



Debates

WEEKLY HANSARD

Legislative Assembly for the ACT

TENTH ASSEMBLY

23 APRIL 2021

www.hansard.act.gov.au

Friday, 23 April 2021

Petition: Yerrabi electorate—Yerrabi Pond—petition 14-21	1135
Motion to take note of petition.....	1136
Yerrabi electorate—Yerrabi Pond	1136
Leave of absence.....	1148
Government—business support	1148
Questions without notice:	
Government—business support.....	1162
Trees—urban canopy.....	1163
Government—community engagement.....	1164
Economy—COVID-19	1166
Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders—youth.....	1168
Government—territory-owned corporations	1169
Environment—dredging	1170
Municipal services—shopping centre upgrades	1170
Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders—Closing the Gap	1172
Environment—green buildings.....	1174
Roads—traffic management	1175
Disability services—National Disability Insurance Scheme.....	1177
Transport—accessibility	1178
Supplementary answer to question without notice:	
Government—business support.....	1180
Papers.....	1180
Adjournment:	
National Disability Insurance Scheme—independent assessments.....	1180
Homelessness—personal account.....	1182
Planning—Gungahlin town centre	1183
Answers to questions:	
Access Canberra—numberplates (Question No 129).....	1185
COVID-19—Check In CBR app (Question No 130).....	1186
Access Canberra—service levels (Question No 131).....	1187
Waste—dog waste bins (Question No 132)	1188
Municipal services—mowing and parks maintenance (Question No 133) ..	1189
Traffic infringement notices—errors (Question No 134).....	1190
Health—waiting times (Question No 136).....	1191
ACT public service—disability employment (Question No 137)	1191
ACT public service—employment of Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders (Question No 138)	1192
Economy—employment and business development (Question No 139).....	1193
Government—procurement panels (Question No 140).....	1196
Government—secure local jobs code (Question No 142)	1196
Planning—Casey (Question No 143)	1197
Throsby—name change (Question No 144).....	1198
Planning—Gungahlin (Question No 145)	1198
Waste—liquid waste (Question No 148).....	1199
Building—defects (Question Nos 151 and 152).....	1200
Energy—consumption (Question No 154).....	1201
Transport Canberra—patronage (Question No 155)	1202

Transport Canberra—data (Question No 156)	1203
Transport—private vehicle use (Question No 157).....	1204
Disability services—funding (Question No 158)	1205
Mental health—education (Question No 160).....	1205
Disability services—Companion Card program (Question No 161).....	1206
Disability services—COVID-19 Disability Strategy (Question No 162)	1206
Planning—Ginninderry shops (Question No 166)	1207
Waste—green waste service relocation (Question No 167).....	1208
Transport Canberra—Ginninderry shuttle bus (Question No 172)	1208
Animals—dog ownership (Question No 174)	1209
Lake Tuggeranong—water quality (Question No 175).....	1210
Questions without notice taken on notice:	
Environment—urban vegetation.....	1211
Environment—urban vegetation.....	1213
Environment—Big Canberra Battery site.....	1214
Environment—water quality	1215
Energy—solar	1215
Alexander Maconochie Centre—oversight committee	1216
Parking—Greenway	1217
Crime—antisocial behaviour	1217

Friday, 23 April 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.

Petition

The following petition was lodged for presentation:

Yerrabi electorate—Yerrabi Pond—petition 14-21

By Mr Pettersson, from 508 residents:

To the Speaker and Members of the Legislative Assembly for the Australian Capital Territory

This petition of certain residents of the Australian Capital Territory draws to the attention of the Assembly that Yerrabi Pond recreation area needs urgent rehabilitation.

Your petitioners therefore request the Assembly to:

- (1) Aid and support the establishment of “The Friends of Yerrabi Pond” to highlight the need for upgrading the Yerrabi Pond area.
- (2) Provide more toilet and handwashing facilities.
- (3) Provide essential signage particularly on shared pathways, concerning rights of pedestrians and instructions regarding dogs and their droppings.
- (4) Upgrade the western children’s playground with the provision of a toilet and handwashing facilities.
- (5) Upgrade the many areas around the Pond that are currently overgrown with weeds, bushes, etc.

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

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

Motion to take note of petition

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

That the petition so lodged be noted.

MR PETTERSSON (Yerrabi) (10.03): It is a great pleasure to rise on this issue again. I rose at the start of the week and here I am at the end of the week. I want to particularly acknowledge that we are joined by Mr John and Kay Beagle, the chief petitioners, as well as Mr Darron Marks. Those that have been out and about in Gungahlin in recent times would have seen them working tirelessly to gather more signatures for this petition. And gather signatures they did. With 601 online and 508 on hard copy, that is 1,109 signatures, a very impressive number.

I do not want to speak too long because I know that we have the Yerrabi Pond motion ahead of us, but I do want to put the log of claims that the Friends of Yerrabi Pond have developed on the public record. They seek to replace the existing toilets with new toilets at a play area on the Amaroo side of the pond; to have shared path signs indicating pedestrians have right of way; more bins, especially on the Amaroo side; to extend lighting to cover all of the pathways around the pond; to provide more parking to service the businesses; and more seats, especially on the Amaroo side.

There are calls for dog waste bags and appropriate signage; to resurface the footpath bridges; improve water quality; control weeds and other growth close to the pond; arrange regular maintenance and clean-up around the businesses; service and repair stormwater entry areas to the pond; repair damaged and hazardous rubber surfaces in the play areas; provide clear centre strips on paths; prepare a master plan for the rehabilitation and provision for new facilities, like a small arboretum or gardens, maybe storage facilities for kayaks; and a covered and powered stage area for events.

There are calls to provide facilities for food vendors or coffee vans; to provide new comprehensive signage giving details of the pond and its facilities, as well as information on flora and fauna; to remove excess weeds in the pond; repair paths, especially on the western side; provide space for community gardens; and to make sure that the pond is a wonderful place for future generations.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Yerrabi electorate—Yerrabi Pond

MR PETTERSSON (Yerrabi) (10.07): I move:

That this Assembly:

(1) notes:

- (a) the importance of Yerrabi Pond as the primary recreation area for the growing Gungahlin community since opening in 1999; and

- (b) that residents would like to see improved amenities at the pond with particular consideration to:
 - (i) number of toilets and their amenity;
 - (ii) improved signage;
 - (iii) landscaping and replanting of bushes and grass;
 - (iv) number of tables, bins and barbeques to cater to local demand;
 - (v) recreational facilities for young people; and
 - (vi) path improvements for pedestrians and cyclists;
- (2) further notes the \$300 000 in funding provided by the ACT Government for Yerrabi Pond foreshore improvements in the 2020-21 Budget; and
- (3) calls on the ACT Government to:
 - (a) consult with the Gungahlin community to inform improvements and future upgrades;
 - (b) consider further upgrades to Yerrabi Pond in future ACT Budgets; and
 - (c) support a “Friends of Yerrabi Pond” group to engage in this process.

Today I rise to call for improvements to Yerrabi Pond. I am sure that every member in this place agrees that one of the best things about living in Canberra is the many open green spaces that fill our city. It is always great to head to your local park on the weekend, to get out of the house, to get some fresh air and enjoy some wonderful weather. But sometimes you require a bit more than a local park. Sometimes you need a bigger and better serviced space, like a district park, like Yerrabi Pond.

Yerrabi Pond is the central park for most Gungahlin residents. When Yerrabi Pond opened in 1999, Gungahlin was home to around 12,000 Canberrans. Now Treasury predicts that the population of Gungahlin will grow to over 83,000 people by 2022. Yerrabi Pond should have grown alongside our district and town centre but, alas, it has not. Instead, I think conditions are not up to scratch and that there are limited facilities for the growing population. Put simply, Yerrabi Pond needs some love.

Now, I want to take members of this place who are not regulars at Yerrabi Pond—I am really talking to those members from Brindabella, because I am not sure how often they make it up to Gungahlin—on a tour of Yerrabi Pond. If you walk along the edge of the Yerrabi Pond right now, you are bound to come across abandoned shopping trolleys and rubbish. You will find broken bottles, plastic bags and food wrappers littering the landscape because, put simply, there are not many bins at Yerrabi Pond. This waste often makes its way into the pond, polluting the water and impacting local wildlife. It is disheartening.

As you make your way around the pond, you will notice uneven footpaths and a complete lack of lighting. It is unsafe, particularly for children and the elderly. You will notice weeds coming up through the pavement along the waterfront promenade and weeds all through the Mirrabei Drive dam wall. As you get into the rhythm of your walk, you will notice that on the singular track around the pond it can get very busy, with people overtaking constantly and limited space available on the path.

Madam Speaker, I would describe myself as an infrequent jogger. I am not one of the battle-hardened runners in Gungahlin parkrun every Saturday, but I get around the pond every few weeks or so in somewhat decent time. When I run, I often do it by myself in the evening. I feel like I take my life in my own hands sometimes. It is that dark and sometimes that busy. The, on average, nearly 200 people who attend parkrun every week are brave souls. I have run it before and it is packed. It is hard for them all to fit on the singular path with all of the traffic.

Just this Saturday I held a community barbecue at Yerrabi Pond. I do them occasionally as a good way to chat to constituents and it is a good excuse for me to have a few sausages. When my team plan these community barbecues, we actually plan for the lack of facilities. We pack a portable barbecue, extra seats and some shade because we know that the facilities are not there. It is one thing for me and my office to plan a barbecue for mostly adults who want to have a chat about local issues. It is entirely a different matter if you are trying to plan a kid's birthday party.

There is a level of certainty that you need to have when planning for a kid's birthday party. Who wants to organise a birthday party at Yerrabi Pond only to find out on the day as you arrive that every table is taken and there is competition for the barbecues? It has reached the point where I see families turning up early to try and reserve tables for later in the day. It is genuinely wild. It reminds me of gatherings in Sydney, not in Canberra.

With all of these people, some of you must be wondering, "Where do they come from?" The short answer is from all over Gungahlin. It is the central district park, and overwhelmingly they drive. The public transport connections do not exist. It is probably a 10- or 15-minute walk from Gungahlin town centre if you try to use public transport to get to the town centre. This means that finding a car park can be nearly impossible along the waterfront promenade or along the central recreational area.

The adventure playground and giant flying fox are fantastic and young kids get good use out of these facilities. I actually remember when I was a youngster playing on these very same pieces of equipment and they are some of the fondest memories that I have of my childhood. They are great playgrounds, but they are not maintained particularly well. Some of the, as I would describe them, potholes in the protective matting will give you pause when you see a kid standing in them halfway up their shins.

The skate park is popular, but it could be so much better. It is not that big, and it is not that exciting. There is definitely some big envy towards the very well done Belco skate park. The dirt bike track and new nature play space are also great, and the local community is very excited to see the fencing come down on the nature play space. The toilet block is outdated. It is in poor condition. The toilets are dimly lit, unventilated and vandalised. There are no change tables and they are not disability friendly. It is unsurprising that people do not want to use these inaccessible and uninviting facilities.

In comparison, Lake Ginninderra has four toilet blocks, with a \$600,000 upgrade planned for the toilets in John Knight Park. The eastern loop around Lake Burley Griffin is nine kilometres long, twice as long as the Yerrabi Pond circuit, yet it has seven toilet blocks available for people walking around the pond. Locals are adamant that Yerrabi Pond be on equal footing with other water bodies in our city.

Yerrabi Pond is a place that the community truly cares about. For the many Gungahlin residents who do not have a backyard—and there are lots of them in Gungahlin town centre—this parkland is the go-to outdoor space for exercise and socialising. As Gungahlin grows, major new apartment complexes are being constructed right near the pond, in the town centre.

It is often hard to keep up with the countless plans and proposals for new apartment towers to be constructed in Gungahlin town centre. These complexes bring thousands of new residents to Gungahlin but fail to provide adequate outdoor living space. As a result, the closest outdoor green space for these residents is the local pond, but sadly the pond, in its current state, cannot accommodate such high population growth.

I have heard stories from many constituents who remember when the water was so clean they could fish in Yerrabi Pond. These days the water is brown, smelly and there is rubbish in it and pollution. We have heard recently of the new floating wetland in Lake Tuggeranong that cleans up water quality and prevents blooms. It does this by sucking up nutrients in the lake. I would like to see initiatives like this implemented in Yerrabi Pond so that Yerrabi Pond can see improved water quality.

I have talked to countless individuals who absolutely love Yerrabi Pond, but they are disappointed with the lack of upgrades to basic amenities. This lack of amenity makes it near impossible for the elderly and people with disabilities to enjoy the pond to the same standard as an able-bodied person. We should be providing adequate amenity so that everybody can enjoy this wonderful local resource equally.

Circling back to something I mentioned earlier, and really a little bit about my youth, when I was a youngster I used to skateboard. It surprises no-one. Local skate parks provide a safe space for young people to catch up, give them something to do with their time and let them enjoy their scooters, skateboards and bikes in an environment that is conducive to having fun. It is important that we maintain these skate parks to a good standard so that young people have a spot to enjoy their hobbies close to where they live.

Unfortunately, the Yerrabi Pond skate park is in desperate need of some TLC. The famous website Skatermaps.com rates Gungahlin skate park a measly three out of five stars, describes it as “starting to show its age” and recommends that skaters are better off going elsewhere. It does not even slightly compare with the nearby skate parks, particularly the one in Belconnen—for the record, given five out of five stars—which is better designed, larger, better maintained and definitely has some gnarlier features. I would love to see Yerrabi Pond skate park become a local icon and attractive to skaters who live all over Canberra, not just locals who cannot make it over to Belconnen. This can be done with some upgrades and a facelift. I do not think that it

is too hard. Just around the corner from the skate park at the adventure park there are large chunks of protective matting that have just been ripped out and have never been fixed. There are giant potholes. Young people and children deserve fun, clean and safe spaces to enjoy. We in this chamber are responsible to ensure that this is the case.

The Friends of Yerrabi Pond community group have been some of the most passionate advocates for breathing new life into the area. I have been taken aback by their enthusiasm and their go-get-'em attitude. They have been proactively asking government to listen and to act upon these longstanding concerns. Their efforts have been met with lots of support in the form of signatures on the petition and also support from MLAs in this place.

A few weeks ago I joined some dedicated locals to clean up Yerrabi Pond. This was not about a petition. This was just a good way to celebrate Clean Up Australia Day. The number of people who volunteered their Saturday to come along to Yerrabi Pond to help clean it up showed me just how passionate people are about making their local space a wonderful place to be. They did not get anything out of it. They just wanted to make Yerrabi Pond a little bit more beautiful.

I think, for the most part in this place, we are all on the same page in that we need to make some real improvements to Yerrabi Pond. This year, Labor promised to make upgrades to our urban spaces. The fix Yerrabi Pond petition makes a few simple requests: firstly, that the government support the establishment of a Friends of Yerrabi Pond association to aid community consultation; secondly, that the government upgrade the areas around the pond; and, finally, that the government provide new toilet facilities, more bins, proper signage and improved pathways.

I do not think that these are unreasonable requests. We want a town that feels clean, safe and cared for. Creating community spaces that properly provide for Gungahlin residents is essential for achieving this goal. While the facilities around Yerrabi Pond may have been reasonable over 20 years ago, the current state of services is not good enough.

On behalf of the Gungahlin community, I am calling on the government to consider further upgrades to Yerrabi Pond, to give it the new lease on life that it deserves. Gungahlin residents see the pond's potential to become an amazing community space. I share their belief that the pond can and should be brought up to the same standard as other district parks. While the basics must be addressed first, I urge the government to consider what Yerrabi Pond could look like if we really dedicated the time and resources to revitalise this place. I hope that all members of the Assembly can join me to make these improvements happen.

MS CASTLEY (Yerrabi) (10.19): I am delighted to get to my feet as a proud Liberal member for Yerrabi to heartily support this motion. The two key points that I want to make are these. Firstly, this motion is long overdue. Yerrabi Pond has been neglected for years—many years—by this government and it is about time they took responsibility for its shabby state. Secondly, this motion is based on a petition by the Friends of Yerrabi Pond. The person who has led that charge is a gentleman with us in the chamber today, John Beagle. I salute him for his leadership, his gumption, and his

tireless community service. I revealed your age in the chamber earlier this week, John, so it is there in *Hansard* for all of Canberra to know. It is important to state that at 89 years of age, there is no stopping or slowing down this warrior.

The whole point of petitions is that they are community led. How great that is to see. Having said that, it is a shame that we in this place, 25 of us elected and paid handsomely to represent our communities, need to rely on warriors like John, along with his wife, Kay, and local activist and Gungahlin Community Council member Darron Marks, who is also here today, to prompt us to do our job.

As I mentioned earlier this week, Darron became a self-described bin militant following years of frustration at not being able to get bins for Yerrabi Pond. This is politics 101, isn't it, Madam Speaker? It is a poor reflection on the government and this Assembly that our community members need to turn to militancy to get action. I salute John, Kay and Darron, and the more than 1,000 wonderful Yerrabi residents who have signed the petition calling on the government to improve our pond and make it an attractive place that all families and people want to visit.

As a proud Liberal member for Yerrabi, I also want to put on record my campaigning efforts to get the government to fix our pond, which in some places is an eyesore. Last month I wrote to Minister Chris Steel and asked him when his Labor-Greens government would prioritise improving Yerrabi Pond by installing more lighting, bins, taps, playgrounds, and barbecues. I have yet to receive a response, but I am heartened by this community petition and I eagerly await the government's response.

The Canberra Liberals suggest that the minister set up a task force—much as I loathe the word—or a group that comprises the key leaders of the Friends of Yerrabi Pond, so that we can get to work. We need not much talk, but action. On behalf of the Canberra Liberals, may I invite myself to the table and ask to be a member of that group, alongside my Labor colleague Mr Pettersson?

I have said before, and will keep saying through my entire term, that I want to highlight the fact that Yerrabi is the only Canberra electorate that does not have a minister representing the area. That was Chief Minister Andrew Barr's decision. It is no surprise, therefore, that so many parts of my electorate are ignored and neglected by this government. Meanwhile, Mr Barr has looked after his own electorate of Kurrajong, with not one, two or three ministers, but four.

On their flyers urging residents to sign the petition, the Friends of Yerrabi Pond have stated, "We are the only group active and able to achieve action to bring the pond and surrounding facilities and parklands to a better state for everyone." I turn to our local warriors in Yerrabi, here in this chamber today, to give you my promise that I am totally on board. I would be delighted to be an honorary member, if that is the term, of your Friends of Yerrabi Pond. I will be active; just you watch me. I will back you all the way to ensure that this government recognises your hard work and fixes up the pond to a standard that all Canberrans deserve.

I acknowledge the amendment Mr Braddock will be moving and I support this proposed change to the motion.

MR BRADDOCK (Yerrabi) (10.23): I move:

Insert new clause (3)(d):

“(d) consider rating Yerrabi Pond for secondary contact recreation activities.”

I would like to thank Mr Pettersson for bringing forward this motion and the petition presented to the Assembly earlier this week.

Yerrabi Pond is much more than a stormwater retention pond. Yerrabi Pond lies at the heart of the Gungahlin district in both a geographic and recreational sense. It provides a focal point for a wide range of recreational activities, such as parkrun—I cannot match the speed at which Mr Pettersson can go around the lake—barbecues, cycling, children’s birthdays, playgrounds, picnics, walking dogs and fishing. My kids have loved using sticks to fish aquatic plants out of the pond.

