for resuming the proceeding; and
 - (b) in a way—
 - (i) prescribed by regulation (a *prescribed way of service*); or
 - (ii) if the accused person makes a nomination under subsection (6)—nominated by the person.
- (6) The accused person may nominate a prescribed way of service for being given a notice under subsection (4), other than a way that involves personal service on the person or any other person.
- (7) Failure to comply with subsection (4) or (5) does not invalidate the continuation of bail.

Part 1B **Bail Regulation 1992**

3B **Section 4 heading**

substitute

4 **Service of notice—Act, section 34 (5) (b) (i)**

Answers to questions

Waste—green bins (Question No 86)

Ms Lawder asked the Minister for Transport and City Services, upon notice, on 12 February 2021:

- (1) Can the Minister advise how many Canberra residents have registered for the ACT Green Waste Bin Program in total.
- (2) Of the number referred to in part (1), how many were eligible concession card holders.

Mr Steel: The answer to the member's question is as follows:

- (1) As of 31 Jan 2021, 87,513 Canberra residents have registered for the ACT Green Waste Bin Program since its introduction.
 - (2) Of the 87,513 registrations for the ACT Green Waste Bin Program there has been a total of 31,531 eligible concession card holder registrations.
-

Justice—parole conditions (Question No 87)

Mr Davis asked the Minister for Corrections, upon notice, on 12 February 2021:

- (1) How many people on parole have tested positive for cannabis (presence of Tetrahydrocannabinol) during drug testing, since 1 February 2020.
- (2) In how many instances, over the last 12 months, has an individual on parole cannabis use warranted the cancellation of their parole/intensive correction order.
- (3) What is the purpose of core parole conditions disallowing cannabis use even though cannabis use has been legalised for the rest of the population.

Mr Gentleman: The answer to the member's question is as follows:

1. ACT Corrective Services (ACTCS) has confirmed that since 1 February 2020, 35 parolees have tested positive for cannabis use.
2. Within this period, six parole orders were cancelled, however the cancellations were for multiple instances of non-compliance with cannabis use being only one factor in these.
3. Changes to allow limited possession of cannabis were made to the Drugs of Dependence Act 1989, however core conditions of parole orders are legislated under the *Crimes (Sentence Administration) Act 2005* and the *Crimes (Sentence Administration) Regulation 2006*.

For parole orders, the Sentence Administration Board (SAB) includes the core condition that an “offender must not use a prohibited substance, or abuse a medicine

that is lawfully obtained.” Where an alleged breach involving cannabis use is raised with the SAB and it is proved, the SAB must impose a sanction as required by law. (However, cannabis use alone is likely to be regarded as a minor breach with the sanction imposed likely to be ‘no further action’ or a ‘warning’.)

In a similar way, it remains an offence to drive with detectable amounts of the key psychoactive component of cannabis (tetrahydrocannabinol – THC) in road side drug test samples.

Drug rehabilitation programs—parole conditions (Question No 88)

Mr Davis asked the Minister for Corrections, upon notice, on 12 February 2021:

- (1) Does the current level of residential drug rehabilitation meet the demands of the offenders at the end of their non-parole period seeking entry into these programs.
- (2) How many people in the Alexander Maconochie Centre applied to be released on parole into residential drug and/or alcohol rehabilitation, in the last 12 months.
- (3) How many of those applicants referred to in part (2) were released into residential rehabilitation.

Mr Gentleman: I am advised that the answer to the member’s question is as follows:

- (1) ACT Corrective Services (ACTCS) does not routinely collect data regarding the demand for residential drug rehabilitation services among offenders seeking entry to programs at the end of their non-parole period.
- (2) ACTCS does not routinely collect this information, and a manual review of applications for parole over the last twelve months would be needed in order to respond in detail to this question. As such, it is not possible to provide this information within the requested timeframe.

Notwithstanding, the three judicial members of the Sentence Administration Board (SAB) – who collectively preside over every parole application matter before the SAB – observe that a small percentage of all parole applicants express an intention to enter a residential rehabilitation facility upon release.

- (3) Please see response to question 2 above. ACTCS is not able to provide this information within the requested timeframe.

Crime—drugs (Question No 89)

Mr Davis asked the Attorney-General, upon notice, on 12 February 2021:

- (1) How many people, in the last five years, have been charged with administering a declared substance to themselves as per section 37(2) of the *Medicines, Poisons and Therapeutic Goods Act 2008*.

(2) How many of those charged in total were found guilty of this offence.

Mr Rattenbury: The answer to the member's question is as follows:

There have been no charges under section 37(2) of the *Medicines, Poisons and Therapeutic Goods Act 2008*.

Government—procurement policy (Question No 90)

Mr Davis asked the Special Minister of State, upon notice, on 12 February 2021:

Are there procurement targets for the Charter of Procurement Values; if so, what mechanisms enforce those targets.

Mr Steel: The answer to the member's question is as follows:

1. The Charter of Procurement Values outlines the key values the ACT Government seeks to embed in its procurement practices.
 2. Territory entities are required to report which Procurement Values were, or will be, achieved as a result of entering into a notifiable contract. Data will be used internally to inform decision making, business support requirements and to monitor compliance with the Government Procurement (Charter of Procurement Values) Direction 2020.
 3. The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Procurement Policy that aligns with the Charter of Procurement Values has its own measures, target and reporting requirements. Territory Entities are required to comply with monitoring and reporting requirements to ensure that they are capturing the required data.
 4. Further policies aligning with the values are in development which may include targets where relevant.
-

Sport—disability strategy (Question No 91)

Mrs Kikkert asked the Minister for Sport and Recreation, upon notice, on 12 February 2021:

Did the Minister advise that the ACT Government is currently discussing opportunities to develop a more strategic approach in relation to disability sports; if so, will the ACT Government commit to developing a disability sports strategy and action plan; if so, what are the anticipated completion and implementation dates; if not, why not.

Ms Berry: The answer to the member's question is as follows:

The ACT Government is currently assessing the development of a new strategic plan for the sport and recreation sector. Internal scoping for this is currently in progress. The most recent plan, "Active 2020", was an industry 10-year plan that has now expired.

Initial consideration of key pillars within a new plan includes an emphasis on Inclusion – this would include disability. Detail of priorities/actions will be developed in consultation with the disability and sports sector.

Housing ACT—victims of domestic violence (Question No 92)

Mrs Kikkert asked the Minister for Housing and Suburban Development, upon notice, on 12 February 2021:

- (1) What supports does ACT Housing offer tenants who have been victims of domestic violence.
- (2) Does ACT Housing offer CCTV upgrades to properties with tenants who are victims of domestic violence.

Ms Berry: The answer to the member's question is as follows:

- (1) When Housing ACT receives a report of domestic and family violence about a tenant or resident, they take this information very seriously. The first concern of Housing ACT is the safety of the person and all efforts are made to obtain information about their safety and immediate risk of harm. In line with Housing ACT's Domestic and Family Violence Policy, a referral to a Tenant Support Community Connections Officer is made, as these officers have experience in supporting tenants and aim to assist in linking and navigating support services.

Through engagement with the tenant or resident, Housing ACT completes an assessment of the circumstances and links with agencies such as the Domestic Violence Crisis Service and ACT Policing, to take action that is appropriate to the risk factors and situation presented. While in some instances this may require emergency accommodation or relocation, it may also include security upgrades to their current property.

Housing ACT has a standard list of security upgrades that can be installed in properties for tenants experiencing domestic or family violence. These can include, extra locks on windows and doors, screens to front and back doors and sensor lighting. Housing ACT seeks advice and input from specialist agencies in relation to appropriate safety planning for the person and their family.

- (2) Installation of CCTV is not a security upgrade offered by Housing ACT. Housing ACT can refer tenants to specialist organisations that can offer this service if required.
-

Roads—traffic calming (Question No 93)

Mrs Kikkert asked the Minister for Transport and City Services, upon notice, on 12 February 2021:

- (1) Given that a response from Transport Canberra and City Services, dated 23 September 2020, stated that 'the most recent traffic surveys on Delamere Street

and Walhallow Street indicate motorists are travelling at average speeds of about 52 kilometres per hour and 48 kilometres per hour respectively', what were the fastest speeds recorded by these recent traffic surveys.

- (2) Can the Minister attach these traffic surveys to the response to this question.
- (3) How many speed humps have been installed in the Belconnen district over the past 12 months and in which streets/locations.
- (4) Why have speed humps recently been installed in other streets in Belconnen suburbs, such as Companion Crescent, Flynn, given that the response from Transport Canberra and City Services stated that 'Traffic calming measures such as speed humps are not necessarily effective at deterring or managing [dangerous driving]'.

Mr Steel: The answer to the member's question is as follows:

- (1) The following results represent the highest recorded speeds.

Delamere Street

	Towards Walhallow Street (Eastbound)	Towards Alexandria Street (Westbound)
Max Speed (Whole Survey Duration)	89.8 km/h – 2/9/20	90.8 km/h – 30/8/20

Walhallow Street

	Towards Beetaloo Street (Eastbound)	Towards Jinka Street (Westbound)
Max Speed (Whole Survey Duration)	99.6 km/h – 27/8/20	81.6 km/h – 27/8/20

- (2) Individual traffic reports can be found at Attachments A and B.
- (3) Approximately 20 speed humps have been installed in the Belconnen district over the past 12 months. Locations include:

Shakespeare Crescent, Fraser	Kreffft Street, Florey
Companion Crescent, Flynn	Ratcliffe Crescent, Florey
Covington Crescent, Charnwood	Ashburton Circuit, Kaleen
Townson Street, Charnwood	Osburn Drive, MacGregor
Magrath Crescent, Spence	Cooinda Street, Bruce
Moroney Street, Spence/Fraser	Emu Bank, Belconnen
Bingle Street, Flynn	Bandjalong Crescent, Aranda

- (4) The recently installed speed humps are primarily to reduce inappropriate travelling speeds within school zones, in the 40km/h high pedestrian activity area, and on residential streets. As previously advised, traffic calming measures such as speed humps are not effective at deterring or managing dangerous and anti-social driving behaviours such as hooning, racing or performing burnouts and donuts. Such behaviours are an enforcement issue for ACT Policing.

(Copies of the attachments are available at the Chamber Support Office).

**Planning—McKellar shops
(Question No 94)**

Mrs Kikkert asked the Minister for Planning and Land Management, upon notice, on 12 February 2021:

- (1) When was the last time the ACT Government was in contact with Bennetts Close Pty Limited, the current lessee of the McKellar shops site.
- (2) What plans does the ACT Government have to engage with Bennetts Close Pty Limited concerning the development of this site.
- (3) Can the Minister provide a contact number and/or email for Bennetts Close Pty Limited.

Mr Gentleman: The answer to the member's question is as follows:

- (1) The ACT Government has most recently attempted to contact the lessee on 19 February 2021 and 23 July 2020.
- (2) The ACT Government will continue its attempts to contact the lessee and seek an update on the lessee's plan to re-develop the site in a timely manner.
- (3) I understand that ownership of Bennetts Close Pty Limited recently changed and I do not have contact details of the new Director/s.

**Disability—employment strategy
(Question No 95)**

Mrs Kikkert asked the Chief Minister, upon notice, on 12 February 2021:

What is the anticipated completion date of the review of the ACT People with Disability Employment Framework and when will employment targets for people with disability be released.

Mr Barr: The answer to the member's question is as follows:

Work commenced in February 2021 to consolidate the Inclusion, Diversity and Equity Agenda for the ACT Public Service (ACTPS). This will be completed by 31 May 2021.

Following the development of the overarching strategy, work will commence on reviewing the ACTPS People with Disability Employment Framework. This work will be undertaken between 1 June and 31 August 2021. The revised employment framework will include employment targets and other levers/actions for increasing employment, as well as supporting and developing careers for people with disability in the ACT Public Service.

**Drone use—legislation
(Question No 96)**

Mrs Kikkert asked the Minister for Economic Development, upon notice, on 12 February 2021 (*redirected to the Minister for Business and Better Regulation*):

- (1) What restrictions exist for the use of drones or remotely piloted aircraft in the ACT.
- (2) Is the ACT Government currently planning any legislation regarding the use of drones or remotely piloted aircraft in the ACT.

Ms Cheyne: The answer to the member's question is as follows:

- (1) Drone regulation is a rapidly evolving area of government policy in Australia and internationally, with roles and responsibilities between levels of Government still being understood as the technology develops.

Drones are considered 'aircraft' and are thereby regulated by Commonwealth agencies. These include the Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA), Airservices Australia, and the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Cities and Regional Development. These agencies restrict where drones can fly, as well as hours of operation for commercial drone activities.

While the ACT does not specifically legislate to restrict drone activity on the ACT, there are many instances where ACT-controlled rules or policies may restrict drone use. For example, ACT regulations around noise or other environmental impact may restrict drone operations in some cases. Similarly, planning permissions may restrict the location and operations of commercial drone launch sites. Further, entrance or attendance rules for ACT venues or events may prohibit attendees to use drones.

- (2) No.

The Commonwealth Government has power to regulate drones in airspace, under the Air Navigation Regulations 1998. The ACT Government supports a national approach to future drone regulation, including safety regulation.

National broadband network—maintenance and repairs (Question No 97)

Mrs Kikkert asked the Minister for Economic Development, upon notice, on 12 February 2021 (*redirected to the Assistant Minister for Economic Development*):

- (1) What information does the ACT Government have access to in relation to NBN procedures and expenditure for NBN operations in the ACT.
- (2) Does the NBN regularly share information with the ACT Government regarding maintenance, outages and repairs.
- (3) How much is spent yearly in the ACT on maintenance costs for the NBN specifically on fixing outages related to water damage.
- (4) What is NBN Co procedure for repairing weak copper connections that have been damaged/infiltrated by water.
- (5) How many water related outages were reported from 1 July 2020, broken down by suburb.

Ms Cheyne: The answer to the member's question is as follows:

- (1) The ACT Government has access to publicly available information at www.nbnco.com.au.
- (2) NBN Co does not share its information on maintenance, outages or repairs with the ACT Government.
- (3) The ACT Government does not hold NBN Co's information on maintenance costs.
- (4) The ACT Government does not hold NBN Co's information on repair procedures.
- (5) The ACT Government does not hold NBN Co's information on water related outages.

**Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders—Children and Young People
Commissioner
(Question No 98)**

Mrs Kikkert asked the Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs, upon notice, on 12 February 2021 (*redirected to the Minister for Human Rights*):

- (1) What is the ACT Government's specific timeframe for successfully appointing an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children and Young People Commissioner, given that in the 2020 Portfolio Brief the Minister for Justice, Consumer Affairs and Road Safety states that, 'we anticipate that the new Commissioner could be in place within two years'.
- (2) What is the Government's step-by-step plan for making sure that this appointment can be made within the timeframe referred to in part (1).
- (3) Which of the steps referred to in part (2) have been completed so far.
- (4) When did work on making this appointment begin given that this recommendation was made by the Our Booris, Our Way Steering Committee in December 2018.

Ms Cheyne: The answer to the member's question is as follows:

1. The ACT Government does not have a specific timeframe.

The Parliamentary and Governing Agreement for the 10th Assembly reflects ACT Labor's commitment to implementing all the recommendations of the Our Booris Our Way review - including the recommendation to establish an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Commissioner.

As policy and legislation is developed to deliver on this commitment, genuine and effective engagement community will be essential and project timeframes will need to accommodate that engagement.