The Greens took a substantial package to the election to revitalise Yerrabi Pond as a community asset. This included an investment in lighting, to improve safety for people using Yerrabi Pond to exercise, connect and play at all hours instead of just during the daylight hours; investment in public realm infrastructure, including toilets, park benches, playground facilities, and signage; and the enhancement of economic activity through more eating options around the pond.

The \$300,000 that was announced in this budget is welcome but can only represent the start. As the population of Gungahlin dramatically expands, the demand for quality green space becomes unstoppable. Quality green spaces are essential for community health, both physical and mental, particularly for those in apartments. One thing that Gungahlin town centre has in spades is apartments. Therefore, the Greens see this investment as an initial down payment that only goes so far in matching community expectations.

I look no further than the prioritised list of actions provided by the Friends of Yerrabi Pond, which Mr Pettersson kindly read out for me earlier. If we, as a government, can achieve against this list, the residents of Gungahlin will be truly thankful and have a pond to be proud of.

An additional point that I would like to make is that we need to look at the active travel links between Gungahlin town centre and Yerrabi Pond so that, instead of having to take their lives in their hands when crossing Gundaroo Road, people and families can walk or bike safely towards the pond.

I, like others, applaud John and Kay Beagle. I also mention Darron Marks, who is in the gallery as well, and all others who have established the Friends of Yerrabi Pond. This has given the community a focal point to which to direct its efforts to advocate for, volunteer and work with government to improve this wonderful community asset. It provides a wonderful opportunity for the community to help share the responsibility for this valued space. Through an increased sense of community ownership of Yerrabi Pond comes community connection, pride and responsibility, all values which will improve the amenity of Yerrabi Pond and its surrounding community. I will now talk on the amendment that I have circulated.

Members of the Gungahlin community frequently use Yerrabi Pond for fishing, canoeing and kayaking. All these activities bring the possibility of incidental contact with the water. To facilitate the existing community enjoyment of this fantastic body of water, and also to allow further development of this recreational use of Yerrabi Pond, I am seeking to amend the motion to call for the government to consider rating Yerrabi Pond for secondary contact recreation. If implemented, this will help keep our community safe through water testing for bacteria and blue-green algae. It will also give more members of our community more confidence to enjoy this community asset.

This also aligns with the purpose outlined in the original designs for Yerrabi Pond dating from 1991. These designs show that Yerrabi Pond was intended for the recreational activity I have outlined. It is time that we realise this intended vision for Yerrabi Pond; recognise that the community are already using the pond for recreational purposes such as those I have described; and do this whilst keeping our community safe, encouraging more to use this beautiful lake.

There will be much work to do to improve the water quality to support this type of recreation, but I believe that this should remain the aspiration. I commend the amendment to the Assembly.

MR MILLIGAN (Yerrabi) (10.28): I thank Mr Pettersson for bringing this motion to the Assembly. However, I cannot understand how this member of this longstanding Labor-Greens government can stand here in this place and sponsor this petition. Seriously? You are having to call on your own government to invest in community facilities that have been neglected for over 20 years, and ask for public services and amenities like tables, bins, toilets and signs? This should be business as usual for this government, but that does not seem to be the case here.

Members of the community like Darron, John and Kay, who are here today, who have formed the Friends of Yerrabi Pond group, should be commended for their service. I have seen these passionate volunteers out in our community every weekend, talking to people, getting signatures, recruiting more members. They have done an outstanding job. Clearly, they have brought significant pressure to bear so that the Labor-Greens MLAs are standing here today talking about their commitment and making promises. It will be my job, and the job of Leanne Castley and the Canberra Liberals, to continue this good work, to keep the pressure up and to make sure that this government delivers more funding in the next budget.

Don't get me wrong. We have asked for this before. We even promised this investment as part of our election commitments in October last year. The Canberra Liberals know and understand the needs of our local community in Gungahlin. We live there and we listen; we use the facilities; and we understand that basic improvements need to be made. Additionally, we think that this site has so much potential. We will watch with interest to see what will come out of this motion.

As this motion states, Yerrabi Pond is an important community recreation area for the growing Gungahlin community. But it is so much more than that. It is a meeting place, a place of celebration, where we hold birthday parties and barbecues. It is a

community hub where groups come together and bond. It is a venue for physical activity, parkrun, fishing, casual strolls around the pond and use of the gym equipment. Boot camps are even held on the grass. For many in the area, it is an extension of their backyard. For many apartment dwellers, it is their actual backyard.

I support this motion because I support our local community. I especially admire the work done to date by the Friends of Yerrabi Pond. I also support Mr Braddock's amendment to the motion, to turn the waterway into a secondary recreation waterway. That is really important. It is being used by a lot of the community already. If we can ensure that water quality is much better, we can encourage more activities on that waterway, encourage more groups to get involved.

That being said, I am sceptical. I will keep a close eye on developments over the coming months. Experience has shown me that promises made by those opposite are quite often broken. Just ask the residents of Casey, who were promised a community recreation park back in 2012. Just ask the sporting groups in the area who have no indoor sporting facilities, not enough ovals, and a busted pool. Just ask the multicultural community, who still have no venue or community hall. Just ask the parents of students who cannot fit into their local schools because they are bursting. Just ask the business sector in the town centre, who have watched parking and commercial space disappear in Gungahlin.

Yerrabi Pond could be a real gem for the people of Gungahlin and their visitors. It could provide an attractive recreation space for a large number of apartment dwellers on the nearby hill and for workers in the sterile Gungahlin town centre—itsself, sadly, lacking facilities. We will watch with keen interest in this space.

We are supporting the motion. It is disappointing that it has come to the point where a petition has had to be put together by the community. I say again that they have done an amazing job. I know that they have a lot of support from local residents, particularly residents who live in the suburbs adjoining this waterway.

But why should it stop there? We should be looking at all our waterways. We should be ensuring that our waterways are fit, that they do not have huge mounds of green algae, that they are good for secondary recreation use. We should be extending beyond Yerrabi Pond. The residents of Yerrabi deserve that. They pay huge rates. We should be doing what we can to give back to the community.

We support this motion. We will be watching with keen interest. Hopefully, something will be delivered for the people of Yerrabi.

MR STEEL (Murrumbidgee—Minister for Skills, Minister for Transport and City Services and Special Minister of State) (10.34): I thank Mr Pettersson for bringing this motion to the Assembly today and for giving me the opportunity to speak about how the ACT government can improve amenity for Canberrans in the Gungahlin region, particularly around Yerrabi Pond.

Yerrabi Pond is a much-loved local attraction in a fast-growing area of Canberra, with hundreds of people, not thousands, visiting the precinct each day. The walk is a great

way to get some exercise while enjoying the scenery. The play areas provide exciting and engaging play opportunities for children of all ages.

I would like to acknowledge Mr Pettersson's dedication as an advocate in working with the Yerrabi Pond community, including his assistance in helping them to establish the Friends of Yerrabi Pond group, which, no doubt, the government will value as we continue to look at improvements around Yerrabi Pond.

The ACT government has been investing in Yerrabi Pond in recent years, including through the construction of a new nature play space that opened in 2020. The new nature play space has an aquatic theme, featuring a central climbable turtle that pays homage to the species that live in our local waterways, including Yerrabi Pond. There are percussion instruments, as well as a sandpit, balancing equipment, natural log and boulder steppers. Additional trees have been planted to provide shade as part of that project. To complement the play space, last year local Aboriginal artist Matilda House, with assistance from Kirrily Jordan and Annick Thompson, painted a colourful mural on the toilet block wall which tells a story about the wildlife found in the nearby waterways. That was supported by the ACT government.

These investments have already made improvements to the area for those who visit it frequently; but we also know from the community that they would like to see more done to improve the open spaces around the broader pond area. I have been speaking with my colleagues Ms Orr, Mr Pettersson and, previously, Mr Gupta in relation to improvements around the lake. That is why, at the election last year, we made commitments around improving Yerrabi Pond even further.

In the budget, we have invested \$300,000 to consult with locals and undertake a feasibility study to identify further improvements around Yerrabi Pond. The study will consider the priorities of the community across a range of areas, not being limited to things that Mr Pettersson has mentioned—active travel connectivity, access, landscaping, plantings, signage, car parking and availability of recreational facilities, as well as things like lighting, access to recycling and garbage services and the provision of additional bins.

During the process, we want to hear from the community what they love most about the area and what they would like to see improved. This engagement exercise will inform future design work in the area. The consultation will be starting soon. I would like to encourage the Friends of Yerrabi Pond and the broader community to get involved by sharing their views.

I welcome the petitions that have been tabled today and earlier in the week in relation to the ideas that have been put forward by the community. I welcome the petitions as a way of not only asking for particular things to be done but clearly articulating the community's views. I would not put down, as the opposition have today, anything that comes forward into the Assembly regarding petitions. They are a valuable way of things coming forward.

Things about improvements come forward to government in a variety of different ways. We should accept them through whatever door they come. This one is really

useful. Some practical ideas were put to me for the first time through the petition, through Mr Pettersson and his Labor colleagues, and, indeed, through other members of this place. We welcome those ideas. We continue to support these investments through the budget. We have put our money where our mouth is in terms of upgrades to Yerrabi Pond. They were supported by members on this side of the place yesterday but, unfortunately, were not supported by the opposition.

We will get on with the work of consulting with the community on the upgrades. I welcome today's motion. I indicate that the government will support the amendment put forward by Mr Braddock in relation to the use of the waterway for recreational purposes.

MS ORR (Yerrabi) (10.38): I rise today to speak in support of this motion and to acknowledge the great work John and Kay have done in bringing this issue forward.

We often talk about Yerrabi and Gungahlin as being new and rapidly growing; but Yerrabi Pond is one of the oldest parts of Gungahlin, one of the original parts. Part of our story up in Yerrabi that we do not always acknowledge is that we are not young. We are not all new. Some parts of it are starting to mature and need a bit more focus than we might sometimes realise, because we are trying to still build those newer parts.

This is one area that has been there since 1991 and has served our community well. As we grow up, we need to invest more into it. We need to think strongly about the parts of Yerrabi Pond that are already established—the skate park, the playgrounds, the toilet blocks—which are not necessarily meeting the needs that we would like them to meet now. And there are all those other areas down by the foreshore.

Yerrabi Pond is quite big. It has a lot of areas that have a lot of potential that could be realised to accommodate a lot more uses and a lot more demand from our community. We do love this space. That is what has been captured in this initiative from the community. Let us make the existing bits as good as they possibly can be, but let us also realise the potential of the Amaroo side of the pond, the areas north of the Yerrabi foreshore. Let us look at what new uses we can put into this park to accommodate the new needs of our community. We have grown up as a community; we have new interests. Parkrun did not even exist when Yerrabi Pond first started. Now we have parkrun there every weekend, with heaps of people coming down. As we have heard, Mr Pettersson and Mr Braddock are not running very fast during parkrun, but they are still there.

Mr Pettersson: That is not what I said.

MS ORR: I am sorry if I have misrepresented Mr Pettersson's running skills.

We have these new uses that are coming up around this area. Back in 1999 they were not even imagined, were not even used. When you have such a loved area of our community, such a loved space, it is natural that as we grow up it needs to grow up with us.

That is the spirit in which the petition has been brought here today. How do we keep Yerrabi Pond growing with our community so that it is realising all the potential as a recreation space that it can potentially realise?

The best thing to come out of this whole process has been the initiative of the petitioners. They have said, “We don’t just want a petition saying, ‘Do this.’ We want to stay involved. We want a Friends of Yerrabi Pond group. We want to keep investing in this area. We want to keep holding government to account.”

There is nothing wrong in doing that. That is a great aspect of our democracy. I say go for it. I want John and Kay knocking on my door all the time telling me to do this or that. It is fantastic to have that initiative within our community. As a local member, I say, “Great. You have made clear what we need to get on and do. We all love this space. Let’s do it.”

I am very heartened to hear that every member from Yerrabi wants to see this place invested in. There is a lot of potential for us to work together to realise that. It is also great to have the minister so committed to seeing that this continues to grow.

We have done work on the pond and the area around the pond, as the minister has pointed out. The mural that was put in last year is absolutely stunning. It has added to that part of the foreshore and brought a lot of colour and vibrancy to the area. The nature play area is really good. I will always advocate for nature play. The minister can attest to that. Every time I talk to him about a park, I say, “Great. Can we put nature play in it?” There is something great about being able to get dirty and play with sticks. I know we say that is for kids, but, as an adult, I like to do that too. Let us consider not just how we are using the area for kids, but how we can continue to invest for all ages.

That leads to another misnomer we get sucked into with Gungahlin. Not only do we have older spaces, but our community is not just young: we have all ages. We have all groups; we have all abilities out there. Let’s start creating a multi-use space that meets all our community’s needs.

In projects I have done across the community where we have consulted in other areas, seating is always popular. I hear from many different people that it is because they are too old and they want to sit down. That is usually what I hear from my father. If you have kids, you just want to sit down while the kids can run and you can have five minutes off. Whatever it is, you always want to be able to sit. There are lots of needs; that is what I am saying here. Let’s start considering those.

I look at this motion as the next great step in realising the potential of Yerrabi Pond. I hope that the Friends of Yerrabi Pond get going. I hope we see that enthusiasm that has driven us to today’s point continue to grow and develop. I look forward to working with the Friends of Yerrabi Pond in continuing to develop this area over the coming years so that it continues to be an asset to our community.

MR PETTERSSON (Yerrabi) (10.44): I want to thank all the members who have contributed to today's debate. It has been very positive to see members of all political parties in this place speak with a shared voice about the importance of Yerrabi Pond, talk about the current state of affairs, and then talk about something of a shared vision of what it should look like into the future.

This echoes what comes from the community. I do not think these are unique thoughts that members in this place are articulating. These are quite genuinely the views of our constituents. It is quite straightforward: Gungahlin residents want to see Yerrabi Pond improved. I am very confident and very optimistic that that is what is going to happen. This government is committed to listening and engaging with the community. This government is committed to making Yerrabi Pond a better place. That is a very good thing and I know that the Gungahlin community is excited to watch this space and be involved in the journey.

Amendment agreed to.

Original question, as amended, resolved in the affirmative.

Leave of absence

Motion (by **Ms Castley**) agreed to:

That leave of absence be granted to Mr Hanson for today's sitting due to illness.

Government—business support

MS CASTLEY (Yerrabi) (10.46): I move:

That this Assembly:

- (1) notes the importance of Canberra's 30,000 small businesses which employ almost two-thirds of Canberra's workforce;
- (2) further notes:
 - (a) the ACT Government has established several ministerial advisory councils to enable important groups in the ACT to represent the views and experiences of their communities including women, our multicultural community, seniors, youth and the LGBTIQ+ community, but there is no dedicated platform for the small business community;
 - (b) it is important the ACT Government understands the issues affecting the small business community and implements policies which support the sector to grow; and
 - (c) the ACT has previously had a small business ministerial advisory council which provided practical, strategic advice to the Chief Minister on policy; and
- (3) calls on the ACT Government to establish an ACT small business ministerial advisory council to comprise representatives from key sectors in the small business community.

The reason for this notice of a motion today is simple. The Canberra Liberals want the ACT to be the most small business-friendly place in Australia. That is why we are calling on the Labor-Greens government to establish an ACT small business ministerial advisory council. The council would play an important role in meeting that goal. It will be a permanent body, obviating the need for government to set up a smorgasbord of task forces and committees to examine all manner of issues. Perhaps most importantly, the ministerial advisory council will comprise experts in small business—small business owners and workers themselves. They are the ones best placed to advise government on policies to strengthen their sector, as well as other issues affecting their livelihoods, ranging from planning and parking to rates and health regulations.

It is a privilege to be the shadow minister for small business. In my first speech to the Assembly, I spoke about my experience of being a small business owner and running three car yards. My then husband and I employed five staff and made lots of money, but our success did not last. As we were drowning in bills, the debt collector came knocking and the business was liquidated. I turned to selling Tupperware, and my spare bedroom became a beauty salon, where I did waxing and pedicures to put food on the table. Life is never easy, nor is small business; but my story is not different from thousands of small business stories across our territory, and I share it again to show that I understand small business and have enormous respect for the courage of families who start and run small businesses, who take on staff and slog it out every single day to make it work.

Running a business is like riding a rollercoaster—with thrilling highs and absolutely crushing lows. The Canberra Liberals understand and respect small business. This motion calling on the Labor-Greens government to establish an ACT small business ministerial advisory council is a strong and substantial way that the government can show that it, too, understands and respects small business by giving them a permanent place at the table where key decisions are made. The irony is, of course, that small business owners are the ones with the least time to sit around and chat.

The Canberra Liberals understand that small business is the engine room. It is the backbone of our ACT economy. We know Canberra's 30,000 small businesses need government support and the support of this entire Assembly, because they employ almost two-thirds of Canberra's workforce and generate massive revenue for the territory. As I have said, Canberra is a public service town—we hear that time and again—but Canberra is also a small business town. Unfortunately, we do not hear as much about that. There is life beyond the public service, as important and valued as that is. The other workhorses in Canberra, outside the departments and directorates, are our cleaners and sandwich makers, florists, mechanics, gym instructors, beauticians, arborists and kitchen hands, hairdressers and tailors, carpet layers and shoemakers. They are also our tradies: electricians, plumbers and carpenters—the ones in such high demand. Good luck to them all.

The Chief Minister offered some gratuitous advice to my colleague Peter Cain yesterday when he said that this city will thrive only if we talk it up. The Canberra Liberals agree, Chief Minister, which is why we talk up small business, and wish your

government would too. Another reason to introduce this notice of motion calling on the government to establish an ACT small business ministerial advisory council is that the Labor-Greens government can and must do a lot better when it comes to understanding and helping our small business sector. If we want the ACT to be the most small business-friendly place in the country—and that is the Canberra Liberals’ goal—then Canberra has to be a place where it is easy for small business to do business; where it is easy to start a business, to expand, to employ more staff, to move to a bigger site, and to know the government has your back and wants you to thrive, not just get by.

No doubt the government will throw acronyms our way to talk up its small business credentials. The latest on offer are the BRT, the Better Regulation Taskforce, and the CERAG, Canberra Economic Recovery Advisory Group. Minister Cheyne recently spruiked the BRT, which has just kicked off the discovery phase. We are told that this task force will identify burdensome rules, review legislation to simplify business engagement with government, encourage new business models and remove investment barriers. Who is on this task force? Who is heading it? How often will it meet, and has it already met? When will the discovery phase wind up, and what is there to be discovered? Most Canberrans would wonder why a government which has been in power for two decades needs a task force and a discovery phase to understand small business. It is interesting to note the words of the Business Chamber, which said that to be effective the task force “needs to deliver genuinely business friendly policies”. It said that business “would love to see real change”. An ACT small business ministerial advisory council would do just that—develop business-friendly policies. It would also ensure jobs are kept local and we would not need a body, an acronym, set up to make that happen.

The Canberra Economic Recovery Advisory Group is another new government acronym recently added to the bureaucratic lexicon. It will draw together economists, public policy experts, industry representatives, community sector groups and unions to help the ACT’s jobs and economic recovery plan. In August last year Chief Minister Barr declared that the government would run an expression of interest process for two small business owners to join CERAG. I am baffled to know how two small business owners could speak for Canberra’s 30,000-strong small business sector. Given that the focus of this group is jobs, I wonder why only two businesses were invited. The ACT small business ministerial advisory council would comprise small businesses, business owners and workers from key parts of the sector, such as retail, travel and hospitality, health and beauty, fitness and recreation, business services and technology, care and cleaning, and automotive repairs and maintenance.