2. Not applicable.
3. Not applicable.

4. Preliminary work on this recommendation has been underway for some time. In particular, in June 2020 consideration of this recommendation was included in the terms of reference of the independent review of Protection of Rights Services reforms to the Human Rights Commission and Public Trustee and Guardian.

**Remand centres—closure
(Question No 99)**

Mrs Kikkert asked the Minister for Corrections, upon notice, on 12 February 2021:

- (1) Why were the Belconnen and Symonston remand centres closed.
- (2) Was there ever any consideration to keep them open once the Alexander Maconochie Centre (AMC) began reaching its design capacity.
- (3) Were either the Belconnen or Symonston remand centres ever reopened to accommodate detainees after the AMC was opened and if they have since been closed again, why were they closed.

Mr Gentleman: The answer to the member's question is as follows:

1. The Belconnen Remand Centre (BRC) and Symonston Correctional Centre (SCC) were no longer fit for purpose with both Centres only having a small operational capacity.
2. On 27 November 2009, the BRC was handed over to the ACT Property Group, Territory and Municipal Services. No consideration was given to keeping it open.
3. Between July 2015 and February 2016, the SCC was used as a full-time correctional centre for a small cohort of detainees while construction of new accommodation units for men was underway at the Alexander Maconochie Centre (AMC). In August 2016, the AU and Special Care Centre accommodation units opened at the AMC, further increasing its operational capacity.

While the SCC is still declared as an ACT Correctional Centre, it would require extensive works to bring it to an acceptable security and safety standard as a full-time correctional facility. As such, the SCC remains closed for this purpose at this time.

**Alexander Maconochie Centre—costs
(Question No 100)**

Mrs Kikkert asked the Minister for Corrections, upon notice, on 12 February 2021:

- (1) What is the average cost of bringing a defendant into the Alexander Maconochie Centre.
- (2) What was the average cost of bringing a defendant into the former (a) Belconnen remand centre and (b) Symonston remand centre.

Mr Gentleman: The answer to the member's question is as follows:

- (1) The average daily cost of housing detainees at the AMC as at the end of the 2019-2020 financial year was \$559.17 per detainee (including net operating expenditure and capital costs).
- (2) The average daily cost of housing detainees at either the former Belconnen Remand or Symonston Correctional Centres in 2008-2009 was \$536 per detainee.

Corrections officers—training (Question No 101)

Mrs Kikkert asked the Minister for Corrections, upon notice, on 12 February 2021:

- (1) How many correction officers did not undergo their mandatory annual training for use of force in (a) 2018, (b) 2019 and (c) 2020.
- (2) How many correction officers did not undergo their mandatory annual training for CPR in (a) 2018, (b) 2019 and (c) 2020.
- (3) How many correction officers did not undergo their mandatory annual training for fire awareness (including breathing apparatus) in (a) 2018, (b) 2019 and (c) 2020.
- (4) How many correction officers did not undergo their mandatory annual training for fire drills in (a) 2018, (b) 2019 and (c) 2020.
- (5) How many correction officers did not undergo their mandatory annual training for mental health between 2018-2020.

Mr Gentleman: I am advised that the answer to the member's question is as follows:

The figures below include a number of staff who may not have been required to receive mandatory training (e.g. due to maternity or other long-term leave) within each of the timeframes outlined in the questions. At the time of writing, a total of 23 individuals are recorded as not having completed required annual training due to long term absence from work. Training for these individuals will be proactively managed on their return to work.

- (1) The following number of officers did not undergo mandatory annual training for use of force:
 - a 53 officers in 2018
 - b. 46 officers in 2019
 - c. 181 officers in 2020. COVID-19 impacted on the ability for training to be provided in this time period.

There are a range of factors that can influence the timeframes within which staff are trained, including (but not limited to) issues such as staffing constraints and operational requirements. With respect to training challenges in 2020, ACTCS is reviewing training processes to enable increased levels of training to be conducted in a COVID-safe manner.

- (2) The following number of officers did not undergo mandatory annual training for CPR:
- 30 officers in 2018
 - 77 officers in 2019
 - 81 officers in 2020. COVID-19 impacted on the ability for training to be provided in this time period.

There are a range of factors that can influence the timeframes within which staff are trained, including (but not limited to) issues such as staffing constraints and operational requirements. With respect to training challenges in 2020, ACTCS is reviewing training processes to enable increased levels of training to be conducted in a COVID-safe manner.

- (3) The following number of officers did not undergo mandatory annual training for fire awareness:
- 90 officers in 2018
 - 155 officers in 2019
 - 147 officers in 2020. COVID-19 impacted on the ability for training to be provided in this time period.

There are a range of factors that can influence the timeframes within which staff are trained, including (but not limited to) issues such as staffing constraints and operational requirements. With respect to training challenges in 2020, ACTCS is reviewing training processes to enable increased levels of training to be conducted in a COVID-safe manner.

- (4) While all corrections officers are trained in fire safety and response as part of their induction training, participation in fire drills is not included in the mandatory annual training for correctional officers.

The ACT Corrective Services (ACTCS) *Emergency Management Policy 2019* states that two fire drills are to be conducted at a correctional centre each year, which will include participation of officers on shift at the time.

- (5) Suicide and self-harm awareness training is required to be undertaken on a triennial basis under the current Enterprise Agreement. During the 2018-2020 period, a total of nine staff had not undergone the required training.

Alexander Maconochie Centre—detainee privileges (Question No 102)

Mrs Kikkert asked the Minister for Corrections, upon notice, on 12 February 2021:

- (1) How accessible is the incentives and earned privilege policy to detainees and their families.
- (2) What are the different levels of privilege and what benefits are associated with each one.
- (3) What is the highest level of privilege and what privileges does one attain at this level.
- (4) What is the lowest level of privileges and what privileges does one retain at this level.

- (5) How is an inmate able to move up in privilege system.
- (6) How does an inmate move down in the privilege system.
- (7) Is there a maximum level of privilege an inmate can attain depending on the severity of their sentence and offence.

Mr Gentleman: I am advised that the answer to the member's question is as follows:

The Incentives and Earned Privileges Policy (the Policy) is currently being finalised. Once finalised, the Policy will be formally notified on the ACT Legislation Register and will be made broadly available to detainees and their families.

Remand centres—Symonston (Question No 103)

Mrs Kikkert asked the Minister for Corrections, upon notice, on 12 February 2021:

- (1) What was the design capacity of the Symonston remand centre.
- (2) What was the peak number of inmates ever held at the Symonston remand centre.
- (3) What plans or proposed plans exist for the future of the Symonston remand centre site.
- (4) Is the Symonston remand centre being used for any purpose; if so, what is that purpose.

Mr Gentleman: The answer to the member's question is as follows:

- (1) The design capacity of the Symonston Correctional Centre (SCC) was 22.
 - (2) Based on historical records for the SCC which go back to 30 March 2009, the highest population on record was 30 detainees.
 - (3) The ACT Government is considering options a range of options with respect to the future accommodation needs of the AMC.
 - (4) Between September and December 2020, the SCC was used as a training facility by ACTCS. The SCC is also used on occasions by other JACS agencies for training purposes.
-

Alexander Maconochie Centre—detainee education and training programs (Question No 104)

Mrs Kikkert asked the Minister for Corrections, upon notice, on 12 February 2021:

- (1) How long has Foresite Training Pty Ltd been contracted by the ACT Government for the purpose of providing training and education at the Alexander Maconochie Centre (AMC).

- (2) When does the contract expire?
- (3) Why is training and education outsourced to a business from Victoria rather than being sourced from a Canberra based business such as Canberra Institute of Technology (CIT).
- (4) How much does the ACT Government pay Foresite Training to provide services at the AMC.
- (5) Has the ACT Government ever approached CIT or a Canberra based business for the purpose of having that organisation provide education and training services at the AMC; if so, what were the results of those requests.

Mr Gentleman: I am advised that the answer to the member's question is as follows:

- (1) The Vocational Education and Training contract at the AMC was awarded to Foresite Training on 24 September 2018.
- (2) The Vocational Education and Training contract at the AMC expires on 30 June 2021. ACT Corrective Services (ACTCS) will shortly issue a request for tender for the provision of Vocational Education and Training services at the AMC into the future.
- (3) The contract was awarded to the supplier following a competitive public tender procurement process.
- (4) The contract value is \$900,833.78 per annum (GST inclusive).
- (5) Yes. In addition to the public tender for the Vocational Education and Training contract, ACTCS has previously engaged a range of service providers for specific vocational education and training courses (e.g. cultural art courses) including: CIT, Capital Training Institute, Yurauna Centre, and the Australian Vocational Training Academy.

Alexander Maconochie Centre—fire safety (Question No 105)

Mrs Kikkert asked the Minister for Corrections, upon notice, on 12 February 2021:

- (1) What training did the Senior Director of Operations undergo for the role of Chief Fire Warden at the Alexander Maconochie Centre before assuming the role.
- (2) What specific fire safety qualifications does the Senior Director of Operations hold.
- (3) What specific training does the current Fire Protection Manager undergo to assume the role of Fire Protection Manager.
- (4) Has the Fire Protection Manager undergone this training.

Mr Gentleman: I am advised that the answer to the member's question is as follows:

- (1) The Senior Director of Operations plays a key role in responding to and managing various operational and emergency incidents as they arise at the Alexander

Maconochie Centre. While the Senior Director of Operations did not undertake specific training prior to being appointed as Chief Fire Warden, they are progressing with additional training to supplement their significant operational experience in responding to issues impacting operations at the AMC.

The Senior Director of Operations was identified as the Chief Fire Warden in accordance with Australian Standard *AS-3745-10: Planning for emergencies in facilities*. The Chief Fire Warden has ownership of the management of emergency responses within the Alexander Maconochie Centre.

The Australian Standard *AS-3745-10: Planning for emergencies in facilities* outlines the selection criteria for the role of Chief Warden to include:

- a. “be capable of performing their duties;
- b. be capable of leading and taking command;
- c. display effective decision-making skills;
- d. demonstrate the capability to remain calm under pressure;
- e. be available to undertake their appointed duties;
- f. be capable of effectively communicating with occupants and visitors;
- g. be familiar with the facility; and
- h. be able to undergo relevant training.”

(2) Please refer to question 1 above.

(3) The Fire Protection Manager plays a critical role in supporting the Chief Fire Warden. The Fire Protection Manager, who has a range of qualifications as outlined in question four below, manages firefighting facilities and equipment and acts as a liaison for fire monitoring. While there is no specific training required to become the Fire Protection Manager, it is highly desirable for the Fire Protection Manager to have experience and qualifications in one or more of the following:

- electrical and telecommunication
- fire protection
- fire system design
- fire science/engineering
- firefighting operations (public/community safety)
- project management
- significant experience in the fire industry
- experience in contract management
- experience in Government procurement
- experience working within a custodial or secure environment

(4) The current Fire Protection Manager has significant relevant experience and qualifications working within the ACT Government and the private sector. Specifically, the Fire Protection Manager has 12 years working in emergency management with the ACT and has significant incident management experience working with the Emergency Services Agency and NSW Rural Fire Service.

The Fire Protection Manager also has experience in ACT Government Project Management, Contractor Management, and tender/procurement experience.

The Fire Protection Manager is a trainer/assessor for government and private sector incident management training and is the lead trainer/assessor for ACT Corrective Services Fire Awareness Training.

The Fire Protection Manager possesses a range of relevant national qualifications and competencies including:

- BSB40812- Certificate IV in Frontline Management
- TAE40116- Certificate IV in Training and Assessment
- PUA20701- Certificate II in Public Safety (Firefighting Operations)
- PUAOPE022- Manage Logistics for a complex incident
- 22202VIC- Course in Australasian Inter-Service Incident Management System (AIIMS)
- BAO14- Breathing Apparatus Operator
- PUAEQU001A- Prepare, Maintain & Test Response Equipment
- PUAEME001A- Provide Emergency Care
- PUAEME002A- Manage Injuries at Emergency Incident
- PUAFIR203B- Respond to Urban Fire
- PUAFIR207B- Operate Breathing Apparatus Open Circuit
- PUAOHS002B- Maintain safety at an incident scene
- PUAOPE012A- Control a Level 1 Incident
- CL14- Crew Leader 2014 (CLV14, CLS14, CLW14)
- PUAOPE015A- Conduct briefings and debriefings

Alexander Maconochie Centre—fire safety (Question No 106)

Mrs Kikkert asked the Minister for Corrections, upon notice, on 12 February 2021:

- (1) How many fire drills were conducted at the Alexander Maconochie Centre in (a) 2018, (b) 2019, (c) 2020 and (d) 2021.
- (2) Which of these fire drills were not conducted with the attendance of either the Chief Fire Warden or the Fire Protection Manager.

Mr Gentleman: I am advised that the answer to the member's question is as follows:

- (1) The following fire drills were conducted in the requested time periods:
 - a. in 2018-19, one fire drill was conducted on 29 April 2019.
 - b. in 2019-20, one fire drill was conducted on 17 December 2019.
 - c. in 2020-21 (year to date), one fire drill was conducted on 12 February 2021.
 - d. see response to question 1c above.
- (2) The Chief Fire Warden was not present at the fire drills conducted on 29 April and 17 December 2019.

A Fire Protection Manager was appointed on 24 October 2019 and is involved in fire drills.

**Alexander Maconochie Centre—expansion
(Question No 107)**

Mrs Kikkert asked the Minister for Corrections, upon notice, on 12 February 2021:

- (1) What efforts, including feasibility studies, assessments or investigations are currently being conducted by the ACT Government in relation to expanding the Alexander Maconochie Centre (AMC).
- (2) Does the ACT Government have any plans to begin any kind of study, assessment, or investigation in relation to expanding the AMC.

Mr Gentleman: The answer to the member's question is as follows:

- (1) The ACT Government is considering a range of options with respect to the future accommodation needs of the AMC.
- (2) The ACT Government regularly monitors and assesses the demands on accommodation at the AMC from detainee population numbers, demographics and cohort mix, and considers future accommodation needs informed by these assessments.

**Alexander Maconochie Centre—dental services
(Question No 108)**

Mrs Kikkert asked the Minister for Justice Health, upon notice, on 12 February 2021:

In relation to the Government response to recommendation 53 of the Alexander Maconochie Centre (AMC) Healthy Prison Review 2019, has the ACT Government completed the review of dental services at the AMC, committed to be finalised by 30 September 2020; if so, (a) when was the review completed and (b) what was the outcome and findings of the review.

Ms Davidson: The answer to the member's question is as follows:

To conduct the review of Dental Services, the Strategic Working Group was established in March 2020 and includes members from Oral Health Services and Justice Health. The impact of the COVID-19 response has caused a delay to the review's timeframe for completion. The Working Group Meetings re-commenced in September 2020 and the group continues to meet bimonthly.

KPMG Australia were engaged to review the Oral Health Services Model of Care and Governance structure in June 2020. This included consideration of recommendations from the Healthy Prison review. The review was completed in October 2020 and the draft report provided. This is currently being considered by Canberra Health Services.

Oral Health Services and Justice Health continue to work in partnership to facilitate continuous improvement for dental services delivery. We aim to have the report finalised as soon as practically possible.

**Alexander Maconochie Centre—crisis support unit
(Question No 109)**

Mrs Kikkert asked the Minister for Corrections, upon notice, on 12 February 2021:

Have privacy masks been added to the Crisis Support Unit CCTV cameras; if so, when were they added; if not, why not.