Minimising government waste and getting better value for taxpayers’ money is another important reason the government should establish an ACT small business ministerial advisory council. You only need to look at the government’s recent failed ChooseCBR scheme to understand the need. Rushed, messy and complicated; no wonder business and consumers did not touch it. And to think, almost \$125,000 was spent on administration costs. How different the trial could have been if Minister Cheyne and her directorate had worked with an ACT small business ministerial advisory council. ChooseCBR could have been a success.

It is important to note that the former Stanhope Labor government saw the sense of establishing an ACT small business ministerial advisory council, which it did way back in 2002—19 years ago. In a media release in July 2005, seeking new members, former Chief Minister Jon Stanhope praised the council for contributing to the 2003 economic white paper and new legislation to establish the Office of the Small Business Commissioner. The council met quarterly and was chaired by the ACT Small Business Commissioner Dr Michael Schaper. Interestingly, the position of commissioner was an independent appointment to develop a work program. The work program was designed—I quote from a media release—to “progress the government’s small business friendly aspirational goal”. What a shame that successive Labor governments have abandoned that goal.

This government has established ministerial advisory councils in numerous areas but not for small business. Minister Yvette Berry, on the Ministerial Women’s Advisory Council, says:

The council is an independent voice to raise and debate issues that matter to women. It plays a key role in advising the government on issues of importance to women.

Minister Emma Davidson, on the Ministerial Advisory Council on Ageing, says:

It enables critical links between the ACT government and older Canberrans providing strategic advice to the minister, a valuable platform where members can advise government on policy development and decision-making.

Minister Berry again, on the LGBTIQ+ Ministerial Advisory Council, said:

It has a key role in maintaining Canberra’s reputation as Australia’s friendliest city for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer people.

I could go on with similar remarks from ministers about the important role of youth, veterans and multicultural advisory councils, but there is no small business ministerial advisory council.

Imagine Minister Cheyne on her feet announcing the establishment of an ACT small business ministerial advisory council, declaring, “This council is an independent voice to raise and debate issues that matter to small business. It will play a key role in advising the government on issues of importance to small business and improve the status of small business in our community. It will enable critical links between the ACT government and small business, and be a valuable platform where members can advise government on policy development and decision-making.”

Such an advisory council would even save me the job of campaigning for public toilets at Kaleen shops upgrade, because the government would have listened to local traders. I will continue to campaign for toilets at local shops, just as I will continue to lobby for an ACT small business ministerial advisory council in the hope that this government might bring to the decision-making table a small business sector too busy to sit around and talk but so needed to represent a world too often foreign to this government.

MR CAIN (Ginninderra) (10.57): I support wholeheartedly Ms Castley’s motion, and I do so in three capacities—as shadow minister for jobs and workplace affairs, as member for Ginninderra, and also as a concerned citizen who wants to see Canberra’s businesses flourishing. The Labor-Green government should acknowledge the importance of the small business community much more strongly than it currently does. I think the establishment of a small business ministerial advisory council is a step in the right direction. Small businesses employ two-thirds of Canberra’s workforce and provide important economic opportunities for Canberrans from all walks of life.

In my own electorate I hear every day the needs and concerns of small businesses. I have spoken to and liaised with many, and I would like to give a special acknowledgement to those whom I know are looking to the government for stronger support—Bartleby’s Books, Herbert’s at Evatt, Fraser Grocer, Fraser Tavern, Capital Strata Management Services, Evatt PharmaSave pharmacy, Evatt Takeaway, In Skin Care Beauty Salon, and Page Tavern. And there are many more that have engaged with me looking for better outcomes. This Labor-Green government continues to neglect some of our city’s most important contributors.

In contrast, the Canberra Liberals understand the need for small businesses. We want them to succeed, and the vehicle at the moment is this terrific motion from Ms Castley. In closing, I ask: what is this government afraid of? Is it afraid of having a council to advise the Minister for Business and Better Regulation and other ministers in this government of the real needs of small business? Why doesn’t it want to hear more from the small business community in Canberra—a neglected part, sadly, of our community? I would like to thank Ms Castley for this motion and I wholeheartedly 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) (10.59): I move:

Omit all words after “That this Assembly” and substitute:

- “(1) notes the importance of Canberra’s 30,000 small businesses which contribute significantly to Canberra’s workforce;
- (2) further notes that the ACT Government has:
 - (a) a range of ways it consults with the small business community to assist the Government in understanding the issues affecting small businesses and to implement policies that support the sector to grow, including face to face interactions; workshops; forums; regular meetings with associations and peak bodies; and a YourSay Panel;
 - (b) appointed a Minister for Business and Better Regulation to advocate and liaise with local businesses and improve the ease of doing business with government;
 - (c) appointed a Local Business Commissioner to provide advice to the Government on systemic issues facing the business community in the ACT as we deal with the COVID-19 pandemic;

- (d) established the Better Regulation Taskforce that will make starting, running, and growing a business easier in the ACT by engaging with businesses to identify issues that are a burden to business and working across government to resolve these; and
- (3) calls on the ACT Government to continue to engage with businesses in a way that suits them and is respectful of their time.”

Ms Castley and I are in agreement about wanting Canberra to be, and to be known as, small business friendly—even more so than it already is. I very much welcome the conversation about how best to engage with Canberra’s small business communities and I want to stress just how valued they are. They are the engine room of our economy, and I have greatly appreciated the huge amount of engagement I have had in the five-ish months since assuming this portfolio.

I also want to acknowledge that this has been a difficult period. Our businesses have been asked to do so much, and they have responded every time. The way in which they have worked deserves our praise and thanks. It is for this reason that our health response has been so strong, that there is growing confidence in our community and economy, and that the economic recovery is strong. I commend and honour that today. Thank you to our small businesses.

In moving this amendment, I would like to state at the outset that the idea of a small business ministerial advisory council has not been dismissed out of hand—far from it. Establishing an advisory council along the lines proposed in the motion was an idea I considered when I took on this newly established portfolio. It is one I have discussed at length with members of the business community and with peak bodies too. Having considered feedback and conducted my own engagement with many businesses as well as many business and industry associations, it is clear that the issues and interests across the communities are varied. This might be due to the natures or types of the businesses and their locations or the stages of life of the businesses and so on.

I have found that the best way to understand businesses has been through direct engagement with them. But, in addition to direct engagement, there already exist many forums, advisory bodies, boards and other opportunities to engage with Canberra’s diverse business communities. Many of these are of their own making—ones which they trust in and engage with already. The Canberra Business Chamber itself is one of those bodies that is an effective advocate—it provides its own forums, which I have joined and which other ministers have joined—but there are countless others, as well.

This is what I, and the government, have been doing. We have been engaging directly with business owners—going to where they already are, through forums and associations they are already engaged in, and in ways that are respectful of their time. I am grateful for the frankly constant and wide variety of community and business engagements during the past five months. This approach has proven effective, and it is one that I and the government intend to continue. But it is also why I am reluctant to set up an advisory council when there are already very effective mechanisms, bodies, forums and organisations.

My concern is that because the issues and interests across the business communities are so wide, so different and so varied, an advisory council may not be truly representative. I think this may have even been subtly flagged in Ms Castley's motion, given it suggests there would need to be key sectors represented on a council, but there has been, until today, no suggestion of what these key sectors would be. The list she gave was long but it was by no means exhaustive. These are all entirely different communities; they are sectors and communities with different issues, different concerns and different passions.

It is worth noting, too, that the vast majority of our 30,000 small businesses are microbusinesses, many of whom are sole traders. Again, within this one community interests will be different. I am also concerned that an advisory council would be an extra burden on business. Ms Castley acknowledged herself that businesses do not have an enormous amount of time to sit around chat. It is not only that; businesses have different working hours and different working days. So an advisory council would not just be another ask. A regular meeting schedule would likely rule out entire sectors because what suits one sector as an appropriate time to meet and engage will be totally different for another sector.

So, as a government we will continue to engage with businesses in ways that suit them depending on their business, and in ways that are respectful of their time. Indeed, this is the approach that has informed the preliminary work of the Better Regulation Taskforce. One of the task force's first and most critical initiatives has been talking to business about how to talk to business—what methods, with what frequency, suit business owners best to have their views and concerns heard by government. Wherever possible, the task force will seek to hear from businesses in forums at which they are already engaged, rather than making engagement itself a burden on business. Again, there are a range of issues—some very specific and some very particular to a business—that have been elicited through having those longer in-depth conversations directly with them as we begin this discovery phase.

But of course there are other ways that engagement has been occurring. It is important to acknowledge the work of Brendan Smyth, who, in addition to his work as Commissioner for International Engagement, has taken on the additional role of local business commissioner. Mr Smyth has worked hard throughout the pandemic with commercial landlords and their tenants to mediate mutually agreeable outcomes for changes to commercial lease arrangements. Mr Smyth also provides valuable advice to government on systemic issues facing businesses in the ACT, as we collectively deal with the pandemic.

And, while the Better Regulation Taskforce and the local business commissioner provide invaluable lines of communication between business and government, I will reemphasise that as Minister for Business and Better Regulation I have been holding many meetings and attending many forums. Indeed, I have in place some regular meetings with peak bodies, too. I have also made it very clear—from the very first interview I did on the day I was announced as minister, and repeatedly since—that my door is open. I can tell you that businesses have very much taken up that invitation. We have been listening, and we have also been reaching out. It has been an incredibly energetic schedule.

As a result of this engagement we have been driving improvements to the government's interactions with businesses to make them better, faster and simpler. And businesses, knowing that they can engage with me and my office, and the government more broadly, have had useful conversations and feedback on matters they are advocating and on ways we have been implementing policies which can support them. One example is that earlier this week I was thrilled to announce direct support for local live music venues, through the Amp it Up! fund, to help the industry recover from the impacts of COVID-19 and grow opportunities for local performance artists. This scheme came as a direct result of conversations I have had with a number of venue owners, with artists who are business owners themselves, as well as regular engagement with Music ACT. It is a clear demonstration that we, as a government, are listening to businesses.

In closing, I thank Ms Castley for bringing forward this motion. I appreciate her intention but I believe that we are already working in a way which is giving businesses a voice to government and which is ensuring they are being heard—and we are doing so in a way works for them. I very much look forward to continuing to engage with businesses in ways that suit them and are respectful of their time. I thank them for the way in which they have embraced this new ministerial portfolio, the way that we have been able to work together, and what we have been able to achieve so far. I look forward to continuing to actively, proactively and energetically engage as we work in partnership to grow employment to more than 250,000 jobs by 2025.

MR CAIN (Ginninderra) (11.08): Madam Speaker, I speak against Ms Cheyne's amendment. I heard a most remarkable statement during her speech—that the establishment of a small business advisory council would be a burden on business, that we cannot possibly burden business with establishing a council to give them a voice to speak to government. That is one of the most remarkable statements I have heard this week in this Assembly. How dare we burden the community by giving them an opportunity to speak to government? This is nonsense. What about the other councils that advise the government? Is the government then planning to shut them all down because it is a burden to be on a council speaking to government? This is ludicrous.

I would invite Ms Cheyne, perhaps at another opportunity, to explain to the small business community why their having a voice to government is not necessary and we are so sorry about having to burden with them with establishing a council to speak to government. It makes no sense. This is not good governance; it is quite the opposite! It is atrocious governance.

Ms Castley has done her research, and what a surprise to realise that the small business community would like to have a voice to government. What a shocking thing to come to, what a conclusion. Who would have guessed with so many other advisory councils that I suspect actually enjoy having an opportunity to speak to government? Again, is the minister planning to shut them down because it is such a burden on them having that opportunity?

This is a terrible amendment. The original motion should stand as it is. I would invite all MLAs in this house to think seriously about so many opportunities the government gives to different parts of the community, as Ms Castley has pointed out. Why not give that opportunity to a part of the community that employs two-thirds of Canberrans? I would urge all members in this house to reject Ms Cheyne's amendment.

DR PATERSON (Murrumbidgee) (11.11): I thank Ms Castley for bringing this motion to the Assembly. However, I do not support the motion. I support the government's amendment to the motion. Local businesses are critical to a healthy ACT economy and community. One of the many things I love about our local Canberra context is the tangible and evident sense of support from the community and from the government for local businesses. Never has this been more evident and more important than during the current pandemic, and never have local businesses needed our support so much.

In the Murrumbidgee electorate, we have some wonderful entrepreneurs and local businesses across many industries and sectors. At Mawson, for example, we have an amazing multicultural melting pot that highlights some of the best examples of the incredible multicultural tapestry of our community. Almost next door to each other, we have Lebanese, Swedish, Italian and Vietnamese bakeries. We have Asian and Mediterranean grocery and spice stores, a halal butcher, a fresh grocer, and a wide variety of restaurant cuisines. Many of these local business owners are entrepreneurs who have started new lives in our city. We are lucky to be able to host this diversity of cultures and businesses and lucky that we have a community and government who, in return, supports those businesses.

As a new local member, I have started engaging with many local businesses in my electorate to hear from them about their needs, challenges and opportunities, as well as from the local community. Elsewhere in the Murrumbidgee electorate, the ACT government has demonstrated its commitment to local shopping areas through the \$2.5 million upgrade for the surroundings of the Duffy shops, as well as upgrades for Brierly Street at Cooleman Court.

At Duffy, I have sought comment from the community in recent weeks via a range of channels as to their ideas for upgrades and improvements for the shopping area surrounds. I have been overwhelmed by the level of interest and engagement in demonstrating how important these local shopping areas are to the local community. What has become increasingly apparent is how much these local shops provide a space for the community to meet, to socialise and to support local business. The community wants vibrant local places where they feel safe and welcome. Where they have the opportunity to support local and contribute to their neighbourhood, they will.

I am proud to work alongside a government that offers an array of initiatives to help support local businesses, including support, advice and rebates to help businesses recover from the impacts of COVID-19. Cafes, restaurants and takeaway businesses can apply for a one-off \$1,000 rebate on their electricity bills. Hotels, motels, serviced apartments and function and event venues can apply for a rebate on their water and sewerage fixed charges on Icon Water bills for the 2020-21 financial year.

Wages paid to apprentices or trainees employed after 1 August 2020 are exempt from payroll tax from the start of their employment until 30 June 2021. Community event organisers can continue to apply for support for up to \$15,000 for new or existing community events and festivals that are activated in suburbs and town centres during the 2021 calendar year.

In recognition of the impacts of the pandemic on mental health, small business owners can access Beyond Blue's new access mental health support program. This program is free. It is a confidential mental health coaching program structured over six sessions with a mental health trained coach with a small business background. I would urge all local businesses to reach out if they need support and make sure they are taking advantage of any rebates that are available to them. I support small business. This government supports business. That is why I support the government's amendment.

MR DAVIS (Brindabella) (11.15): I thank Ms Castley for bringing this motion to the Assembly and allowing me to once again reaffirm the ACT Greens strong commitment to small, medium and family sized business in the ACT. I have taken the time to reflect on the motion while it has been on the notice paper and consult with stakeholders. Based on those conversations, we will be supporting Minister Cheyne's amendment to the motion today.

Madam Speaker, it might surprise you to know that, in spite of being born and raised in Canberra, this is my first public service job. I have always either worked in or owned small businesses before being elected to this place. I understand the challenges and opportunities for small businesses in the ACT. I am reminded of both the opportunities and challenges every second Wednesday night when my dad comes over for tea and I help him do his invoices so that he gets paid on a fortnightly basis. The importance of the administrative and financial burden on small business people is brought home to me quite regularly.

In my capacity as both the ACT Greens spokesperson for small business and a member for Brindabella, I have risen in this place many times in the last six months to celebrate wonderful Canberra small businesses. You might recall being introduced to Phish and Phreak Productions, a small business that has blossomed throughout the COVID pandemic.

I have also risen, Madam Speaker, to join with your voice in support of a small business in our community that has been really run roughshod over by the greed of multinational corporations. That is the value that I hope to bring to this conversation, as we continue to support and embrace small, medium and family sized businesses in our city.

I am encouraged, though, on reflection, to go through just some of the government's achievements. There is an awful amount of work that is happening in this space. I am excited about all of it, whether it be the fact that in this cabinet there is a specific Minister for Business and Better Regulation—that is a very exciting move forward for Canberra small businesses—or that the Canberra economic advisory group already exists to provide support and advice in real time to the minister as it pertains to small

business; or the redeployment of my friend, the former member of this place, Mr Brendan Smyth, as the Local Business Commissioner and the work that he has done to broker and negotiate between landlords and small businesses as we recover from the pandemic; or the Better Regulation Taskforce, which I know is already providing much-needed advice to government; or the regular contributions made through the YourSay panel.

Like all of us in this place, I was really excited to see the government's initiative in launching its ChooseCBR program to help small, medium and family sized businesses recover from the pandemic. It was a trial. Of course, the opposition has made some hay while the sun shines in pointing out some of the shortcomings with that trial. I trust it is their job to do that. But I am encouraged; I am a glass half full kind of person. I am optimistic and hopeful that the learnings that have come from that trial will inform the expanded rollout of the ChooseCBR program in the coming weeks and months, which will further support small, medium and family sized businesses throughout the ACT.

In fact, earlier this week I rose in this place to ask the Chief Minister about the social and economic benefits of Floriade. Given that Floriade will now recommence in its usual home in Commonwealth Park, I was concerned, as the Greens spokesperson for small business, that our suburbs and district shopping centres would no longer enjoy the social and, importantly, economic benefit that *Floriade: Reimagined* brought them. I am really excited to see the government has made the decision to continue with Floriade in the suburbs, attracting Canberrans from all around to get down to the Hyperdome and the Lanyon marketplace and to get up to the Gungahlin marketplace and see Floriade around their area—and hopefully grab a bite and a coffee too!

Throughout the election the Greens made a number of commitments to support small, medium and family sized businesses. In particular, I was quite excited about our \$10 million commitment for interest-free seed funding loans to form cooperatives. No doubt small businesses will tell you, as they tell me, Madam Speaker, that one of the biggest burdens on small, medium and family sized businesses is the administrative burden of the paperwork, and sometimes the sense of isolation and loneliness that can come from being a microbusiness or macrobusiness, working in isolation from others and not being able to share resources or tools, or simply catch up over the water cooler in the morning. That is a really exciting opportunity the Greens took to the election to support cooperatives, where business people can work together, where business people can minimise expenses, share resources and build camaraderie and relationships within their suburbs.

In particular, the ACT Greens made a commitment, in resolving our spokesperson responsibilities after the election, to expand my remit to include the night-time economy. Particularly as a young person, Madam Speaker, can I tell you that I hear far too often—though I push back at the suggestion every time—that there is nothing fun to do in Canberra at night and it's best to nick off to Sydney or Melbourne. I look forward to getting up in this chamber many times over the next 3½ years to promote the lively and exciting activity that is happening in the ACT in the evening and on the weekends. I will be excited to reflect on and comment on the rollout of the Amp It Up! program that the government has announced earlier this week to support

musicians and artists and, in turn, the small businesses that house them throughout the ACT.

In closing, there are a number of commitments that this government has made to support small, medium and family sized businesses. Some of them are very new, meaning that we do not have the necessary evidence to reflect entirely on their benefit. I am optimistic, as I continue to engage enthusiastically with the Minister for Business and Better Regulation, in reflecting on those programs and providing advice, where it is helpful, on where I identify shortcomings so that we can get the best possible policy outcomes. That is the power of this power-sharing Labor-Greens government.