Mr Gentleman: The answer to the member's question is as follows:

Yes, privacy masks were applied to the majority of the Crisis Support Unit CCTV cameras in September 2020. Privacy masking was not applied to three cells to ensure appropriate observation for safety purposes when required.

**Alexander Maconochie Centre—naloxone use
(Question No 110)**

Mrs Kikkert asked the Minister for Justice Health, upon notice, on 12 February 2021:

In relation to recommendation 60 of the Alexander Maconochie Centre Healthy Prison Review 2019, what options for naloxone nasal administration were detailed in the report due 31 December 2020.

Ms Davidson: The answer to the member's question is as follows:

The provision of making Naloxone available for administration after hours, is guided by the *Medicines, Poisons and Therapeutic Goods Act 2008* and *Medicines, Poisons, and the Therapeutic Goods Regulation 2008*.

ACT Corrective Services are the first responders for all emergencies, therefore ACTCS are taking lead on how nasal naloxone might be administered by correctional officers legally and safely.

Justice Health Services is working with ACT Corrective Services to look at how nasal naloxone might be accessed after hours when JHS is not onsite.

**Alexander Maconochie Centre—worship services
(Question No 111)**

Mrs Kikkert asked the Minister for Corrections, upon notice, on 12 February 2021:

In relation to expanding the multi-faith chaplaincy team and the Government response to recommendation 47 of the Alexander Maconochie Centre Healthy Prison Review 2019, has the ACT Government completed its review, committed to by 30 April 2020; if so, (a) when was the review completed and (b) what was the outcome of the review.

Mr Gentleman: I am advised that the answer to the member's question is as follows:

(a) The review was completed in June 2020.

- (b) The review identified that ACT Corrective Services (ACTCS) Detainee Services Unit should undertake a further consultation process with detainees and service providers to inform development of a *Detainee Religious Services Strategy* (the Strategy), which should incorporate any findings from a current review by the Human Rights Commission (HRC) into the experiences of Muslim detainees accessing their faith in the AMC. This HRC review has not yet been finalised. This consultation process will commence following the completion of the HRC review. In the interim, work has commenced in other areas of developing the Strategy, including an all detainee survey in October 2020 to obtain input about the chaplaincy service and areas for improvement.
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Alexander Maconochie Centre—ICT facilities (Question No 112)

Mrs Kikkert asked the Minister for Corrections, upon notice, on 12 February 2021:

- (1) What access do inmates at the Alexander Maconochie Centre have to computers or computer like devices.
- (2) What access do inmates have to devices that use USB ports.

Mr Gentleman: I am advised that the answer to the member's question is as follows:

- (1) Detainees have access to computer devices in common areas such as the library and Education building. In addition, many detainees have access to computers within their cells.
 - (2) PrisonPC devices limit USB use to a keyboard and mouse. The PrisonPC devices are designed to shutdown if they detect USB keys, removable hard drives and mobile phones. If a detainee requires data to be transferred from USB to their PrisonPC personal storage allocation (e.g. university material), this can be arranged through the PrisonPC administrators.
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Alexander Maconochie Centre—visitor searches (Question No 113)

Mrs Kikkert asked the Minister for Corrections, upon notice, on 12 February 2021:

- (1) What are the standard security steps that corrections officers take to search every visitor to Alexander Maconochie Centre (AMC) inmates for contraband.
- (2) What criteria determines whether a visitor to an inmate is subjected to a more intensive search.
- (3) Does the AMC have a standard operating procedure for random searches of visitors to inmates prior to the visitor entering the visits area.
- (4) How many random searches on visitors to inmates have occurred since 1 January 2019?

Mr Gentleman: I am advised that the answer to the member's question is as follows:

- (1) The standard security steps that corrections officers take to search visitors to the AMC are outlined in the ACT Corrective Services *Visits Policy 2016, Interim Visits Arrangements Operating Procedure 2020, Searching Policy 2010* and the *Searching Procedure 2010 (RESTRICTED for security reasons)*. All visitors that enter the AMC are searched in accordance with these policies and operating procedures, which always includes passing through a metal detector and frequently involves examination by a Passive Alert Detection Dog. Visitors that are on correctional grounds, such as the car park, may also have their person and property searched.
- (2) If a visitor is unable to walk successfully through a metal detector, scanning by a handheld metal detector may be required, as well as a frisk search. If the visitor is unable to satisfy these requirements, they will be denied entry to the correctional centre. Visitors are not subject to strip searches.
- (3) All visitors searches are conducted in accordance with the *Visits Policy 2016, Interim Visitors Operating Procedure 2020, Searching Policy 2010* and the *Searching Procedure 2010 (RESTRICTED for security reasons)*.
- (4) There have been no random searches on visitors since 1 January 2019.

**Alexander Maconochie Centre—staff disciplinary policy
(Question No 114)**

Mrs Kikkert asked the Minister for Corrections, upon notice, on 12 February 2021:

- (1) In relation to the 'Joint statement accompanying image' concerning the 2018 hangman incident at the Alexander Maconochie Centre (AMC), given that the joint statement states that 'it was not possible to identify who drew the image', what exact steps were taken to identify the staff member who made the drawing.
- (2) What are the policies and procedures that exist to guide an investigation into wrongdoing by a staff member at the AMC.
- (3) Was the investigation fully internal; if not, what external bodies assisted and in what capacity.
- (4) Is the use of external bodies in such an investigation allowed, required, or optional.

Mr Gentleman: I am advised that the answer to the member's question is as follows:

- (1) The discovery of the image was referred for consideration of a misconduct investigation within the Justice and Community Safety (JACS) Directorate. However, with no CCTV cameras within the room, which is accessed by all AMC-based ACT Corrective Services (ACTCS) staff members each day, no outcome was able to be reached on the identity of the person/s who made the drawing to allow for an investigation to be commenced.
- (2) The policy that governs all alleged wrongdoing by staff in the AMC is the ACTCS *Integrity Framework* which guides how investigations into wrongdoing by staff will be investigated. ACTCS is also covered by the ACT Public Service Standards for the Conduct of Inquiries and Investigations.

- (3) The investigation into the identity of the person/s who made the drawing was internal to JACS.
- (4) Use of external bodies in an investigation into staff misconduct occurs where a matter relates to fraud or mid-range to serious misconduct. For these investigations the matter is required to be referred to one or more external bodies including, but are not limited to:
 - Professional Standards Unit within the Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate
 - ACT Integrity Commission
 - ACT Policing.

**Alexander Maconochie Centre—CCTV surveillance
(Question No 115)**

Mrs Kikkert asked the Minister for Corrections, upon notice, on 12 February 2021:

- (1) How many CCTV cameras are there in the Alexander Maconochie Centre (AMC).
- (2) During routine operating procedures how many AMC staff are watching the camera feeds.
- (3) Do all CCTV cameras record audio; if not, how many do not record audio and where are the cameras that do not record audio.
- (4) For how long does the AMC keep the video files and are these video files backed up in a secure location.

Mr Gentleman: The answer to the member's question is as follows:

- (1) There are 539 CCTV cameras throughout the AMC. CCTV coverage includes both indoor and outdoor locations.
- (2) There are a number of posts at the AMC that include monitoring CCTV for specific purposes, amongst their other duties:
 - the Master Control Room consists of two officers with the ability to monitor all CCTV cameras within the AMC
 - the Operations Officer has ability to monitor CCTV to support the operational logistics relating to detainee and staff movement
 - the Security Officer routinely monitors the CCTV feed for all social visits
 - the Visits Officer also routinely monitors the CCTV feed for all social visits
 - officers in the Management Unit and Crisis Support Unit have the ability to monitor CCTV specific to those areas as required.
- (3) The CCTV cameras do not record audio, primarily due to privacy reasons.
- (4) Routinely, the AMC retains CCTV footage for 30 days, consistent with relevant provisions in the *Territory Records Act 2002*.