I will continue to get up in this place regularly and support and endorse small, family and medium sized businesses throughout the ACT—be it my regular staple Friday night of attending a drag show of a Phish and Phreak Production, be it on a weekend night when I cannot be bothered cooking and I head down to the Chisholm Family Tav for some bangers and mash—I told them Parto sent me; don't worry!—or be it any of the small, medium and family sized businesses throughout Brindabella where I am a regular customer.

My senior adviser has a little bit of a penchant for big earrings, so this is an important time to plug the marketplace in Wanniasa. They have a very impressive selection of earrings. I pointed it out to Minister Davidson just last week. As anybody in here knows, Minister Davidson does love a pin. They also have a very impressive supply of very funny, sometimes adult-only, pins. I will let Minister Davidson pick from those herself.

I genuinely thank Ms Castley again for bringing this motion to the floor. I do not question her commitment to small, medium and family sized businesses. In fact, our experiences before being elected to this place are not dissimilar, having worked in, for, or owned our own small businesses. I know the intent is good and the earnestness is clear. But on reflecting on the entire government's policy agenda for small, medium and family sized businesses, I am not yet convinced that another meeting is what small business needs. I am convinced that there are a range of options already to engage with the minister.

I also want to reiterate some of the points made by my friend Dr Paterson, who has rightly pointed out a range of government supports and rebates that small, medium and family sized businesses can access. I implore any small, medium or family sized business in the ACT who is having any difficulty in navigating those programs to contact my office. I will be more than happy to walk them through it.

There may very well be in future the possibility of such a ministerial advisory council. But, given the positive agenda of this government in a range of different areas to bring small, medium and family sized businesses into the conversation, I remain unconvinced that yet another meeting is necessary.

MS CASTLEY (Yerrabi) (11.25): I rise to express my disappointment that this Labor-Greens government will not support the Canberra Liberals' motion to set up an ACT small business ministerial advisory council. I express my disappointment in the

business minister, Tara Cheyne, for not advocating for her Labor colleagues, including the Chief Minister, to see the sense and importance of this motion; and my disappointment in the Greens business spokesperson, the leader of the Greens, for not standing up to their bigger government partner and convincing them to back small business in a substantial way.

Unfortunately, I am not surprised that Minister Cheyne has not backed this motion. I believe it is a huge, wasted opportunity for small business—for our true experts in small business: the owners and the workers themselves—to have a direct say. Not being able to go to an advisory council is like being an aunt or uncle who often gets to babysit the kids and thinks that they understand what it takes to be a parent. You do not know the pressure of being a parent until you have been a parent awake at 3 am to feverish, vomiting kids.

I liken that to small business. Until you have dipped your toe in the water, understanding what it is like to not have a voice at a ministerial table is difficult. I would have hoped that this government would have supported our small business sector and given them the opportunity to say, “This is what it’s like to be the parent, to be the one running the small business.”

I cannot help but wonder whether the government and the minister are worried about giving small business a proper forum and a genuine body where they can vent, share and get off their chest all the issues that pound them each day. Does the government really want to know? I know that there are other forums. Mr Davis and Ms Cheyne mentioned them. There are too many. We want one advisory council instead of multiples. Make it simple and fast. The Labor-Greens government has made its priorities clear.

Let me look at the other ministerial advisory councils that the government has established: women, young people, multicultural groups, the LGBTIQ+ community. Don’t get me wrong; I heartily support and endorse these groups having a permanent say in government decision-making through their own ministerial advisory councils. It just speaks volumes about the low status of our overlooked small business sector for the Labor-Greens government.

It convinces me that only when that changes—the day Canberrans give the Canberra Liberals the honour of governing our amazing territory—will small business finally get the status and attention that it needs and deserves. Until then, as shadow business minister, I will continue to champion the needs of the small business workhorses that this territory too often forgets—not the tens of thousands of bureaucrats, who we do value and appreciate, but the other ones. We all know who they are—the ones we all turn to when things go pear-shaped at home, not to mention the ones we turn to for our morning caffeine hit.

I do not support the amendment.

Question put:

That the amendment be agreed to.

The Assembly voted—

Ayes 14

Noes 7

Mr Braddock	Dr Paterson	Mr Cain
Ms Burch	Mr Pettersson	Ms Castley
Ms Cheyne	Mr Rattenbury	Mrs Jones
Ms Clay	Mr Steel	Mrs Kikkert
Ms Davidson	Ms Stephen Smith	Ms Lawder
Mr Davis	Ms Vassarotti	Mr Milligan
Mr Gentleman		Mr Parton
Ms Orr		

Amendment agreed to.

Original question, as amended, resolved in the affirmative.

Sitting suspended from 11.35 am to 1.00 pm.

Questions without notice

Family and domestic violence—legislation

MS LEE: The Chief Minister will be glad to know that my question is to the Attorney-General. Attorney-General, during the last sitting you indicated that the Family Violence Act review was given to the Justice and Community Safety Directorate in March 2020, but the public release was delayed as the government had “a number of concerns” with the report. Attorney-General, it has been brought to my attention that a draft report was provided to the directorate in January 2020 and the feedback from that draft was integrated in the March 2020 report, which was presented as the final. Yet it was not until October 2020, following numerous emails from researchers and stakeholders, that the authors were instructed to add sentences, according to a quote, and to fix typos. Attorney-General, will you correct the record and admit that the delay in releasing the review into the family violence act was not the fault of the researchers but a decision made to protect your government’s own political interest and delay in releasing bad news before the election?

MR RATTENBURY: Ms Lee has just asked a series of questions about matters for which I was not the portfolio minister at the time, so I am not aware of the specific information. The briefing that I have received since coming into the portfolio was that the report was received in March. There were concerns, as I have told the chamber before. The final report was received by government on 14 December.

I will have to take on notice Ms Lee’s question. That is not information I have been briefed on as I was not the minister at the time.

MS LEE: Attorney-General, will you apologise to the researchers and stakeholders for using them as scapegoats rather than taking responsibility as the current Attorney-General?

MR RATTENBURY: I thank Ms Lee for the supplementary, because I forgot to address that point in the previous answer. In my comments, I have never suggested that this is the fault of the researchers. I have been quite clear in saying that the delay was at the government's end. JACS had a very busy year last year. They did all the legislation for the COVID period. Ideally this would have been dealt with faster; I have never denied that, and I have never cast aspersions on the researchers. I know at least one of them, and I think they are excellent researchers. That is not the point that I have been seeking to make.

MRS KIKKERT: Attorney-General, will you apologise to family members of past victims for your political delay of this report?

MR RATTENBURY: I do not accept the premise of the question. I have been very clear that this is an important report that the government is going to follow through on. What the report does is, in quite a few of the recommendations, recommend further work. That work is now being prepared. The Justice and Community Safety Directorate is working with a range of other government agencies, including those that Minister Berry is responsible for, particularly the Office of the Coordinator-General for Family Safety, to work through the recommendations and identify the places where further research has been recommended. That is the work it has been doing.

What has been lost sight of here in the attempt to create some political mileage in this is that this was a piece of work commissioned by the government to review the act that the government brought in, to make sure that it was doing what was intended. It was initiated by the government. It is a government piece of work to help us make sure that we are having the best response to family violence that we can. That is what this work is about. That is why we are committed to following through on the recommendations. We sought them ourselves to make sure that we are doing the right job.

Government—business support

MRS JONES: My question is to the Chief Minister. Minister, last August you announced your government would establish a Canberra economic recovery advisory group to help businesses and create jobs. You said your government would hold an expression of interest process for two small business owners to join the group, opening on 31 August last year. The group's first meeting was meant to be the following week. The cabinet summary, however, reveals that cabinet only endorsed the group's appointments four months later, on 15 December. Chief Minister, did the group first meet on the week of 7 September as planned and, if not, why not?

MR BARR: Yes, it did. The composition of the group involves some appointments by me and then some members through the expression of interest process. Those that I could immediately appoint met with me in that week.

MRS JONES: Chief Minister, how many times has the group now met? Who are its members and small business representatives? What have they achieved?

MR BARR: I have attended now three meetings with the group. They have also formed some subcommittees, I understand, and had some further engagements with each other and with officials when I have not been present. There was a major workshop held in the last few weeks where the advisory group, a number of them who are involved in running their own businesses and activities, took a lot of time out to undertake that work.

The small business representatives are Nick Tyrrell who members might be familiar as the owner of the GoBoat franchise that operates in Canberra and Alan Tse who is a cofounder of the Altina Drinks company. They are both local small business people. The broader membership of the group includes representatives from other businesses. There are about a dozen names. I am happy to provide those on notice.

MS CASTLEY: Chief Minister, were Nick Tyrrell and Alan Tse consulted about your government's failed ChooseCBR trial that only 336 businesses signed up to?

MR BARR: In rejecting the premise of Ms Castley's question, yes, I engaged with Nick specifically on a number of elements of the trial. He made a few suggestions that we were able to adopt very quickly, including a geolocation map for where businesses were located. So the short answer is yes. But I reject the premise of Ms Castley's politically loaded question. But I have come to expect that now from her in terms of how she approaches matters in her shadow portfolios. So we factor it in. But taking the politics out, yes, these individuals were indeed consulted.

Trees—urban canopy

MR MILLIGAN: My question is to the Minister for Transport and City Services. Recently, you announced that the Labor-Greens government would put a price on city trees, in a novel scheme to protect them. Individual trees will have a price tag and tree culprits could be liable for steep fines, into the tens of thousands of dollars. The government is taking advice from authorities in Melbourne, where a similar scheme operates. Minister, given that one tree in Melbourne is valued at \$54,000, what will be the average price of a tree here in Canberra?

MR STEEL: I thank the member for his question. The ACT government is committed to protecting and growing our urban forests. That is why we have released the Living Infrastructure Plan and now the final Urban Forest Strategy to help make sure that we can, number one, protect the trees that we already have, many of which are mature trees that are providing fantastic canopy cover. We need to make sure that they are retained for the benefit of people in their neighbourhoods and for biodiversity reasons. That is why we have looked across the country at how we can better protect trees. We have been working with Ian Shears from the City of Melbourne on the development of the strategy, and we are certainly interested in the canopy contribution scheme that they have introduced there.

Ms Lee: A point of order, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: Ms Lee?

Ms Lee: Mr Milligan's question clearly was: what will be the average price of a tree in Canberra? I ask the minister to be directly relevant.

MADAM SPEAKER: The minister has a minute left. I ask him to come to that.

MR STEEL: Thank you, Madam Speaker; very impatient. We are getting on with that work, and we intend to bring that forward as one of the actions under the strategy coming forward. I expect that will come forward potentially through legislation later on in the Assembly. I would not want to pre-empt that. There is a lot of policy development that needs to occur to make sure that a canopy contribution scheme will work for us here in the ACT.

We on our side of the parliament are committed to protecting trees. We have a very ambitious target of getting to 30 per cent tree canopy cover. We are not going to get there just by planting new trees. We need to make sure that we protect the ones we have, including those affected by potential development in the future, and that we provide disincentives for developers to remove trees in the first place, to protect as many trees as we can and grow more, to make sure that we can get the benefits of that canopy cover into the future.

MR MILLIGAN: Minister, how will you price Canberra trees? How many will you price and how will the scheme work, given that you hope to have it operating by the end of the year?

MR STEEL: I thank the member for his question. I do not think it is in order, Madam Speaker. He is asking for an announcement of policy. I have clearly said that we are in the process of developing that policy, and we look forward to making that public at the appropriate time. It would require legislation if it was implemented here in the ACT, so it would be considered by the Assembly, and no doubt with an Assembly inquiry as well.

MS CASTLEY: Minister, what modelling have you done about how many trees the project will save each year?

MR STEEL: I thank the member for her question. We will be doing a whole range of policy work in the lead-up to the introduction of any future scheme, to help protect urban forests. That is just one action under the entire strategy. We know that, due to the changing climate, and due to trees reaching senescence, the end of their life, we will lose around 200,000 over the period of the strategy. So it is really important that we put in place measures to protect the trees that we have, and make sure that we are planting new trees as well, to build up our urban canopy. There is policy work underway, and we encourage all members of the Assembly to support that work. We have had, until this point, a bipartisan view on this matter, in relation to trees. I think we are starting to see a split emerging.

Government—community engagement

MR DAVIS: My question is to the Chief Minister and it relates to the YourSay program. Chief Minister, Canberrans love having their say and they value being a part

of government policy development. However, I have grown concerned since being elected at how many of my constituents in Brindabella are not engaged with the YourSay program and have been surprised when I have introduced it to them. Can you walk me through the government's marketing strategy to ensure maximum participation, particularly among diverse groups, including young people?

MR BARR: I thank Mr Davis for the question. There are obviously a number of different elements to the YourSay process. We have an online community panel that now has, I am told, more than 4,700 Canberrans who have registered. We are looking to continue to grow the size of that online panel. Its demographic and geographic representativeness is very good. Where we have needed to supplement that, particularly with young people, there has been an active process to recruit more young people onto the panel. That has occurred at university campuses, the CIT and indeed in other youth engagement opportunities.

There is a social media element to recruitment for the YourSay community panel. More broadly, YourSay is a platform that enables people to participate in particular community consultations in their own time. It has quite a sophisticated web-based tool that enables a very diverse range of community consultation activities to occur—everything from commenting on specific development proposals through to policy development. I think it is even as sophisticated as to allow people to nominate where they would like a tree to be planted within the city as part of one of the consultations that have occurred.

We utilise the broadest range of communication channels available to us. That includes some popular United States-based social media channels as well as our own earned activities through—

Mr Parton: Any Chinese-based—

MR BARR: I do not know that we have necessarily gone so much into the TikTok space, Mr Parton. You certainly appear to be leading the way there. Whether the content is necessarily that good is another matter.

MR DAVIS: A supplementary, Madam Speaker. Chief Minister, can you talk me through exactly how government weighs the feedback provided by the YourSay panel on government decisions?

MR BARR: We have a regular series of community surveys. We have been surveying community attitudes, for example, to COVID-19 public health measures, the vaccination program and a range of different questions that are asked. We have also surveyed the panel on how often it would like to be surveyed just so that we can get a sense of community willingness to participate.

The results of surveys are presented to cabinet and then ultimately publicly released. They are weighted against the city's demographic profile, so we have both a geographic and a demographic weighting. Most surveys have demonstrated pretty clear community views, as in two-thirds, three-quarter majorities on particular issues,

but there are some where the community is quite evenly split. Cabinet will obviously consider that feedback, together with other sourced information.

The advantage of the online panel is that you hear from people who you otherwise may not hear from and you get a broader sense of the community's views, rather than community engagement that just focuses on those absolutely and most motivated to participate. I think it is important, as a part of a suite of consultation tools, to understand the broader community's views on particular issues and also how important they view something to be, because whilst it may be very important to a very small section of the community, the rest of us may not think it is as important as some others do. The panel is able to give us insights into the relative importance of issues as well as a very demographically representative sample of community opinion. That pool of 4,700, for example, is significantly larger than national opinion polling companies use for Australia-wide polling. *(Time expired.)*

MS CLAY: A supplementary. What other methods of community consultation are you using when you are scoping feedback for government services?

MR BARR: I thank Ms Clay for the question. It is everything from your more traditional town hall community meeting format, which, again, attracts only the most interested and motivated people, through to targeted consultations with particular demographics who may not participate—

Mrs Jones: When was the last town hall meeting, Mr Barr?

MR BARR: It has been difficult in a pandemic, Mrs Jones, to hold town hall meetings. There have not been that many in the last year; that is fair. We also, of course, undertake targeted stakeholder consultations with representative groups. There are neighbourhood-level discussions. We do a lot online. We have also surveyed our own panel and Canberrans more broadly on how they would like to be engaged with. Most people, the overwhelming majority, want to do it at a time that suits them. They do not want to turn up at 7.30 to a cold hall somewhere in the middle of winter. They want to be able to engage with government in a straightforward way.

The engagement levels on the community panel, for example, are about 100 times more than you would ever get attend a public meeting in Canberra. It is way more successful, way more engaging and way more representative of what Canberrans really think. Of course, every four years we get the ultimate sample when 300,000 people cast their votes and elect people into this chamber. We saw the result of that only six months ago.

Economy—COVID-19

DR PATERSON: My question is to the Chief Minister. Chief Minister, what is the government's fiscal strategy in response to COVID-19?

MR BARR: I thank Dr Paterson for the question. We will continue to support the territory's economic recovery. The recovery of our labour market is the first and foremost priority. Tracking back towards the full employment situation that we had

prior to the pandemic is the government's number one economic policy goal. As I mentioned in a number of my budget speeches over the course of the week, we have now got to the point where the number of job vacancies in the territory equals the number of unemployed people. Pre pandemic, we had significantly more job vacancies than we had unemployed people. We had an unemployment rate with a three in front of it. It would be nice to see that drop to having a two in front of it. We have the best performing labour market in Australia.

I think our emerging challenge will be in skills. That is why there is a significant investment in TAFE, higher education and school-level training that we are delivering, in partnership with the Australian government. We will focus on sustainable economic growth and the delivery of quality and efficient public services.

We will continue to move to ensure the sustainability of public finances. I note, again, that the territory is the only AAA rated jurisdiction in Australia now, and one of only about 14 in the world at a subnational government level. We have achieved that because of the tax reforms of the last decade. If we had the tax system of 2011 now, we would not have a credit rating. We would have been hit badly during the pandemic and, indeed, by earlier economic shocks. So another reason why tax reform was the right thing to do is demonstrated by the territory's fiscal and economic position now. We have a larger economy and a more stable revenue base because of tax reform. The government will continue this reform process.

DR PATERSON: Chief Minister, how is the government embedding the wellbeing framework into the budget process?

MR BARR: The framework will be the guiding platform for which new policies, programs and initiatives will be considered from the budget that we will deliver, at the end of August, for the next fiscal year onwards. The 2021-22 budget will further embed how the wellbeing framework will be implemented in the territory. Wellbeing impact assessments will be required to identify the key implications of new spending proposals within and across the 12 domains of the ACT wellbeing framework.

The impact assessments being developed for new proposals will help the government's budgeting approach to ensure that our new spending proposals are holistic and consider the enduring impact of government decisions across the specific areas identified within the wellbeing framework. This is a change to the way government budgets are delivered. We will be the first Australian state or territory to go down this path, closely following our friends and colleagues across the ditch, in New Zealand, with whom we have been working closely as we watch the implementation of their framework and use their experience to guide our own initial steps down this path. I think it is a worthy public policy reform. It is nation leading. It is not world leading, but it is certainly Australian leading. We look forward to going through that process as we develop the 2021-22 budget.

MS ORR: Chief Minister, can you please update the Assembly on the ACT's employment market conditions?

MR BARR: As I indicated in my response to the initial question, the labour market is our fundamental, number one, economic priority. We continue to lead the nation on almost every employment indicator: the lowest unemployment rate in Australia, the lowest youth unemployment rate in Australia and the lowest under-employment rate in Australia. We have the second highest labour force participation rate, at a little over 70 per cent, which is significantly higher than the Australia-wide average of about 66 per cent.