Footage must be retained for a period of seven (7) years for the following matters:

- incidents where further action is taken within 12 months; and
- use of force

Footage is stored securely and backed up.

**Alexander Maconochie Centre—parenting programs
(Question No 116)**

Mrs Kikkert asked the Minister for Corrections, upon notice, on 12 February 2021:

- (1) How many mothers with children under 18 are in the Alexander Maconochie Centre (AMC).
- (2) What parenting programs does the AMC offer to incarcerated mothers with children under 18.

Mr Gentleman: The answer to the member’s question is as follows:

1. As at 15 February 2021, 13 women detained at the Alexander Maconochie Centre (AMC) self-reported that they have children under the age of 18.
2. The AMC offer four programs for women detainees with children under the age of 18, including:
 - SHINE for Kids – Child/Parent Days
A Child/Parent Activity Day attempts to provide a more ‘normal’ environment by providing activities that a child and parent can do together (e.g. creating art and craft or playing ball). Giving the incarcerated parent an opportunity to make their child’s lunch, feed them a bottle, or play and create without the other carer present can be empowering as it allows them to participate in everyday parenting tasks that they’re otherwise unable to undertake. This program will recommence once COVID-19 restrictions allow.

SHINE provides transport to and from scheduled visits and child/parent days. SHINE also supports detainees’ families to transport newborn babies to the AMC to bond with their mothers.
 - ‘Story Time’
The ‘Story Time’ program allows parents to strengthen their bond with their children and take a role in their child’s education. The parents read a children’s story which is recorded onto a recordable book. The book is forwarded to the child so that they are able to read the book while listening to their parent’s voice.
 - Elders Family and Culture program
The Elders Family and Culture program is aimed at Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander female detainees who have children in the community. Eligible detainees can nominate one incarcerated family member to join them, with participating detainees able to have their children come into the facility for specific family and culture engagements, such as artwork, jewellery making, story-telling or traditional dance, provided by a local Indigenous service provider.

Subject to COVID restrictions, it is proposed that the Elders Family and Culture program be offered on a quarterly basis during school holidays. The program will be held in partnership with SHINE for Kids and local Indigenous Elders.

- Circle of Security
Circle of Security is an eight-week program that is offered to female detainees with active parenting roles (also offered to male detainees but in separate groups). The program is designed to improve the development pathways of children and their parents and promote secure attachments within the family unit. The last Circle of Security program finished in September 2019, and it is anticipated that the program will recommence in mid-2021.

**Alexander Maconochie Centre—Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander detainees
(Question No 117)**

Mrs Kikkert asked the Minister for Corrections, upon notice, on 12 February 2021:

- (1) In relation to recommendation 41 of the Alexander Maconochie Centre Healthy Prison Review 2019, what potential options for Indigenous detainees have been explored for increasing opportunities for social interactions between them and extended family members.
- (2) When were these opportunities reported to the ACT Government.

Mr Gentleman : I am advised that the answer to the member's question is as follows:

- (1) Following recommendation 41 of the Alexander Maconochie Centre (AMC) Healthy Prison Review 2019, the Indigenous Services Unit has identified the following opportunities for increased social interaction between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander detainees with extended family members at the AMC.
 - The Elders Family Engagement Program offers Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander detainees with extended family members at the AMC a social setting for engagement, with Elder participation to facilitate conversation on important topics of Culture, Country and Community. The program encourages strengthening sense of identity, connection, and resilience of family. The program will run on a quarterly basis.
 - The Elders Family and Culture Program is due to commence following the relaxation of COVID-19 restrictions and has been developed for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander female detainees who have children in the community. Eligible female detainees will be able to nominate one incarcerated family member to join them, with the children of all participating detainees being brought into the facility for specific family and culture engagements, strengthening cultural connections and maintaining parental and familial bonds. This will include activities such as artwork, jewellery making, story-telling or traditional dance, provided by a local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander service provider. The program will also run quarterly with sessions during school holidays.

- (2) The Indigenous Services Unit continually engages with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander detainees and family members on a range of matters – including opportunities for supporting increased social interactions between detainees and extended family members. This work is ongoing.

Disability services—government regulations (Question No 118)

Mrs Kikkert asked the Minister for Disability, upon notice, on 12 February 2021:

- (1) Given that amendments made in 2012 to the Disability Services Act 1991 gives the Minister the power to approve disability service standards and to make regulations under the Act, what disability standards were approved by the Minister (and relevant past ministers) since 2012 and when were they approved.
- (2) What regulations were made under the Act by the Minister (and relevant past ministers) since 2012 and when were they made.

Ms Davidson: The answer to the member's question is as follows:

- (1) The *Disability Services Act 1991* (the Act), and associated regulations and instruments, is the legislation that guides the oversight of Specialist Disability Service Providers (SDSP) operating in the ACT. The Act requires that all SDSPs comply with relevant standards as well as with other quality and safeguarding provisions.

Regulation of NDIS registered disability providers is the responsibility of the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission and managed through practice standards made under the National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013.

Standards approved by the Disability Services (Standards) Declaration 2014 (No 1), made under section 5A of the Act include:

- Home Care Standards
- National Standards for Disability Services
- National Standards for Mental Health Services
- Disability Standards for Education
- Disability Advocacy Standards

- (2) Regulations made under the Act since 2012 include:

- Disability Services Regulation 2014
- Disability Services (Specialist Disability Service Types) Declaration 2014 (No 1)
- Disability Services Approved Standard 2014 (No 1)

Disability services—funding (Question No 119)

Mrs Kikkert asked the Minister for Disability, upon notice, on 12 February 2021:

- (1) How much funding for the Disability Inclusion Grant (including maximum amounts per organisation) was given by the ACT Government in (a) 2016-17, (b) 2017-18, (c) 2018-19 and (d) 2020-21.

- (2) Does the ACT Government have plans to double the funding for the Disability Inclusion grant and divide the grant round into two rounds for 2021-22; if not, why not.
- (3) How much funding for the I-Day Grant (including maximum amounts per organisation) was given by the ACT Government in (a) 2011-12, (b) 2012-13, (c) 2013-14, (d) 2014-15, (e) 2015-16, (f) 2016-17, (g) 2017-18, (h) 2018-19, (i) 2019-20 and (j) 2020-21.

Ms Davidson: The answer to the member's question is as follows:

- (1) The Disability Inclusion Grant program commenced in 2017.

The following table outlines Disability Inclusion Grant funding information for the specified financial years:

Financial year	Total Grant funding	Maximum available amount per application
2017-18	\$50,000	\$20,000
2018-19	\$100,000	\$20,000
2019-20	\$100,000	\$20,000
2020-21	\$100,000	\$20,000

- (2) The ACT Government currently does not have plans to double the funding for the Disability Inclusion Grants and/or to divide the Disability Inclusion Grants into two separate rounds for the 2021-22 financial year. In February 2020, the Disability Inclusion Grants were reviewed to evaluate their success and make recommendations for strengthening the guidelines.

The ACT provides a range of grants targeted at community needs, with 19 Health and Wellbeing Grants and 15 City and Territory Grants open for applicants throughout each financial year. More information about these grant programs is available to the public at www.grants.act.gov.au.