Our strong labour market reflects the strength of our public health response to the COVID pandemic and the policies that were put in place to support employment, both public sector and private sector. There is a target for the ACT to achieve 250,000 jobs in our economy by 2025. We were up to around 240,000 pre pandemic. We lost more than 10,000 jobs. We have now got them back and we are on our way to growing to over 250,000 jobs.

The commonwealth employs about 60,000 people in the ACT. The ACT government employs a little over 20,000. The next biggest employers are our universities and then large business, in terms of individual employment. Then, as we have been discussing in the Assembly, small and micro businesses account for a significant proportion—although not two-thirds—of all employment in the territory.

We will continue to focus on policies that support the growth of both public and private sector jobs in the territory. They need not be mutually exclusive. In fact, if both sectors grow then our total employment will grow, and that is the government's focus.

Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders—youth

MRS KIKKERT: My question is to the Attorney-General. Attorney, your incoming portfolio brief states you have indicated that your immediate institutional priority is to create an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people's commissioner. This brief also states that work to develop and consult on a model for this position could commence in late 2020 or early 2021 and the new commissioner could be in place within two years. In answer to a question on notice directed to Minister Cheyne, however, she said that this Labor-Greens government had no specific time frame for creating this position. Attorney, since this is your immediate institutional priority, why does your government have no specific time frame for making it happen?

MR RATTENBURY: Madam Speaker, I am going to have to take that on notice and go and check that brief, because I do not recall giving that instruction to the directorate at any point in time. I have been very clear with my priorities for the directorate, and I do not recall making that indication to them. I will go and check the documents and provide a response on notice.

MRS KIKKERT: Maybe you can put this question on notice then: did work commence in late 2020 or early 2021 that you are not aware of, on developing and consulting on a model for this commissioner, and if not, why not?

MADAM SPEAKER: Ms Cheyne.

MS CHEYNE: I am the responsible minister for this work, together with Minister Stephen-Smith. Work has been underway on this for some time. We are working very closely with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community in the ACT. We are looking forward to having more to say on it in the coming months.

MRS JONES: A supplementary question. Minister, will you commit to having an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people commissioner within two years, as the incoming portfolio brief states?

MS CHEYNE: I am not going to announce government policy, Madam Speaker, but it is absolutely a commitment for this government. It is in the parliamentary and governing agreement; it is something that we have committed to. But we want to work with the community to make sure that we get it right, that it reflects what the community desires. That is exactly what we are doing.

Government—territory-owned corporations

MS CLAY: My question is to the Chief Minister. Chief Minister, the parliamentary and governing agreement includes an agreed reform to require employee and consumer representation on the board of major ACT territory-owned corporations and government businesses, like ActewAGL and Icon Water. What will this look like, and when will it be completed?

MR BARR: The government is well underway with the delivery of this particular initiative. There are some definitional questions around what constitutes a major government entity, but I can advise that, for example, the CIT board, the University of Canberra council and the Public Cemeteries Board have existing arrangements that would, in my view, meet the requirements here. In some instances there would need to be legislative change, potentially, or an appointments process when vacancies next occur. Where legislation requires particular skill sets, it may be possible to find individuals who have those skill sets as well as a representative element.

In the context, Ms Clay, of the question, ActewAGL is a joint venture and has a very strict and small board that is apportioned according to the ownership shares. It would not be part of this, but Icon Water, which is an ACT government wholly-owned entity, is potentially an eligible board in this context. The Territory-owned Corporations Act has certain legal requirements around the appointment of directors. We would be cognisant of that in the implementation of this parliamentary and governing agreement item.

MS CLAY: Chief Minister, what will the selection process look like for deciding who the employee and consumer representatives on the boards are?

MR BARR: The government's approach has been to have an expression of interest process against the legislative requirements for the individual boards. There are some set out in legislation that require a particular skill set or range of skills in order to be

eligible for appointment. The government's process has been to seek expressions of interest, and to promote that widely through a range of networks to ensure that we get a diverse range of applicants who are reflective of our broader community.

In relation to specific requirements around technical definitions of employees and/or consumers, ultimately it will need to be a judgement call of cabinet. But I do note that most of the appointment processes also have a reference to a relevant Assembly standing committee. It is generally a multistep process of expression of interest, cabinet receiving a range of potential nominees, cabinet making a determination, then sending that proposed nominee to an Assembly committee for comment before making a final appointment. That tends to be the process, although it is not always the case, depending on the nature of the particular board. Sometimes the decision is made at a ministerial level, with reference to an Assembly committee—at other times not.

Environment—dredging

MS LAWDER: My question is to the Minister for Transport and City Services. I understand that TCCS is planning to dredge parts of the Fadden Hills pond to remove some of the accumulated sediments as well as some of the reeds. This has an added benefit of further isolating the existing island in the middle of the pond while keeping wildlife on the island safe from predators. The original proposal was to leave the sediment to dry around the pond before transporting it to the tip. This plan has now changed to using an eductor truck to suck up the sediment as this will be much less damaging to the pond and the surrounding area, as well as not reducing the effectiveness of the water quality treatment of the pond, not to mention not leaving a bad smell for several weeks for nearby residents. Minister, what is the government's policy on using eductor trucks versus other ways of removing the sediment?

MR STEEL: I thank the member for her question. I will take that on notice and come back to the Assembly.

MS LAWDER: Minister, where else around Canberra's waterways has dredged sediment been left to dry around ponds and lakes?

MR STEEL: I thank the member her question. Again, I will take that on notice.

MR PARTON: Minister, what other ponds and waterways have planned dredging coming up in the next 12 months?

MR STEEL: I thank the member for his question. I will take that on notice.

Municipal services—shopping centre upgrades

MR PARTON: My question is to the Minister for City Services. Minister, the government website about the Kaleen shops upgrade had a section titled "What we are not looking at", which stated that this project does not include construction of new public toilets. Curiously, since you were last asked about why toilets would not be built, the website has been changed. That section has been removed. However, your online survey asking people what matters most about the shops upgrade does not

include public toilets; people can only respond about seating, signage, landscaping and so on. Minister, have you done an about-turn on public toilets, and are you now open to installing toilets at the Kaleen shops?

MR STEEL: I thank Mr Parton for his question. I do not know how much clearer I can be in here. For the second time this week, I will say to the Assembly that we are very keen to hear from the communities around Kaleen Gwydir Square, the Duffy shops and the Campbell shops about what they would like to see as part of the government's upgrades there. I have not ruled anything in or out. I will be absolutely clear about that again: I have not ruled anything in or out. If people want to see toilets, they can put those views forward. Of course, there is a certain quantum of funding that will be going into these upgrades, so if we do more of one thing, like putting in toilets, we will have to do less of something else. That is something that the community is going to have to grapple with as part of this consultation.

We are consulting with the community. I spent 2½ hours out at Duffy on Sunday talking with the community there. I did hear from some people that they wanted to see toilet upgrades. I heard from others that they want to see an expanded playground. Draft plans have been put forward. That is all they are—drafts. We want to hear the community's views about what they would like to see as part of these upgrades.

MR PARTON: Minister, why are public toilets not on the government's list of eight items it asks people to rate as important, particularly given that, as you have said, nothing is ruled in or out? Will you change that?

MR STEEL: I thank Mr Parton for his supplementary. I have made it very clear that we are keen to hear from the community about a whole range of things. Of course, we have to put up some draft plans in order to prompt feedback and discussion about the upgrades. That includes noting some of the features that might be included in some future upgrades so that people can respond to them. Clearly Mr Parton is responding very much to those things. I am sure other members of the community will put their views forward as well; I encourage them to do so.

MR DAVIS: Minister, does this government have a plan to upgrade the Livingston Avenue shops in Kambah, which have now been vacant and derelict for over a decade?

MR STEEL: I thank the member for his question. That shopping centre is not owned by the government. The public areas around shopping centres, as I explained earlier in the week, are often owned by the government. It is a matter for the private owner of those shops to upgrade them and let them. We hope that they do. The government has very few powers to be able to intervene in relation to private shopping centres. We encourage shop owners to get a move on and to revitalise that local shopping precinct.

The government will get on with making sure that the public realm is up to standard and well maintained and that old assets are upgraded, as we are doing in many shops around Kambah, including the recent upgrades at Kambah village. We have also recently upgraded some of the ramps and footpaths at the Marconi Crescent shops. In the past, in 2016, we also upgraded the shops at Mannheim Street. A range of

different upgrades have been occurring in that area. Ultimately it is up to the private owners of the shops to make sure that they upgrade their shops, that they let out their shops and that they make sure that they are available for the public.

Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders—Closing the Gap

MS ORR: My question is to the Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs. Minister, how is the government ensuring that we make progress against our commitments in the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Agreement 2019-2028 and the National Agreement on Closing the Gap?

MS STEPHEN-SMITH: I thank Ms Orr for the question. It is an important one. The ACT, of course, leads the nation in having an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body, a dedicated voice to government from the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community. The ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Agreement sets out the shared commitment between the government and the Elected Body to drive sustained quality of life outcomes for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.

The ACT was also one of the first jurisdictions to sign on to the National Agreement on Closing the Gap. The national agreement was made between state, territory and commonwealth governments, in partnership with the coalition of peak Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations, and it is governed through the Joint Council on Closing the Gap. The National Agreement on Closing the Gap mirrors many of the commitments we have already made through our ACT agreement. Both agreements are underpinned by a commitment to self-determination, with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as partners in our work to close the gap and improve outcomes across society. Both agreements also require work across all areas of government.

While it is relatively early in the life of both agreements, they are already guiding reform. This includes through broad systemic and cultural change within directorates to work towards the elimination of systemic racism and to increase the accessibility of government services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. It also includes specific programs to address specific challenges, such as the Functional Family Therapy—Child Welfare program, delivered by Gugan Gulwan Youth Aboriginal Corporation, in partnership with OzChild, and our justice reinvestment initiatives, with Winnunga Nimmityjah and the Aboriginal Legal Service, to name just two of the important areas of reform.

There is still much progress to be made to meet our commitments. We know that the most effective solutions for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are developed and delivered by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. That is why Labor committed, in the lead-up to the 2020 election, to a 10-year, \$20 million healing and reconciliation fund. We have already started to get this work underway.

MS ORR: Minister, what priorities has the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community raised that the healing and reconciliation fund could support?

MS STEPHEN-SMITH: I thank Ms Orr for her supplementary question. We are already aware of a number of key priorities for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community in the ACT. The healing and reconciliation fund will be a key mechanism in enabling the community to progress these projects on their own terms. This includes the work towards establishing a Ngunnawal language centre. Language is such an important part of our culture. As we are all aware, the Ngunnawal language has some passionate advocates within our community. The commitment of Ngunnawal people to strengthening their language, with their generosity in sharing it with the wider community, is an immeasurable cultural asset for Ngunnawal people but also for Canberrans and all Australians. Once established, the Ngunnawal language centre will support this important work.

Another identified priority which the fund can support is the return of Boomanulla Oval and Yarramundi Cultural Centre to community control. This is a longstanding goal of the community, one that is shared by the government. The healing and reconciliation fund will facilitate the community and government to work together as genuine partners in building the capacity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled organisations who may wish to undertake the management of these assets.

Members will be aware that across the country conversations about treaty are taking on a new shape. This is not a new conversation for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, but the willingness of governments to engage genuinely in this discussion seems to be generating real progress in many jurisdictions. The ACT has explicitly supported exploring a treaty for some years now. Achieving a treaty in the ACT will be a complex process, and one that must be led by traditional owners. It will be a process that draws on the community's time and energy.

The healing and reconciliation fund will facilitate the community to take a direct role in determining how their work to advance treaty conversations is resourced. Again, in this budget we have started that process, through part of our \$317,000 commitment to facilitate those treaty conversations with and between traditional owners.

MR PETTERSSON: Supplementary.

MRS KIKKERT: Supplementary.

MADAM SPEAKER: Mr Pettersson.

MR PETTERSSON: Minister, in addition to the establishment of the healing and reconciliation fund, what work is underway to advance the priorities of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Canberrans?

MS STEPHEN-SMITH: I thank Mr Pettersson for the supplementary question and Mrs Kikkert for her efforts. As has been outlined, the healing and reconciliation fund will be a long-term investment in self-determination and in strengthening the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled sector, in line with our commitments under the ACT agreement and the national agreement.

The 2020-21 budget includes significant investments, targeted for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community in the short to medium term. Among these investments is \$425,000 towards what will ultimately be a \$10 million purpose-built facility for Gugan Gulwan Youth Aboriginal Corporation. Gugan Gulwan is of course an invaluable organisation in our community. Ensuring that it has the facilities that it needs to deliver services is an absolute priority for the government. That is why we included it in ACT Labor's 2020 election platform and why we commit this funding in our first post-election budget.

The budget also includes almost \$4.9 million to continue our work to implement the recommendations of the Our Booris, Our Way review. Members are well aware of the significance of this review and the importance of its recommendations. Labor acknowledged this by committing, at the election, to fully implement those recommendations, in partnership with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community. In this spirit of partnership, part of the \$4.9 million will support the ongoing operation of the Implementation Oversight Committee. This budget brings our overall investment in addressing the Our Booris, Our Way recommendations to around \$15.7 million.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body, which will go to new elections in NAIDOC Week this year and into caretaker mode in May. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all members of the current Elected Body. It has been a very stable and effective body. I particularly want to acknowledge the leadership of Katrina Fanning, who has not only led the Elected Body here in the ACT but represented the ACT admirably on the coalition of peak Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and in the Joint Council on Closing the Gap.

Environment—green buildings

MS CASTLEY: My question is to the Minister for Water, Energy and Emissions Reduction. The government's new Dickson office block is the first in the ACT to be all-electric and gas free. You were reported as saying last year about the Dickson building—and I quote:

Doma and the ACT government are demonstrating that new commercial buildings can be gas-free, and it lays down the challenge to others in the industry to match this climate-friendly standard.

In fact the Greens' own policy states that this government leadership will make it easier for private developers to transition to gas-free development by ensuring that all newly leased government buildings are all-electric. Minister, why then is the newly leased government building next door, at 220 London Circuit, on gas?

MR RATTENBURY: It is a source of frustration for me, but that building was commissioned and designed prior to the Dickson office block, before this became a formal government position.

MS CASTLEY: Minister, did any of the 11 companies that registered interest in the \$300 million Civic office block propose an all-electric system? If so, why has 220 London Circuit embraced gas?

MR RATTENBURY: I do not know the answer to that question. I did not have access to all 11 of those nominations. That will have been done somewhere else in government. I am happy to try and take that on notice and provide Ms Castley with the answer.

MS LEE: Minister, why should Canberrans heed your advice to ditch gas when you have signed a minimum 20-year lease to house 1,700 public servants in a building run on gas? How many homes or suburbs would have to go off gas to save the equivalent of the gas used in this new government building?

MR RATTENBURY: In seeking to make her political point, Ms Lee has not listened to my first answer, which was that this is a new policy that the ACT government brought in. This building was commissioned prior to this becoming government policy.

Ms Lee: Was the lease signed before or after?

MR RATTENBURY: It was commissioned prior to that. It was commissioned long before this became government policy. She is also failing, as the Liberal Party have done on other occasions, to recognise the fact that what we are trying to create here is an orderly transition off gas. We are trying to begin moving away, and that involves taking decisions now and beginning to move there. We are trying to make sure that, as a first step, no more gas is rolled out. That is the policy.

The Liberal Party have said, “Mr Rattenbury is going to come around to your house and rip out your gas heating system.” They have actually said that. That is not government policy. What we are saying to people is: when your gas system reaches the end of its useful life, which it will, replace it with an all-electric system. It is better for the planet and it is actually better for your bills, because it will be cheaper to run. New modern electric devices are so much better. The commercial sector is not as advanced as the residential sector in this space. It has not happened. The economics of it stack up much better in the residential sector.

I would say to residential households: definitely look at this as a good option for you. The commercial sector is at the beginning of this transition, and we are beginning to see that. That is why we have spoken as widely as we can about what is happening, because we want to encourage others to look at this option, to see that it is technically possible and that it is an affordable option.

Roads—traffic management

MR CAIN: My question is to the Minister for Transport and City Services. Minister, I am contacted regularly by constituents about road safety around the Jamison shops. To date the only action taken by the Labor-Greens government has been to install some slow-down signage around the shopping precinct. Minister, when will you fix road safety around Jamison shops?

MR STEEL: I thank Mr Cain for his question. I am interested to hear from him perhaps outside the chamber about some of the further issues around traffic at Jamison shops. The ACT government understands the importance of road safety, particularly around heavily used community hubs like shopping centres. The interventions that are made to respond to our traffic issues are evidence based. Roads ACT looks at a variety different factors, including road traffic volumes, speeds, and implements of course our commitment to a safe systems approach, which recognises that infrastructure is an important part of that safe systems approach but that it is also the responsibility of people using those shops as well.

I am very happy to hear in more detail from Mr Cain about what the issues are there so that we can take them into account and see whether we can start gathering some of the evidence that might then inform any improvements to road safety in the area. I have recently been down there to catch up with a friend of mine over some seafood at the Southern Cross Club's seafood restaurant and I understand how busy it is down there and how popular it is.

MR CAIN: I do thank the minister for his answer, and I do thank the minister for his collaborative approach. My question is: are speed bumps and pedestrian crossings under consideration as measures to improve traffic safety around Jamison?

MR STEEL: Yes, we will consider the range of infrastructure that might be required as interventions. Sometimes the infrastructure the people think is the right response to these things actually is not, based on the evidence. One example is crossings. Sometimes people think crossings are actually safer. In fact, sometimes they are not safer because people think that it is actually safe to cross and think that the cars will stop for them. So it requires certain conditions to make sure that those are safe. Of course other interventions are things like speed bumps and traffic lights, and some of these are quite expensive interventions and will need to be considered in the context of other priorities and other road safety priorities, because there is a long list of other intersections that need to be upgraded over time and are often reported in the media—from the ANU crash index that lists the top 10 intersections from a property damage point of view—and we have got our own methodology that we use around which intersections we put forward, which is often based on the risk of death or injury as well as property damage, that we will need to take into account in prioritising improvements that require a significant infrastructure investment.

MRS KIKKERT: Minister, when will the Labor-Greens government get the basics right on important services like road safety and maintenance?

MR STEEL: I thank the member for her question. We continue to remain committed to road safety, upgrading and maintaining our roads and making sure that the system is safe for everyone. As I mentioned at the start, if there are concerns about a particular area, I am keen to hear about those concerns so that we can respond to them. Whilst our team is out there using the roads themselves and monitoring and assessing improvements that can be made, the community is always welcome to put their views, and they will be assessed.

I have recently been doing that. I have talking with Garran residents around accessibility issues around the shops and I have been talking with Narrabundah residents about safety issues in and around Narrabundah. Some of those issues were related to the peak hour population there as well as broader safety issues for children and the like. I respond to those concerns. They just need to be raised with me, and there is no need to play politics with a supplementary like that.

Disability services—National Disability Insurance Scheme

MR BRADDOCK: My question is to the Minister for Disability, regarding the National Disability Insurance Scheme. Minister, why isn't the government doing more to support NDIS participants, who are among Canberra's most vulnerable?

MS DAVIDSON: Thank you for the question. There is quite a lot that the ACT government is doing to support people with disabilities in the ACT. We fund individual advocacy organisations, such as Advocacy for Inclusion and ADACAS, to support people who are going through what is sometimes a very complicated process to get NDIS support. We also provide support through the ISRP to people who need intensive support for complex needs that are sometimes not covered well by the NDIS.

At a national level, I am advocating for the community's position on reforms for the NDIS and continuing the longstanding ACT government position of supporting the human rights of people with disability around choice, control and continuity in making decisions about the supports and services that will help them to achieve what they want in their lives.

MR BRADDOCK: Minister, what have you achieved in lobbying the federal government to do its bit in supporting NDIS participants?

MS DAVIDSON: That is a very fair question. I made the ACT government's position very clear at the most recent meeting of disability ministers: that we would like to see the pilot of independent assessments cease so that we can have genuine consultation with people with disabilities around the reforms that they would like to see for the NDIS.

Given the concerns that people have raised around the independent assessment process and the difficulties that it causes for people, the trauma that it caused for some of the people who participated in those pilot assessments, it would be best for those to stop while consultation with people with disabilities happens.

MR DAVIS: Minister, what has the new federal minister for the NDIS said to you about the future of the scheme?

MS DAVIDSON: The communique that came out after the meeting of the disability ministers, including the federal minister, stated that there would be further consultation needed for NDIS reforms. I noted some reporting in the media from the federal minister around the pilot continuing to completion and then there being a pause for consultation.

Transport—accessibility

MR PETTERSSON: My question is to the Minister for Transport and City Services. Minister, have the needs of vulnerable Canberrans shaped the government's thinking about transport and city service delivery in Canberra?

MR STEEL: I thank Mr Pettersson for his question. The ACT government is committed to ensuring that our city is accessible for all Canberrans and that everyone can access services, jobs, socialise and contribute to our community safely, efficiently and with ease. We recognise that for some members of our community the design and delivery of services and infrastructure is a critical factor in how easily they can leave the house, attend appointments, move around safely on our streets and engage in the everyday activities of community life that many of us take for granted.

We also understand that some Canberrans often rely on services like public transport even more than other members of our community do. The recognition of the vital importance of accessible public transport and city services is front of mind of our government when we are undertaking ongoing work to strengthen and expand Canberra's public transport network, improve local community infrastructure and deliver better services for our suburbs.

The government has a really ambitious agenda ahead over this term of government in Transport Canberra and City Services. We want to make sure that the views of all people are at the forefront of design and provide an important lens. A range of different groups come to mind. They include people with a disability, the voices of children and their parents as their advocates and older Canberrans, as well as women. We want to make sure that that is an important lens as we go through a whole range of different infrastructure projects, programs and services that we intend to deliver under this term of government.

MR PETTERSSON: A supplementary. Minister, can you please outline what the government is doing to ensure the needs of vulnerable Canberrans are met in the design and delivery of public transport and city services?

MR STEEL: I thank Mr Pettersson for his supplementary. I have recently met with a number of groups representing Women with Disabilities ACT and the ACT Down Syndrome Association. I have been speaking with my colleagues Tara Cheyne and Ms Orr in her previous capacity as Minister for Disability. It has become clear to me that we need to ensure that the views of these groups and others who speak for diverse communities are given appropriate weight when key decisions on transport and city services are made.

That is why I am proud to announce that the ACT government, through Transport Canberra and City Services, will be establishing an accessibility reference group to ensure that Canberrans with different kinds of circumstances have access to the public transport and city services they need by being involved in the design process from the beginning. This group will build on the existing disability reference group established by Transport Canberra and City Services.

I will be doing some further consultation in relation to this new group and then I expect an expression of interest process will begin. The terms of reference will also be released soon. I expect it will include the groups that I have mentioned—people with a disability and their advocates, children and those representing children, as well as women and older Canberrans—to ensure that as we design and develop future public transport projects and initiatives, including our new ticketing system, wayfinding services, infrastructure specifications and flexible demand-based transport services in future, this group can feed into the development of those programs, policies and infrastructure going forward. We need to make sure that we are meeting the diverse needs of our community. With this approach we hope that we can include that from the very beginning.

DR PATERSON: A supplementary. Minister, could you please outline what the government is doing to ensure the city infrastructure is accessible to vulnerable Canberrans?

MR STEEL: I thank Dr Paterson for her question. The ACT government continues to work hard to ensure that all Canberrans are able to access services and community infrastructure when they want or need it. For example, local shopping precincts are an important priority when it comes to accessible improvements for Canberrans. In a recent shopping centre refresh program, one of the fast-track stimulus programs last year, we have delivered accessibility upgrades at 11 local shops, including Gordon, Hackett and Kambah. A large part of those was replacing old, non-standard, non-compliant ramps, for example, and improvements to footpaths to make sure there was accessibility. We will continue to do that type of work going forward at other shop upgrades as well.

We have also recently improved accessibility around bus stops. There are dozens of new and upgraded shared paths and cycleways across the city. We upgraded several intersections, including the installation of pedestrian signals, and we installed priority cycle crossings in Yarralumla and Woden. As an action under the government's transport strategy we will also look at how intersection design can be improved to better prioritise the needs of vulnerable road users like pedestrians and cyclists as well.

We look forward to continuing to expand the Age Friendly Suburbs Program to support older Canberrans to navigate our streets. It is simply based on the principle that what is often designed that is good for older Canberrans and for children is good for the entirety of our community and the accessibility of our entire community. I think that is the same principle that Minister Vassarotti announced this week with her commitment to universal design across residential buildings that she is advocating for nationally. The same principle applies here as well with public spaces. We are getting underway to design and construct new, accessible and safe public spaces around Canberra. We look forward to hearing from the diversity of our community as we do so.

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

Supplementary answer to question without notice

Government—business support

MR BARR (Kurrajong—Chief Minister, Treasurer, Minister for Climate Action, Minister for Economic Development and Minister for Tourism) (2.01): I have a matter arising.

MADAM SPEAKER: From question time?

MR BARR: Indeed. Mrs Jones asked me about the membership of the economic advisory group. The full list of members is as follows: Stephen Bartos, Carla Batina, Renee Leon, Jane Madden, Cherelle Murphy, Professor Paddy Nixon, Zoe Piper, Michael Schaper, Professor Helen Sullivan, Allan Seed and Nick Tyrrell.

Papers

Madam Speaker presented the following papers:

Electoral Act, pursuant to subsection 10A(2)—ACT Legislative Assembly Election 2020—Report, dated 15 April 2021.

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*—Speaker’s response to recommendations 24, 25, 26, 27, 28 and 29.

Mr Gentleman presented the following paper:

Health workers—Government response to resolution of the Assembly of 20 August 2020.

Adjournment

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

That the Assembly do now adjourn.

National Disability Insurance Scheme—*independent assessments*

MS DAVIDSON (Murrumbidgee) (2.03): I rise to speak today following situations over the last few weeks where processes could have been much improved by co-design.

When the deep consultation required in co-design is replaced by last-minute comments on legislation or policy that is essentially a done deal, this puts a burden on people with disability to retrofit that policy or legislation. This is where the phrase “nothing about us without us” has gained momentum. I can recommend a fantastic co-design guide by People with Disabilities WA.

Developing trust and respect is integral to getting good outcomes in any co-design process. When this happens, the outcomes can be fantastic. This is what we wanted for the NDIS. The NDIS was developed in response to people with disability asking for a program that would adequately meet their needs. People with disability were involved at every step of the creation and first stages of the scheme. Now, after seven years, the time has come for reforms to the NDIS to make it work better for participants. But people with disabilities are not being listened to.

In a letter that I received from nine local disability peak groups and providers from the sector, consultation was raised as a major problem with the introduction of independent assessments. They wrote that the NDIA has failed to meaningfully engage with people with disabilities and their representatives and has not adequately addressed the concerns raised since the announcement of the introduction of independent assessments was made.

People with disabilities have raised a huge number of concerns around independent assessment. In essence, it represents a move from the social model of disability to the medical model. There have been good examples of co-design in many jurisdictions around Australia, including within the ACT government. I saw firsthand the genuine commitment to true co-design in the development of the family safety hub. More recently, ACT Health have been co-designing safe haven cafes. I welcome Chris's work on the access committee as well.

Co-design is not easy work. It can be messy, it can take longer, and the outcome cannot be predicted. Sometimes the co-design group recommend a solution that turns out to be hard to implement and we have to go back to the table for a conversation about an alternative solution. That is okay. If we really trust each other, if we build a relationship on the foundation that we are all here with a collective cause and we are committed to this journey together, then, with patience, we will reach the right destination and do justice to the issue.

If you are wondering where that trust comes from, it is love. Cornel West said that justice is what love looks like in public just as tenderness is what love feels like in private. I believe wholeheartedly in radical love and compassion as the basis for transformational change. To practise radical love is to respond at an emotional level to the pain of others, with no exceptions. It is compassion that is completely inclusive. It requires that we sit with our discomfort about the hurt that someone is feeling without defensiveness and listen when people are telling us their truth about how existing systems affect them. If we have the courage to look at those cracks in the system when they are pointed out to us, we might see the light getting in to show us a different way.

It is hard to walk a straight line with a crooked heart. If your heart is poisoned by fear and hurt, you will walk the path of anger and defensiveness. You will hoard what you should share and you will lock out those you should let in because you can see only what might go wrong and not the beauty of what is far more likely to go wonderfully right. You have to fix the heart first. But once your heart is right, and it is focused on love and compassion, your actions will follow. This is the path that I am trying to walk. I am grateful for the guidance of our community as I continue the journey.

Homelessness—personal account

DR PATERSON (Murrumbidgee) (2.07): My speech today is written by a man that we will just call Pro Bono. He contacted me during the election campaign and we have been communicating over email ever since. I am very grateful for the trust that Pro Bono has put in me to share his words and experiences of being a public housing tenant in the ACT and of homelessness. I believe his experiences provide unique insight, so I would like to share some of his words today. His words are titled “The Invisible People”:

In 2001 I was homeless for some months, due to mental breakdown.

The good people at Samaritan House, a refuge for homeless men, rescued me and helped me to get back settled into society. It was a struggle, but I was eventually able to settle down and resume something like a normal life.

Understandably, to most people becoming homeless is very traumatic. Suddenly, one is alone. One has no home to retreat into, to hide from the pain. All hope has gone. It seems common, at this time, to feel disorientated, lost, confused, and particularly helpless. The newly homeless often find themselves wandering around, not knowing where to go, what to do, just having to keep moving, unable to settle in one particular place, unable to think.

The first night out on the street is often said to be the worst. Night-time is when all we want to do is retreat to the safety of our own homes. The loneliness and helplessness of that first night is something that you never forget.

Many homeless people manage to find some friendliness, or at least acknowledgement, from other homeless people. For them there is a culture of sorts that will welcome them and help them to cope with the loneliness and emptiness of their life. Much depends on the individuals, who they meet on their daily wanderings, and whether they are still capable of making human contact with others. Many aren't. They are the ones for whom the loneliness never ends.

One of the biggest problems with understanding homeless people is that there is no single reason why anyone becomes homeless, which makes it harder to understand the homeless as a group. They need to be treated as individuals, each with their own individual problems.

The best way to find out why people are homeless is to go and ask them. They are the ones who know why they are there, and they can be very articulate when it comes to the matter of how society has failed them.

Most people in the wider community think that drug abuse is the main cause of homelessness. In my experience, this is not necessarily so. It is only true in a minority of cases, although many homeless people become drug users to escape their situation. However, the so-called “experts”, the policy makers, and most researchers, believe that drug abuse leads to homelessness. It is lazy and discriminatory thinking to conflate the two issues.

Common to all people who are homeless is the extreme vulnerability of the person, the lack of adequate and suitable housing, the lack of an income to pay

for accommodation, and often the lack of social support to enable them to live settled lives. Homelessness rarely has a single cause. It is the interplay and cumulative impact of systemic, structural, and individual circumstances that forces this person onto the streets.

The charities do a wonderful job with their limited resources, helped by a vast army of volunteers willing to give up their free time to help those less fortunate than themselves.

Just because you have a nice home, a good job and a close family does not mean you are safe. Homelessness does not discriminate.

Planning—Gungahlin town centre

MR BRADDOCK (Yerrabi) (2.11): Today I want to talk about my intense interest in the future of the Gungahlin town centre and ensuring that the community gets a town centre to be proud of, a town centre that serves the community, a town centre that the community has had the opportunity to shape.

The future of Gungahlin town centre is an active question that lies before this Assembly. A draft variation to the Territory Plan concerning the Gungahlin town centre now sits before the planning standing committee. It is a document with features so ugly that there is no way to draw a link from it to the community feedback from which it is supposedly derived. It is a plan that sells Gungahlin short. It includes a 37 per cent reduction in community spaces at a time when Gungahlin is screaming out for community space to hold classes, practices and community events to cement the bonds that hold a community together, and at a time when another part of the government is conducting a Gungahlin community recreation needs study.

The proposal has already prejudged the outcome of that study and decided that Gungahlin can get by with 37 per cent less community space. It also includes a 35 per cent reduction in office space. The proposal no longer sees Gungahlin as providing a strong employment base, with those exact words struck out of the precinct code. In their place are the words “range of employment”. We already have a range of employment in Gungahlin. We need more.

With the cuts in community space and office space, what will we see instead? More apartment towers. This is despite 58 per cent of residents stating that they want no more residential apartment towers in the town centre. This week I asked the minister for planning why draft variation 364 is looking to cut community zoned facilities by 37 per cent and office space by 35 per cent. I am still none the wiser.

We must act now. Once the land is sold off we have lost our opportunity to create a future; but selling the land is exactly what the Suburban Land Agency are currently doing. They are currently selling off more blocks for mixed-use development. This is despite urban planning currently being in front of a committee in this Assembly. This is despite a motion passed by this very Assembly saying that we need to ensure that current sales of development sites support best practice mixed-use developments.

This is a package of work that is not yet complete, which the minister for planning will report back on in the last sitting day of this year, and which will help inform future planning for Gungahlin district. This week I asked the minister responsible for the Suburban Land Agency why this sale is continuing. Her response was that she saw no reason to halt the sale. The land has been auctioned off to the highest bidder with no consideration of community wishes. I do not want to see the territory selling off the future of Gungahlin town centre. We need to pause the sale until these issues can be addressed. We need to make sure that any mixed-use developments that go up are, indeed, best practice.

We need to give the planning committee time to consider the draft proposal properly. If we do not, is anyone in doubt as to what we will see? We have seen this story before. Where there was meant to be an office park, creating an employment hub for Gungahlin, we now see 22-storey apartment towers dominating our skyline, with empty, unviable retail spaces on the ground floor and investors seeking to maximise the return on their investment by maximising the number of apartments. This is not good enough for the people of Gungahlin. It is selling Gungahlin short.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

The Assembly adjourned at 2.15 pm until Tuesday, 11 May 2021 at 10 am.

Answers to questions

Access Canberra—numberplates (Question No 129)

Mr Cain asked the Minister for Business and Better Regulation, upon notice, on 1 April 2021:

- (1) How many customers of Access Canberra that ordered new number plates received their plates on or before the date which their registration took effect, during the financial years of (a) 2019-20 and (b) 2020-21 to date.
- (2) How many customers of Access Canberra that ordered new number plates received their plates after the date which their registration took effect, during the financial years (a) 2019-20 and (b) 2020-21 to date.
- (3) For each separate registration class, can the Minister list the average wait time (in days) for customers to receive their new licence plates from the date of purchase.
- (4) What processes have been put in place to ensure that Access Canberra customers are not being short-changed by the number plate mail-out procedure.

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

Answer to Question 1:

The number of Access Canberra customers that ordered or received new number plates received on the day before registration took effect:

2019-20	2020-21
44,139	33,077

Answer to Question 2:

The number of Access Canberra customers that ordered new number plates and received their plates after the date which their registration took effect:

2019-20	2020-21
12,296	6,739

Answer to Question 3:

Average Days between Order to Availability		
VEHICLE TYPE	2019-20	2020-21
Action Buses	9	17
Buses	9	14
Diplomats	6	11
Government	15	0
Heavy Vehicles	5	33
Light Vehicles	31	26
Motorcycles	30	39
Taxis and Hire Cars	9	19
Trailers	57	57
Veteran Vintage Historic	11	39
Average Calendar Days	12	18

Answer to Question 4:

Customers are required to attend an Access Canberra Service Centre to collect new number plates.

From 6 April to 17 July 2020 Access Canberra was operating under restrictions associated with the Public Health Direction due to COVID-19. Customers were unable to attend Service Centres during this time to collect new number plates as a result of these restrictions. In response to this situation, and to minimise disruption to customers, Access Canberra temporarily modified its service model to reduce physical interactions and to limit the movement of people. During this period, Access Canberra delivered number plates to customers nominated address following registration. Access Canberra has since resumed normal registration plate arrangements allowing customers to collect their number plate at the time of their transaction.

COVID-19—Check In CBR app (Question No 130)

Mr Cain asked the Minister for Business and Better Regulation, upon notice, on 1 April 2021 (*redirected to the Minister for Health*):

- (1) How is the data captured by the Check In CBR app secured.
- (2) How long is the data captured by the Check In CBR app retained by the ACT Government or any other parties.
- (3) Is the ACT Government providing any other channels for patrons who do not want to have their data captured digitally.
- (4) Will the ACT Government reimburse businesses who experience reduced customer numbers through unwillingness of patrons to use the Check In CBR app (including the channel whereby businesses check individuals in using their business profile).
- (5) Does the mandatory use of the Check In CBR app contravene any ACT or Commonwealth legislation.

Ms Stephen-Smith: The answer to the member's question is as follows:

- (1) The data collected when using the app goes directly to ACT Health servers. The back end of the app (where the data is stored), is hosted on an ACT Health Microsoft Azure tenancy (within Australia) and has undergone security testing before being made available to the public. Regularly security penetration testing is undertaken on the app.
- (2) Data captured by the Check In CBR app is securely stored and retained for a period of 28 days. On day 29 of the data being collected, the check in data is deleted from all storage.
- (3) The ACT Government is not providing non-digital mechanisms for data to be collected because to do so would slow down the contact tracing process. It should be noted that Check In CBR has a business profile function that enables venue staff to check-in patrons who do not have a smartphone with Check In CBR. This

functionality enables both venues and patrons to meet their obligations in relation to using Check In CBR for contact tracing purposes.

- (4) No, the Public Health (Restricted Activities – Gatherings, Business or Undertakings) Emergency Direction 2021 (No 2) imposes legal obligations for which failure to comply is an offence. This Direction made it mandatory for restricted businesses to use the app, and it also made it mandatory for persons aged 16 years or older who attend a Restricted Business for 15 minutes or more to check in using the app.
 - (5) No. The mandatory use of the Check In CBR app is completely legal and conforms to both ACT and Commonwealth legislative requirements.
-

Access Canberra—service levels (Question No 131)

Mr Cain asked the Minister for Business and Better Regulation, upon notice, on 1 April 2021:

- (1) Does Access Canberra track customer service performance at (a) shopfronts, (b) on the telephone and (c) online.
- (2) Are the results of customer service performance tracking reported publicly.
- (3) What was the average wait time at each of the Access Canberra shopfronts in (a) December 2020 and (b) December 2019.
- (4) How many total customer service interactions occurred at each of the Access Canberra shopfronts in (a) 2020 and (b) 2019.
- (5) How many Access Canberra transactions occurred online in (a) 2020 and (b) 2019.
- (6) How many Access Canberra transactions occurred over the telephone in (a) 2020 and (b) 2019.
- (7) Has the ACT Government engaged any consultants regarding the outsourcing of Access Canberra functions.