- (3) The following table outlines I-Day Grant funding information for the specified financial years:

Financial year	Total Grant funding	Maximum available amount per application
2011-12	\$20,000	\$5,000
2012-13	\$20,000	\$5,000
2013-14	\$25,000	\$5,000
2014-15	\$25,000	\$5,000
2015-16	\$25,000	\$5,000
2016-17	\$25,000	\$5,000
2017-18	\$25,000	\$5,000
2018-19	\$25,000	\$5,000
2019-20	\$25,000	\$5,000
2020-21	\$25,000	\$5,000

Arts—Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artworks (Question No 120)

Mrs Kikkert asked the Minister for the Arts, upon notice, on 12 February 2021:

- (1) Of the 137 pieces of public art included on the ACT Government's online Public Art List, which ones were created fully or in part by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
- (2) Of these, how many designate themselves Ngunnawal people.
- (3) How many are (or were) resident in the ACT.
- (4) Of the 137 pieces of public art included on the ACT Government's online Public Art List, which ones are considered to have Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander theming.
- (5) Does the ACT Government have a plan or specific goal to acquire public art created by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists and/or Ngunnawal artists; if so, what is it.

Ms Cheyne: The answer to the member's question is as follows:

- (1) Of the 137 pieces of public art included on the ACT Government's online Public Art List, there are five public artworks (outdoor sculptural works) and one ceramics work comprised of five vessels (exhibited indoor) that are known to be created by or in part by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as follows:
 - *Bogong Moths* – by artist Jim Williams (Ngambri).
 - *Gathering Place* – community art process led by Wellspring (Jennifer Jones and Phil Nizette), individual participants names not known.
 - *Reclamation Culture, Spirit and Place* – by artists Sandra Hill (Nyoongar), Jim Williams (Ngunnawal) with Tony Pankiw and Jenny Dawson.
 - *World Peace Flame Monument* – by artist Jim Williams (Ngunnawal).
 - Indigenous ceramics – by artists Hudson Allison, Ngyuntjima Carroll, Robert Puruntatameri, Kanytjupai Baker, Vivian Thompson, Carol Williams, Janet De Boos. Artists designations not known.
 - Indigenous land art sculpture that forms part of the Gungahlin Drive Extension Artworks – artists not known.
- (2) There is one artist, Jim Williams, known to be Ngambri man, and Traditional Custodian of the ACT.
- (3) The residential details of Mr Williams and the other Indigenous artists listed in (1) are not known.
- (4) Of the 137 pieces of public art included on the ACT Government's online Public Art List, there are nine artworks considered to have Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander theming as follows: *Bogong Moths*; *Civic Memory Quilt*; *Fireline*; *Gathering Place*; *Reclamation Culture, Spirit and Place*; *The Goongarline*; *World Peace Flame Monument*; Indigenous ceramics; and Indigenous land art sculpture (part of the Gungahlin Drive Extension artworks).

- (5) Yes, the ACT Government is currently commissioning public artworks by the Ngunnawal communities for the new ACT Government Buildings in Civic and Dickson.
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**Roads—projects
(Question No 121)**

Mrs Kikkert asked the Minister for Transport and City Services, upon notice, on 12 February 2021:

- (1) Has the design stage for the duplication of William Hovell Drive been completed.
- (2) When is the anticipated start and completion dates for the William Hovell Drive duplication.
- (3) Can the Minister provide an attachment with the detailed design for the William Hovell Drive duplication.
- (4) When will construction on William Slim Drive be completed.
- (5) Will there be noise reduction measures for the homes backing onto William Slim Drive, as part of the construction on William Slim Drive.
- (6) Are there any plans to duplicate Drake Brockman Drive; if so, what is the current timeline for design, construction and completion.

Mr Steel: The answer to the member's question is as follows:

- (1) No.
 - (2) See response to Question 1.
 - (3) See response to Question 1.
 - (4) Contracts for the construction of the first stage of the duplication of the third stage of Gundaroo Drive (formerly known as William Slim Drive) have recently been awarded with roadworks expected to commence shortly and are anticipated to be completed by mid-2023 (weather permitting).
 - (5) The design of the road will involve the trial of a reduction of the speed limit to 60 km/h. In addition, the use of noise reducing pavement surfacing is expected to reduce the noise levels along the road. Noise assessments have been undertaken prior to the commencement of construction and following the completion of works. Noise mitigation measures will be provided if/where required. The construction works are being implemented to ensure that existing traffic noise levels are maintained during construction. The contractor will be responsible for ensuring that noise levels of plant and equipment during construction are in accordance with the current Roads ACT Noise Management Guidelines.
 - (6) Any future duplication of Drake-Brockman Drive will be triggered by traffic generated by the Ginninderry development. At this stage, there is no timeframe for this.
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**Transport—Latham
(Question No 122)**

Mrs Kikkert asked the Minister for Transport and City Services, upon notice, on 12 February 2021:

- (1) In relation to the Minister's responses to questions regarding the cancelled bus service for Macrossan Crescent, Latham, dated 2 September 2020, by how many minutes would extending route 40 to stop along Macrossan Crescent increase travel times for bus passengers.
- (2) Can the Minister detail how exactly would this increased travel time result in a reduction in the frequency of bus services at peak times on route 40 or another service elsewhere in the city.
- (3) How many passengers on average boarded the bus along Macrossan Crescent before services were cancelled.

Mr Steel: The answer to the member's question is as follows:

- (1) Approximately eight minutes in the peak periods.
- (2) If eight minutes is introduced into a trip, the impact is that subsequent trips will not run to time, with some potentially cancelled. The only alternative to reduce this impact would be to reduce the frequency to allow these stops to be serviced by cancelling services. This is due to the optimal use of available buses at any one time.
- (3) In the 12 months preceding the decommissioning of the four stops on Macrossan Crescent (April 2019), for the 40 services operating each day, there were on average four boardings at each stop per day. During this same period there was an average of four people per day disembarking the buses.

**Municipal services—footpaths
(Question No 123)**

Mrs Kikkert asked the Minister for Planning and Land Management, upon notice, on 12 February 2021 (*redirected to the Minister for Transport and City Services*):

- (1) Given that the informal (dirt) footpath between southern Solong Street and the southern end of Wanderlight Avenue now appears on activeinfrastructure.net.au as a 'Local (Future)' infrastructure project, can the Minister provide a date by which this footpath will be sealed.
- (2) Until that time, what safe route or routes do residents in the western section of Lawson stage 1 have for accessing Ginninderra Drive, the University of Canberra, or Belconnen Town Centre by foot.

Mr Steel: The answer to the member's question is as follows:

- (1) A date has not yet been confirmed. Transport Canberra and City Services has assessed the path network in the area and identified an alignment for the future path network that would connect Lawson to the University of Canberra and the Belconnen Town Centre.
 - (2) The alternative route that could be used is the path around the 'Reservoir Hill' that connects with the shared path on Wanderlight Avenue that leads to the intersection with Ginninderra Drive. From this intersection, pedestrians and cyclists can use either the path along Allawoona Street to access the University of Canberra or use the path network along Aikman Drive to access the Belconnen Town Centre.
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Planning—Kippax group centre flood study (Question No 124)

Mrs Kikkert asked the Minister for Planning and Land Management, upon notice, on 12 February 2021:

Given that the Minister's response to question on notice No 3184 (Ninth Assembly) indicated that the 2015 Kippax Flood Study Report was being revised and would be finalised in 2020, can the Minister now provide a copy of the revised flood study.

Mr Gentleman: The answer to the member's question is as follows:

The Revised Kippax Group Centre Flood Study was received by EPSDD on 15 July 2020, following the response to QON 3184. It was still subject to review by EPSDD staff after this time and the report was accepted and the final invoice paid on 10 August 2020. The revised report is attached for your information.

Health—disability strategy (Question No 125)

Mrs Kikkert asked the Minister for Health, upon notice, on 12 February 2021:

What are the anticipated completion and implementation dates for the ACT Disability Health Strategy that will be commencing development this year.