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

- (1) Yes. Access Canberra tracks customer service performance at (a) shopfronts (Service Centres); (b) on the telephone (Contact Centre); and (c) online (Digital Services).
- (2) Results are published on the Access Canberra website and are included in the CMTEDD Annual Report.
- (3) Average wait times at each Access Canberra shopfronts were:
 - (a) December 2020
 - Wait times were not measured in December 2020 due to COVID-19 restrictions.

(b) December 2019

- Belconnen – 11 minutes 43 seconds
- Gungahlin – 7 minutes 37 seconds
- Tuggeranong – 4 minutes 42 seconds
- Woden – 12 minutes 13 seconds

(4) Total customer service interactions occurred at each of the Access Canberra shopfronts were:

(a) 2020

- Belconnen – 77,185
- Dickson – 10,265*
- Gungahlin – 85,336
- Tuggeranong – 78,019
- Woden – 77,709

*Opened on 7 September 2020

(b) 2019

- Belconnen - 115,170
- Gungahlin – 112,562
- Tuggeranong – 113,034
- Woden – 112,785

(5) Access Canberra transactions occurred online were:

(a) 2020

- 5.395 million

(b) 2019

- 4.570 million

(6) Completed transactions over the telephone:

(a) 2020:

- 606,108

(b) 2019

- 570,740

(7) No.

**Waste—dog waste bins
(Question No 132)**

Mr Cain asked the Minister for Transport and City Services, upon notice, on 1 April 2021:

- (1) Can the Minister list, by suburb, the number of dog waste bins that are currently installed in Canberra.

- (2) What is the process followed for the assessment and installation of dog waste bins around the ACT.

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

- (1) There are no waste bins intended solely for the disposal of dog waste. Any general waste bin can be used for this purpose. There are currently 1,225 public waste bins serviced by City Services.
- (2) Urban Open Space Municipal Infrastructure Standard 16 outlines the design considerations and typically provided facilities at each different type of urban open space, including waste bin provision. Waste bins are provided in higher use areas like at shopping centres, District parks and other locations where there are high numbers of visitors. If no bin is provided it is the ACT Government's policy that people, including pet owners, using public open space areas are responsible for taking their rubbish with them and disposing of it in an appropriate manner.

Municipal services—mowing and parks maintenance (Question No 133)

Mr Cain asked the Minister for Transport and City Services, upon notice, on 1 April 2021:

- (1) What was the expenditure in the 2019-20 financial year on (a) mowing and (b) maintaining bush areas and nature parks, such as Gossan Hill and O'Connor Ridge.
- (2) Has there been any additional expenditure in the 2020-21 financial year on (a) mowing and (b) maintenance of bush areas and nature parks.
- (3) Has there been an evaluation of the use of native grasses along the light rail track.

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

- (1)
 - a. The estimated cost of mowing urban open spaces, parks and sportsgrounds by Place Management in TCCS for the 2019-20 financial year was \$8.9m.
 - b. There are over 40 bush areas and nature parks in and around the urban areas of Canberra managed collectively and known as Canberra Nature Park, of which Gossan Hill and O'Connor Ridge are a part. Approximately \$1.223 million was spent on mowing and other maintenance, including fire fuel management works.
- (2)
 - a. The mowing of urban open spaces, parks and sportsgrounds by Place Management, was estimated at the commencement of the 2020-21 financial year at \$8.6m. The rainfall during the 2020-21 year to date has required additional investment in the mowing program, this has been addressed via the fast-track stimulus program for \$2.1m, which has notionally been allocated to additional mowing \$1.6m and additional weed control \$0.5m.
 - b. Approximately \$1.429 million was spent on mowing and other maintenance, including fire fuel management works in these Canberra Nature Park areas in the financial year to March.

- (3) Evaluation of the native grasses selected for use on Light Rail Stage 1 were conducted by the National Capital Authority and Canberra Metro prior to the planting of the grasses as part of the project.
-

**Traffic infringement notices—errors
(Question No 134)**

Mr Cain asked the Minister for Transport and City Services, upon notice, on 1 April 2021 (*redirected to the Minister for Business and Better Regulation*):

- (1) How many speeding fines were issued, in 2020, with an incorrect offence date due to a system error related to the leap year.
- (2) What is the total dollar value of these fines.
- (3) How many remain unpaid.
- (4) Has an assessment been made on the system to see if similar infringement notice errors occurred in 2016; if so, when did this assessment occur.
- (5) Did a private sector company develop the system for the ACT Government; if so, has any recourse been sought from the private sector company for the system error.
- (6) Does the Government intend to seek any recourse against the private sector company for the system error.
- (7) Was legal advice sought regarding the enforceability of the infringement notices with the incorrect dates.
- (8) What was the cost of this legal advice.
- (9) What total public sector employee hours have been allocated to recovering the unpaid fines issued with incorrect dates.

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

- (1) 623 infringement notices.
- (2) The total dollar value of these fines is \$238,112.
- (3) As of 12 April 2021, 85 infringement notices remain unpaid.
- (4) No. A different software system was being used in 2016. Similar infringements notice errors did not occur.
- (5) Yes, the software system was developed by a private company to support the ACT Government under contract arrangements. Access Canberra wrote to the vendor to ensure the 'leap year' system errors were fixed and that a similar situation would not re-occur. All rectification work for the system and its update due to the 'leap year' issue was completed at no cost to the Territory.

- (6) The ACT Government has not instigated any further action against the vendor at this time.
- (7) Yes.
- (8) The ACT Government Solicitor provides legal services, including advice and representation to the ACT, its government agencies, Ministers, and office holders and does not charge a fee for advice.
- (9) Employee hours are not tracked against the processing of specific infringement matters. Operational costs are managed through the existing budget for Access Canberra.

Health—waiting times (Question No 136)

Mr Cain asked the Minister for Health, upon notice, on 1 April 2021:

What is the waiting time for (a) optical procedures and (b) urinary procedures in the public system?

Ms Stephen-Smith: The answer to the member's question is as follows:

- a) Optical procedures is a generic term that covers multiple procedures which are undertaken across a broad range of settings including at a patient's bedside, in a clinic or in surgery. Resultantly, there is not a specific waiting list.

The ACT Public Health System does provide a number of ophthalmic services covering eye trauma to cataract surgery.

Financial Year	Number of Procedures	Average Wait Time (days)
2019-20	1396	132

- b) Urinary procedures is a generic term that covers multiple procedures which are undertaken across a broad range of settings including at a patient's bedside, in a clinic or in surgery. Resultantly, there is not a specific waiting list.

ACT public service—disability employment (Question No 137)

Mr Cain asked the Minister for Disability, upon notice, on 1 April 2021 (*redirected to the Chief Minister*):

- (1) Is there a whole-of-service employment target for people with a disability in the ACT Public Service.
- (2) Does the ACT Government report its progress publicly against these targets.
- (3) How many people with a disability did the ACT public service employ in (a) 2015, (b) 2016, (c) 2017, (d) 2018, (e) 2019 and (f) 2020.

- (4) How many people were employed via the Inclusion (People with Disability) Vocational Employment Program in 2020.
- (5) In what month in 2020 were applications for the Inclusion (People with Disability) Vocational Employment Program opened.
- (6) In what month in 2020 did successful applicants for the Inclusion (People with Disability) Vocational Employment Program commence work.

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

- (1) The ACT Public Service (ACTPS) first established targets for the employment of people with disability in 2011. The target was first set as part of the implementation of the ACTPS People with Disability Employment Framework under the Respect, Equity and Diversity (RED) Framework. From 2015, Directorate-specific targets were determined annually by the Head of Service and are incorporated into Directors-General Performance Agreements. New targets for the employment of People with Disability will be implemented in 2021.
- (2) Diversity statistics, including the number of people with disability employed in the ACT public service, are published in the State of the Service report each year.
- (3) The table below sets out the number of people with disability employed in the ACT public service as at 30 June between 2015 and 2020.

	June 2015	June 2016	June 2017	June 2018	June 2019	June 2020
Total	437	458	521	565	622	699

- (4) Two people were employed through the Inclusion (People with Disability) Vocational Employment Program in 2020.
- (5) Applications for the current cohort of the Inclusion (People with Disability) Vocational Employment Program opened on 28 October 2019.
- (6) Participants in the current cohort of the Inclusion (People with Disability) Vocational Employment Program commenced in the ACT public service in October and November 2020.

**ACT public service—employment of Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders
(Question No 138)**

Mr Cain asked the Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs, upon notice, on 1 April 2021 (*redirected to the Chief Minister*):

- (1) Does the ACT Public Service have targets for employment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.
- (2) Does the ACT Government report its progress publicly against these targets.
- (3) How many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples did the ACT Public Service employ during (a) 2015, (b) 2016, (c) 2017, (d) 2018, (e) 2019 and (f) 2020.

- (4) How many people were employed via the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Vocational Employment Program in 2020.
- (5) In what month in 2020 were applications for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Vocational Employment Program opened.
- (6) In what month in 2020 did successful applicants for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Vocational Employment Program commence work.

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

- (1) The ACT Public Service (ACTPS) first established targets for the employment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in 2011. The target was part of the implementation of the ACTPS Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Framework under the Respect, Equity and Diversity (RED) Framework. From 2015, directorate-specific targets were determined annually by the Head of Service and are incorporated into Directors-General performance agreements. New targets for the employment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people will be implemented in 2021.
- (2) Diversity statistics, including the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People employed in the ACT public service, are published in the State of the Service report each year.
- (3) The table below sets out the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People in the ACT public service as at 30 June between 2015 and 2020.

	June 2015	June 2016	June 2017	June 2018	June 2019	June 2020
Total	299	313	350	380	423	489

- (4) Ten people were employed through the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Vocational Employment Program in 2020.
- (5) Applications for the current cohort of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Vocational Employment Program opened on 28 October 2019.
- (6) Six participants in the current cohort of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Vocational Employment Program commenced in the ACT public service between September and November 2020. Four participants commenced in February 2021.

Economy—employment and business development (Question No 139)

Mr Cain asked the Minister for Economic Development, upon notice, on 1 April 2021:

- (1) Does the Government measure the ACT's economic reliance on Australian Government spending, specifically via (a) ACT-based Australian Public Service (APS) jobs and (b) Australian Government procurement in the ACT.
- (2) Can the Minister provide copies of any reports or analysis in the last five years that have assessed the reliance of the ACT economy on ACT-based APS jobs and Australian Government procurement in the ACT.

- (3) Does the Government track employment by sector.
- (4) According to government data, can the Minister detail as at 30 June 2020, (a) the number of APS employees who reside in the ACT, (b) ACT public servants who reside in the ACT, (c) ACT public servants who do not reside in the ACT, (d) the number of private sector employees, (e) the number of private sector employees who work for organisations that primarily supply goods and services to the Australian Government and (f) other.
- (5) Does the Government track how many businesses have relocated from the ACT to NSW; if so, of these, does the Government track how many businesses relocated from the ACT to Queanbeyan, NSW.
- (6) How many businesses have relocated between the 2016-17 financial year and the 2019-20 financial year.
- (7) How many jobs have the relocations referred to in part (6) cost the ACT.
- (8) Does the Government track or survey the reasons why businesses leave the ACT; if so, can the minister detail the top three reasons.
- (9) How much money has government invested in the Canberra Innovation Network (CBRIN).
- (10) What is the duration of the CBRIN investment commitment.
- (11) How does the Government measure the effectiveness of the CBRIN investment.
- (12) Does the Government track how many jobs have been directly created as a result of its financial investment in CBRIN.
- (13) How many jobs have been directly created as a result of the Government's financial investment in CBRIN.
- (14) Why did the TradeConnect Grant program end.

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

- (1) There are a range of measures available that show the influence of the Commonwealth on the ACT economy. National Accounts data, ABS data, Commonwealth Budget papers and the AusTender website all provide this type of information. The ACT government does not have of its own set of measures that track this relationship.
- (2) Treasury has not regularly produced reports/analysis of this nature. From time to time at government request, particular proposals for relocation of Commonwealth agencies have been examined.
- (3) ABS Labour Force, Detailed, Quarterly publication provides detailed employment by industry and by sector in the ACT.
- (4) (a) This information is not available. Commonwealth budget papers have provided Commonwealth staffing levels by agency at the national level. The Commonwealth budget papers do not provide the staffing level by state/territory. The APS

Commission publishes the number of APS by state/territory but not by location of where they reside.

(b) and (c)

ACT Public Service

State	Total
ACT	22387
Outside ACT	3267
Total	25654

ACT Public Service and ACT Public Sector*

State	Total
ACT	23353
Outside ACT	3475
Grand Total	26828

*Includes Elections ACT, ACT Audit Office, CIT.

(d) Public/Private employee splits are available from the ABS.

<https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/labour/employment-and-unemployment/labour-force-australia-detailed/feb-2021/6291026a.xls>

(e)

This information is not readily available

(f)

This information is not readily available

- (5) This information is not tracked. However, data shows there were 31,747 registered businesses in the ACT in June 2020, compared with 25,327 in June 2014.
- (6) This information is not available.
- (7) This information is not available.
- (8) The ACT Government does not survey businesses that leave the Territory.
- (9) Under the previous agreement with CBRIN (2014-15 to 2018-19) the ACT Government invested \$7,309,684 GST inclusive. Under the current CBRIN agreement (2019-20 to 2022-23) the ACT Government has committed \$5,500,000 GST inclusive.
- The current agreement also includes the expected value of the rent waived through a peppercorn lease agreement for CBRIN's use of level 5, 1 Moore Street Canberra.
- (10) The current agreement with CBRIN ceases 30 June 2023.
- (11) CBRIN is required to prepare an Annual Workplan by 31 May each year and reports on progress against activities and key performance indicators.

In 2018 CBRIN commissioned a report to assess the impact it has had on entrepreneurs, innovators and the innovation community across its programs designed to implement its key strategic directions. A copy of the report is publicly available online at: <https://cbrin.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/Impacts-of-the-Canberra-Innovation-Network.pdf>.

(12) No.

(13) The ACT Government does not track how many jobs have been directly created as a result of investment in CBRIN. However, CBRIN employs 12 staff and provides intensive support for about 89 businesses at any given point. CBRIN also provided support for approximately 1,138 people through its workshops since 1 July 2020.

(14) The Trade Connect program concluded in 2017-18 and was repositioned to better align with the ACT Government's International Engagement Strategy, which allows the Government to invest in targeted international markets where there are strategic trade and investment opportunities closely aligned to Canberra's industry strengths.

Government—procurement panels (Question No 140)

Mr Cain asked the Special Minister of State, upon notice, on 1 April 2021:

- (1) How many separate procurement panels are there across the ACT Public Service.
- (2) For each ACT government procurement panel can the Minister detail (a) the number of companies, (b) the number of companies whose head office is not in the ACT, (c) any companies who were directly appointed to the panel, (d) when the panel last went to market via either tender or expression of interest and (e) details of any extensions to the panel.

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

As of 8 April 2021, there is a total of 71 current panels registered on the ACT government's Notifiable Contracts Register. Across the 71 entries there is 639 providers. Each of the 71 panels has providers associated, however, the number of providers varies from panel to panel.

The directorate responsible for establishing the panel is also responsible for managing the contract data for providers on each panel. Further information relating to these panels is not available through the ACT government's Notifiable Contracts register, nor is there any other centralised system. Extracting the information across all directorates and agencies to inform a more comprehensive response would be a significant task, representing an unreasonable diversion of resources.

Government—secure local jobs code (Question No 142)

Mr Cain asked the Minister for Industrial Relations and Workplace Safety, upon notice, on 1 April 2021:

- (1) Has the Government identified that the Secure Local Jobs code does not apply to several industries including: professional, scientific and technical services, and health services, among others; if so, what was the basis of excluding certain industries and including others and can the Minister provide any reports commissioned or economic analysis undertaken to support this decision.

- (2) Has the Government looked into whether the Secure Local Jobs code had a positive or negative economic impact; if so, can the Minister provide any reports or economic analysis.

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

- (1) The Secure Local Jobs Code was introduced to ensure contracts for Territory-funded work are only awarded to businesses that meet high ethical and labour standards. Procurements for Territory-funded work exclude a range of services or works considered less prone to vulnerable or insecure work arrangements.

The decision to exclude services and works were informed by consultation with key stakeholders during the development of the Code in 2018. The stakeholders included unions and the advisory group preceding the current Secure Local Jobs Code Advisory Council.

- (2) The Government expects that all businesses who receive public funds will meet this community's expectations about ethical behaviour towards workers. The Secure Local Jobs Code creates a transparent process that ensures employers who treat their workers fairly can compete for government work on a level playing field. The government receives ongoing information about the impact of the code through the Secure Local Jobs Advisory Council, which includes representatives of Canberra businesses.

Planning—Casey (Question No 143)

Ms Castley asked the Minister for Planning and Land Management, upon notice, on 1 April 2021:

In relation to the former Springbank Rise Real Estate office at 2 Minty Gove Casey and noting the fact that a development application (DA201528245) for a childcare centre was approved on 10 August 2017 and no work has begun, can the Minister advise (a) why nothing has been done, (b) when will work begin, (c) how long will it take, (d) why the site is such an eyesore, (e) who is responsible for maintaining the site and (f) what role does the Government have.

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

- (a) The ACT Government issues approvals to build but does not interfere with the financial and business decision of a private developer. Private businesses are best placed to make decisions about their own operations and access to finance.
- (b) Decisions about the timing of development are made by the developer taking into account their own operational and financial considerations.
- (c) Decisions about the timing of development are made by the developer taking into account their own operational and financial considerations.
- (d) The maintenance of the site is the responsibility of the private owner of the site and is a cost borne by the owner of the site and not ACT taxpayers.
- (e) The maintenance of the site is the responsibility of the private owner of the site and is a cost borne by the owner of the site and not ACT taxpayers.

- (f) The ACT Government is responsible for issuing approvals for development and ensuring that any development that occurs is in accordance with relevant approvals. The ACT Government can also take compliance action where a site may be unclean or poses a hazard to the community.
-

**Throsby—name change
(Question No 144)**

Ms Castley asked the Minister for Planning and Land Management, upon notice, on 1 April 2021:

Can the Minister advise if the Government is considering a name change for Throsby; if so, (a) when will the name change and (b) what will it be changed to.

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

The Government is not considering a name change for the suburb of Throsby.

**Planning—Gungahlin
(Question No 145)**

Ms Castley asked the Minister for Planning and Land Management, upon notice, on 1 April 2021:

In relation to the Stage 4 development of Gungahlin Marketplace and the Gungahlin Cinema development, was the development application for this development approved in January 2020; if so, (a) when will work begin on this development and (b) what action will the minister take to speed up this process for residents of Gungahlin.

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

- (a) The development application (DA201935835 over Block 2 Section 9) for Gungahlin Marketplace was approved with conditions on 15 January 2020. The relevant plans for this development application were endorsed by the planning and land authority on 2 March 2020 to enable the proponent to proceed with the building approval process through a private certifier.

The development application (DA201936502 over Block 1 Section 12) for a commercial building, including a new cinema, was approved with conditions on 7 April 2020. The relevant plans for this development application were endorsed by the planning and land authority on 7 April 2020, enabling the proponent to proceed with the building approval process through a private certifier.

Both developments currently have two years following development approval in which to commence construction. However, while the ACT Government issues approvals to build, specific decisions about development timing are a matter for the private businesses.