Ms Stephen-Smith: The answer to the member's question is as follows:

Initial scoping work on the ACT Disability Health Strategy will be undertaken in 2021. Scoping work will include: a gap analysis, literature review, desktop review comparison with other Australian jurisdictions and consultation. Consultation will include people with lived experience of disability, relevant non-government disability sector organisations and other key stakeholders in the health sector.

It is anticipated that the ACT Disability Health Strategy will be drafted in 2022 and implementation will commence in 2023. Similarly to the development of other strategies, it is expected that this work will identify early opportunities for service options that will be implemented prior to finalisation of the strategy.

**Discrimination, Health Services, Disability and Community Services
Commissioner—disability complaints
(Question No 126)**

Mrs Kikkert asked the Minister for Human Rights, upon notice, on 12 February 2021:

What is the total number of complaints relating to disability received by the Discrimination, Health Services, Disability and Community Services Commissioner for each year for the past four years to the date this question on notice was published.

Ms Cheyne: The answer to the member's question is as follows:

The Discrimination, Health Services, Disability and Community Services Commissioner (DHSDCS Commissioner) can receive complaints relating to disability in a number of complaint jurisdictions including discrimination, disability services and vulnerable people complaints relating to abuse, neglect or exploitation of people with a disability.

Disability related complaints received by the DHSDCS Commissioner

	2017	2018	2019	2020	Jan 2021
Disability service	27	21	13	8	1
Disability discrimination and vilification	47	65	100	89	7
Vulnerable people (disability)	N/A	N/A	N/A	13	1
TOTAL	74	86	113	110	9

Complaints related to disability issues can also be handled by other agencies in the ACT including the Human Services Registrar (in the Community Services Directorate), the NDIS Quality & Safeguards Commission (commenced in the ACT on 1 July 2019), the Office of the Senior Practitioner and the Australian Human Rights Commission.

**Sentence Administration Board—decisions
(Question No 127)**

Mr Braddock asked the Minister for Corrections, upon notice, on 12 February 2021 (*redirected to the Attorney-General*):

- (1) In relation to the Sentence Administration Board parole hearings, what is the average time between an application for parole and a final decision on the parole application.
- (2) How many times, in the last 12 months, has a parole applicant's non-parole period date occurred before the final parole decision being made.
- (3) For each of those instances referred to in part (2), how long after the non-parole period date did the applicant have to wait in custody before a final decision was made.
- (4) What, if any, steps are taken by ACT Corrective Services, including the Sentence Administration Board, to reduce the time between application and decision.

- (5) Have there been any occasions, since 30 June 2020, when an individual has had their parole or Intensive Corrections Order (ICO) cancelled and not been taken into custody within 24 hours; if so, (a) how many times has this happened, (b) how long has it taken for each of these individuals to be taken into custody and (c) how many people whose parole or ICO has been cancelled are currently not yet in custody.

Mr Rattenbury: The answer to the member's question is as follows:

- (1) The Sentence Administration Board (SAB) does not routinely collate this information. A manual review of records relating to each application for parole would be required in order to respond in detail to this question. As such, it is not possible to provide this information within the requested timeframe.
- (2) As in answer (1), the SAB does not collect the data required to answer this question. In the absence of such data, the SAB has reviewed its current parole application matters at 18 February 2021 and can report that 35% of parole applications currently received by the SAB will have/have already had their first inquiry before the SAB after the non-parole period date.
- (3) As in answer (1), the SAB does not collect the data required to answer this question. The SAB can, however, report that a decision about a parole application matter must be determined by the SAB within 60 days of the hearing being opened and that this statutory time frame was met for all matters. The result is that any detainee applying for parole will either be granted parole or refused parole within the 60-day statutory period.
- (4) In late 2020, SAB was allocated temporary extra resources. And access to a temporary facility at ACT Corrective Services premises. At this time the SAB can conduct sitting days twice weekly by teleconference most weeks. This arrangement has allowed the SAB to catch-up with a backlog of parole application matters and to return to the situation pre-2020 when most matters were conducted closer to or prior to a parole applicant's non-parole period date.
- (5) Yes, there have been occasions since 30 June 2020, when an individual has had their parole or Intensive Corrections Order (ICO) cancelled and were not taken into custody within 24 hours. Between 30 June 2020 and 17 February 2021:
 - a. this has happened 22 times;
 - b. it took approximately 36 days for individuals to be taken into custody; and
 - c. there are four individuals currently not yet in custody.

Housing—Justice Housing Program (Question No 128)

Mr Braddock asked the Minister for Corrections, upon notice, on 12 February 2021:

- (1) How many beds are currently available through the Justice Housing Program.
- (2) How many people have been released into the Justice Housing Program since 1 July 2020.

- (3) How many of these people have been through the Drug and Alcohol Court.

Mr Gentleman: I am advised that the answer to the member's question is as follows:

- (1) There are currently nine houses with a total of 27 beds currently available through the Justice Housing Program (JHP). A tenth property will be ready for occupancy in the coming weeks, bringing the total number of beds within the JHP to 30.
 - (2) Since 1 July 2020, a total of 30 people have accessed the JHP.
 - (3) None of these people have been through the Drug and Alcohol Court (DAC).
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Questions without notice taken on notice

Schools—modular learning centres

Ms Berry (*in reply to a supplementary question by Mr Hanson on Wednesday, 10 February 2021*):

There are currently 148 transportable units in place at 38 schools.

As the usage arrangements are unique to each school, it is not possible to quantify how many students are currently being taught in transportable learning environments.

Land—sales

Ms Berry (*in reply to supplementary questions by Mr Coe and Mr Parton on Wednesday, 10 February 2021*):

The ACT Government does not hold information on the specific reason why people decided to purchase land from the Suburban Land Agency (SLA). It is reasonable to assume there will be a variety of reasons that will influence a purchase decision, including the availability of the ACT and Commonwealth government stimulus measures.

Information about ACT Stamp Duty concessions and the HomeBuilder program is the responsibility of the ACT Revenue Office. The SLA is not able to quantify the portion of land sales in the current financial year that attracted support from government measures due to privacy requirements associated with data provided by applicants to the ACT Revenue Office. It is also noted that some HomeBuilder applications received by the ACT Revenue Office since 1 July 2020 may relate to land purchases completed in a previous financial year.

The HomeBuilder grant has a two stage application process. The first is the registering of interest (referenced as 'applications' below) and the second is the full application with documentation which is assessed before it is paid (referenced as 'approved' below).

The SLA is advised that for the period 1 July 2020 to 10 February 2021:

- 353 HomeBuilder applications had been submitted related to SLA land, with 44 approved as at 10 February 2021;
- 318 applications for the ACT stamp duty concession related to SLA land, with 318 approved as at 10 February 2021; and
- a further 150 applications for both HomeBuilder and the ACT Stamp duty concession, with 19 approved as at 10 February 2021.

Gungahlin—swimming pool

Ms Berry (*in reply to a supplementary question by Mr Coe on Wednesday, 10 February 2021*):

Since June 2020 the ACT Government has engaged experts to consider a range of issues in relation to the future works required. Experts were also engaged to assist the ACT Government in commercial negotiations and considered the structural elements of the 50-metre pool and its surrounds, as well as the tiles themselves to understand the best way to repair the pool to minimise the risk of this happening again.

Gungahlin—multipurpose centre

Mr Barr (*in reply to a supplementary question by Mr Braddock on Wednesday, 10 February 2021*):

The Government is currently undertaking a Community and Recreational Facilities Assessment for the Gungahlin District, which includes investigations relating to the multipurpose centre. This will include conversations with key Gungahlin stakeholders over the next two months, including the Police Community Youth Club, Communities @ Work, Barnardos Australia and Belconnen Arts.

This assessment will be used as the basis to engage with the Gungahlin community to have their say on community facilities in the district, including the multipurpose centre proposed for the town centre.

Community engagement is planned to be a mix of online and face-to-face events and is anticipated to begin in mid-April 2021.