- (b) These developments are being undertaken by private businesses and it is their decision as to when to start construction. The construction program and any community updates for these developments are matters for the respective developers.
-

**Waste—liquid waste
(Question No 148)**

Ms Castley asked the Minister for Business and Better Regulation, upon notice, on 1 April 2021 (*redirected to the Minister for Transport and City Services*):

- (1) Is the Minister aware that liquid waste and waste from gutters, drains and toxic spills is being dumped at the Australian National University cricket grounds and that trucks are dumping loads into the area which is then leaching and possibly flooding into the catchment of Lake Burley Griffin.
- (2) Is the Minister aware that this area is currently being used as a liquid waste disposal site by environmental waste management companies and contractors who are engaged by the ACT Government to clean hazardous waste from gutters and drains and toxic spills.
- (3) Can the Minister advise what action will be taken to ensure this area isn't used in this manner.

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

- (1) Transport Canberra and City Services (TCCS) owns, operates, and maintains the stormwater network. Activities such as cleaning gross pollutant traps (GPTs), desilting sediment basins, unblocking and monitoring the stormwater network and litter picking around waterways assist to enhance water quality. The site referred to above is located in Turner adjacent to the ANU cricket grounds and is a designated GPT and drying pad. This site is used to dry the collected liquid waste from the stormwater network before disposal to landfill. The GPT is designed and operated specifically to improve water quality in Lake Burley Griffin. Removing debris (organic material and anthropogenic litter) from Sullivans Creek is a critical activity to protect the lake from excessive nutrient pollution which may lead to algal outbreaks.
 - (2) TCCS engages a contractor to remove debris from the Turner GPT at least twice per year and after rain events of 25mm or more. If inspections indicate GPTs are 60 percent or more full, debris is removed from the traps. The debris is placed adjacent to the Turner GPT to dry and is subsequently disposed of in landfill in accordance with TCCS' Environmental Authorisation issued by the Environment Protection Authority (EPA).
 - (3) The Turner GPT assists to prevent negative water quality impacts in Lake Burley Griffin from sediment, debris captured in the stormwater system. This large trap may be cleaned between 4-8 times per year depending on the number of rainfall events.
-

**Building—defects
(Question Nos 151 and 152)**

Ms Castley asked the Minister for Planning and Land Management and the Minister for Transport and City Services, upon notice, on 1 April 2021 (*redirected to the Minister for Business and Better Regulation*):

- (1) In relation to the structural integrity of the Symphony Park building in Harrison and complaints (a) 210226-002214 – Negligence of Executive Committee, (b) 201108-000432 – Misleading conduct – wrong report – by Sellick Consultants, (c) 201029-001431 – Misleading conduct of PBS Building ACT, (d) 201025-000443 – Deceptive and Unfair Conduct of Independent Strata Management and (e) 201009-000759 – Building defects – noises – balcony leak – building movement Unit 60, raised with Access Canberra/Fair Trading which no responses have been received, is the Minister aware of the issues in this complex.
- (2) What rights do the owners have in relation to these issues.
- (3) What action has the Minister taken and what has been the outcome of that action.

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

Question 1

Yes, I am aware of the alleged issues at this complex and that Access Canberra are currently working through these issues. I am also aware that Access Canberra has been in contact with the complainant and will continue to keep the complainant updated as the investigation progresses.

Question 2

Unit Titles – Under the Unit Titles (Management) Act 2011 (UTMA), the owners have ability to take disputes they have with either their executive committee, their strata manager or another member of the unit plan to the ACT Civil and Administrative Tribunal. Further, the UTMA allows for owners to take action to remove the strata manager if the owners corporation believe the strata manager has failed in its duties or breached the managers code of conduct.

Building – Under the *Construction Occupations (Licencing) Act 2004 (COLA)*, anyone who believes a licensee is contravening or a licensee or former licensee has contravened COLA or an operational Act, may complain to the Construction Occupations Registrar (the Registrar).

Under COLA, the Registrar can issue a Rectification Order against builders and other entities after considering all submissions received in response to the Notice of Intention to make a Rectification Order (NOI), and providing there is sufficient evidence to do so.

Question 3

I have referred the matter onto Access Canberra as the regulator for both Building and Fair-Trading matters. Access Canberra are currently investigating these matters and I have asked they keep me apprised as to their investigations.

In relation to outcomes for the above specific matters:

- i. Reference - 201009-000759 – I am advised that in relation to the balcony leak, Access Canberra have engaged with the builder and the builder has agreed to undertake rectification works. The other alleged defects are still being investigated.
- ii. Reference - 210226-002214 – I am advised that the complainant was recently referred to ACT Civil and Admirative Tribunal, as the actions of the executive committee within a Unit Plan do not fall within the scope of Access Canberra and ACAT is the appropriate body to hear such matters.
- iii. Reference - 201108-000432 – I am advised that this complaint has been assessed in relation to the Australian Consumer Law (ACL). I am informed that as PBS Building engaged Sellick Consultants to draft the report, the contractual relationship, and protections relating to services delivered under the contract (and the ACL), apply to PBS Building.
- iv. The other matters raised are still under active investigation.

Energy—consumption (Question No 154)

Ms Clay asked the Minister for Water, Energy and Emissions Reduction, upon notice, on 1 April 2021:

- (1) What was the total household consumption, for the period (a) April to September 2019 (inclusive) and (b) April to September 2020 (inclusive) of (i) electricity and (ii) gas.
- (2) What was the total commercial consumption, for the period (a) April to September 2019 (inclusive) and (b) April to September 2020 (inclusive) of (i) electricity and (ii) gas.

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

- (1) The ACT Government does not collect data at the level of detail requested. Specifically, the ACT Government only collects total annual supply data and does not collect information that separates household energy consumption from commercial use.

We are unable to answer the specific question asked, however have provided total annual supply of electricity and natural gas in the ACT for 2018-19 and 2019-20 below. This data is reported to the ACT Government on an annual basis by energy utilities under the *Utilities Act 2000*.

	2018-19	2019-20
Electricity (MWh)	2,872,824	2,890,163
Natural gas (megajoules)	7,272,392,627	7,220,423,368

Source: Energy Industry Levy determinations (54H – Utilities Act)

- (2) The ACT Government does not collect or monitor all commercial consumption in the ACT. The ACT Government does receive data from the Clean Energy Regulator

(CER) on some large energy user consumption (generally industrial and large commercial customers – it does not include Government). This data is reported to the CER under the *National Greenhouse and Energy Reporting Act 2007* (Cth). For the period April-September 2019, reported large customer energy use in the ACT reported to the CER was:

Large customer use	April-Sep 2019
Electricity (MWh)	43,536
Natural gas (megajoules)	77,861,930

CER data for the same period April-September 2020 is not currently available.

Transport Canberra—patronage (Question No 155)

Ms Clay asked the Minister for Transport and City Services, upon notice, on 1 April 2021:

- (1) What was the daily average number of public transport journeys, by originating district, for the period June to September 2020 (inclusive), for (a) weekdays and (b) weekends, for (i) total of all passenger types, (ii) full fare passengers, (iii) concession passengers excluding students and (iv) school students.
- (2) What was the daily average number of public transport kilometres travelled, by originating district, for the period June to September 2020 (inclusive), for (a) weekdays and (b) weekends, for (i) total of all passenger types, (ii) full fare passengers, (iii) concession passengers excluding students and (iv) school students.
- (3) What was the daily average number of boardings of light rail for the period June to September 2020 (inclusive), for (a) weekdays and (b) weekends, in (i) Gungahlin district and (ii) Canberra Central district.

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

- (1) The daily average number of public transport journeys, by originating district, for the period June to September 2020 (inclusive) is provided in Table 1 below:

Table 1	Weekdays ¹				Weekends			
	All ²	Adult	Concession	School students	All ²	Adult	Concession	School students
Gungahlin								
Total	282,498	87,477	65,667	129,004	28,787	12,116	11,899	4,730
Daily Ave.	3210	994	746	1466	847	356	350	139
Belconnen								
Total	513,445	164,696	171,542	175,678	59,831	20,548	31,027	8,110
Daily Ave.	5835	1872	1949	1996	1760	604	913	239
Central								
Total	500,487	186,038	124,431	189,310	41,857	16,755	20,696	4,372
Daily Ave.	5687	2114	1414	2151	1231	493	609	129

Table 1	Weekdays ¹				Weekends			
	All ²	Adult	Concession	School students	All ²	Adult	Concession	School students
Woden Valley								
Total	270,813	96,528	71,906	101,919	25,284	9,714	11,201	4,309
Daily Ave.	3077	1097	817	1158	744	286	329	127
Weston Creek								
Total	82,528	18,483	18,073	45,827	5,181	1,538	2,437	1,198
Daily Ave.	938	210	205	521	152	45	72	35
Molonglo								
Total	22,905	9,879	5,351	7,665	2,218	901	1,006	308
Daily Ave.	260	112	61	87	65	27	30	9
Tuggeranong								
Total	326,081	87,466	61,597	175,772	21,462	7,240	8,433	5,693
Daily Ave.	3705	994	700	1997	631	213	248	167

1 Based on total trips for the entire period divided by number of days. There were 88 weekdays and 34 weekend days in the specified period. Weekdays includes public holidays schedule on Monday - Friday.

2 Employee travel is counted in total figures but not passenger types.

(2) The daily average number of public transport kilometres travelled by buses is provided in Table 2 below:

Table 2	Weekdays	Weekends
Bus Network³	81,924.554 km	26,169.847 km
Light Rail	2,904 km	1,717 km

3 Based on total "Scheduled In-Service km" measure for the specified period divided by number of days. There were 88 weekdays and 34 weekend days in the specified period.

(3) The daily average number of boardings of light rail for the period June to September 2020 (inclusive) is provided in Table 3 below:

Table 3	Weekdays				Weekends			
	All ⁴	Adult	Concession	School students	All ⁴	Adult	Concession	School students
Light Rail⁵	7,491	3,800	1,206	2,475	3,654	1,712	676	1,262

4 Employee travel is counted in total figures but not passenger types.

5 Light Rail boardings are not currently reported by regions.

Transport Canberra—data (Question No 156)

Ms Clay asked the Minister for Transport and City Services, upon notice, on 1 April 2021:

- (1) What was the number of kilometres travelled by buses during the period (a) April to September 2020 (inclusive) and (b) April to September 2019 (inclusive).
- (2) What was the number of kilometres travelled by light rail during the period (a) April to September 2020 (inclusive) and (b) April to September 2019 (inclusive).
- (3) What was the total number of passengers who boarded a bus during the period (a) April to September 2020 (inclusive) and (b) April to September 2019 (inclusive).
- (4) What was the total number of passengers who boarded the light rail during the period (a) April to September 2020 (inclusive) and (b) April to September 2019 (inclusive).

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

- (1) Kilometres¹ travelled by buses during the periods:
 - a. April to September 2020 (inclusive) were 11,621,918.3710 kilometres; and
 - b. April to September 2019 (inclusive) were 11,325,265.1680 kilometres.
- (2) Kilometres¹ travelled by light rail vehicles during the periods:
 - a. April to September 2020 (inclusive) were 465,571 kilometres; and
 - b. April to September 2019 (inclusive) were 396,736² kilometres.
- (3) The total number of passengers who boarded a bus during the periods:
 - a. April to September 2020 (inclusive) was 4,154,776 boardings; and
 - b. April to September 2019 (inclusive) was 9,404,020 boardings.
- (4) The total number of passengers who boarded light rail during the periods:
 - a. April to September 2020 (inclusive) was 943,678 boardings; and
 - b. April to September 2019 (inclusive) was 2,094,046² boardings.

¹ Based on total "Scheduled In-Service km" measure for the specified period.

² Canberra Metro Operations commenced light rail revenue services from 22 April 2019.

Transport—private vehicle use (Question No 157)

Ms Clay asked the Minister for Transport and City Services, upon notice, on 1 April 2021:

- (1) What was the measured change in total private vehicle kilometres travelled from reduced population movement during the period of April to September 2020 (inclusive).
- (2) If measurements are not available, what was the estimated change in total private vehicle kilometres travelled from reduced population movement during the period of April to September 2020 (inclusive).

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

- (1) TCCS does not collect data on private vehicle kilometres travelled.

- (2) The reduction in overall vehicle numbers, counted at several strategic intersections across the Territory is provided in (Figure 1). These results are expressed as a percentage reduction over the corresponding months in 2019. The results give an indication of a reduction in car journeys but do not give an indication of the distance of each journey.

Figure 1: Percentage Reduction in traffic volumes at strategic intersection sites.

Absolute % reduction over corresponding month in 2019					
Apr-20	May-20	Jun-20	Jul-20	Aug-20	Sep-20
35.14	19.925	6.75	1.46	4.525	4.86

Disability services—funding (Question No 158)

Mrs Kikkert asked the Minister for Disability, upon notice, on 1 April 2021:

What funding sources have been identified by the ACT Government to provide further support to Women with Disabilities ACT.

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

The ACT Government funds Women with Disabilities ACT (WWDACT) as a peak disability organisation to provide systemic advocacy. In 2020-21 provided funding of \$109,935. This figure includes Equal Remuneration Order funding.

WWDACT also access funding through a range of ACT Government grant programs such as the Disability Inclusion Grants, International Day of People with Disability (I-Day) Grants, Participation (Women's) Grants and Women's Safety Grants.

The ACT Government and other community partners continue to work closely with WWDACT to support their viability and to strengthen and renew the service offerings of the organisation. The ACT Government will continue to work with WWDACT in identifying funding sources.

Mental health—education (Question No 160)

Mrs Kikkert asked the Minister for Disability, upon notice, on 1 April 2021:

In relation to the Psychosocial Recovery and NDIS Course by the ACT Recovery College, how many participants attended the trial of the four-week course in June 2020.

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

A total of nine people attended the Psychosocial Recovery and NDIS Course delivered by the ACT Recovery College in June 2020.

**Disability services—Companion Card program
(Question No 161)**

Mrs Kikkert asked the Minister for Disability, upon notice, on 1 April 2021:

- (1) What measures will the ACT Government take to encourage and promote participation of the Companion Card Program.
- (2) How many potential affiliates were approached by the ACT Government in the past, but turned down the opportunity to become an affiliate, for each year since the establishment of the Companion Card Program.
- (3) What was the reason for the rejection in each instance referred to in part (2).

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

- (1) The ACT Government will continue to promote the benefits of the Companion Card Program to both potential users and affiliates through existing channels such as the Involved website, as well as by directly targeting Canberra businesses who are not currently participating in the Program.
- (2) The ACT Companion Card Program commenced in September 2009. Data is not captured on how many potential affiliates are contacted and why they did or did not take up the opportunity to participate in the Program.
- (3) The reasons for potential affiliates choosing not to participate in the Companion Card Program is not collected.

**Disability services—COVID-19 Disability Strategy
(Question No 162)**

Mrs Kikkert asked the Minister for Disability, upon notice, on 1 April 2021:

- (1) In relation to the ACT COVID-19 Disability Strategy, what is the current status for recruitment of Disability Liaison Officers, to the date this question on notice was published.
- (2) What is the anticipated delivery date for disability awareness training modules for justice agencies and organisations.
- (3) Does the ACT Government plan to host a workshop to examine need and options in relation to specialist disability legal and forensic services this year, as it was not held in 2020; if so, when will the workshop will be held; if not, did the Disability Royal Commission report on public hearing 11 substitute the workshop, and is it anticipated that another workshop will be held in 2022.

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

- (1) Two Disability Liaison Officers (DLO's) are currently employed, one at Legal Aid ACT and one at ACT Corrective Services. Recruitment is currently underway to employ four more DLOs. This recruitment will be complete by June 2021.

- (2) It is anticipated the first training session will be delivered by June 2021.
 - (3) The ACT Government plans to host a workshop to examine need and options in relation to specialist disability legal and forensic services in the ACT after the release of the Disability Royal Commission report on *Public Inquiry 11: The experiences of people with cognitive disability in the criminal justice system*. The ACT Government has not yet been advised of the report release date.
-

Planning—Ginninderry shops (Question No 166)

Mrs Kikkert asked the Minister for Transport and City Services, upon notice, on 1 April 2021 (*redirected to the Minister for Housing and Suburban Development*):

- (1) What is the proposed square metre area of the future Ginninderry shops.
- (2) If there is no fixed proposal, what size options are the ACT Government considering.
- (3) Are any sites within these shops being designed with the intent to attract specific kinds of businesses like supermarkets or large retail outlets; if so, how many sites are being designed with this sort of intent and how many of them are being designed specifically to attract larger businesses like Woolworths and Kmart.
- (4) Has the ACT Government already been in contact with specific businesses to attract them into opening stores within the Ginninderry shops site.

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

1. Work conducted by the Ginninderry Joint Venture suggests that a supermarket of 3,500sqm would be viable by 2025, with a potential smaller supermarket of 1,500sqm viable by 2035. Initially an 8,000sqm shopping centre would be viable by 2025 with scope to increase this to 12,000sqm by 2035.

This aligns with Rule 55 in the West Belconnen Concept Plan “R55: No development application for a full-line supermarket (minimum 3000m² gross floor area) will be approved within eight years from the commencement of Draft Variation to the Territory Plan No 351.”

The intent was to ensure that the population within the Ginninderry development had grown sufficiently to support a shopping centre without the need for the new centre to unduly compete with existing centres such as Kippax. As Variation 351 commenced on 22 July 2016, the eight-year limitation period will expire on 22 July 2024.

2. No detailed design has been completed as yet. Refer to Answer 1 above.
3. No detailed design has been completed as yet. Refer to Answer 1 above.

4. No.

**Waste—green waste service relocation
(Question No 167)**

Mrs Kikkert asked the Minister for Transport and City Services, upon notice, on 1 April 2021:

- (1) In relation to the relocation of the Parkwood Green Waste, when will the green waste service provided by Canberra Sand and Gravel (CSG) be relocating.
- (2) Has the Government been in consultation with CSG about possible relocation area options; if so, (a) what areas for relocation have been discussed and (b) is there a confirmed location for relocation; if not, is there a shortlist of relocation options.
- (3) Will the ACT Government be financially assisting the relocation in any way.
- (4) Is it the preference of either the ACT government or CSG to remain in the West Belconnen area?
- (5) What other progress has been made with CSG regarding the relocation.

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

- (1) The licence for the facility will cease on 30 June 2021 to facilitate the remediation and handover of the West Belconnen Resource Management Centre to the Ginninderry Joint Venture. A longer-term solution for the acceptance of green waste for Belconnen and North Canberra is being investigated as part of analysis of Territory-wide waste infrastructure needs. Garden waste can be disposed of at Corkhill Bros. located at the Mugga Lane Resource Management Centre; this service is free-of-charge for members of the public. Residents can also apply for a green bin as part of the Green Bin Collection Service which provides a fortnightly household collection of garden waste.
 - (2) No.
 - (3) There are no plans to do so at this time.
 - (4) Refer to answer 1.
 - (5) Refer to answer 1.
-

**Transport Canberra—Ginninderry shuttle bus
(Question No 172)**

Mrs Kikkert asked the Minister for Transport and City Services, upon notice, on 1 April 2021:

- (1) In relation to a question asked to the Minister for Transport and City Services for a formal assessment of three proposals for rerouting the Ginninderry shuttle bus to provide service to Britten-Jones Drive, Holt and the response of 14 October 2020 stating that it was “not appropriate to consider or progress any of these options during the caretaker period” but that Transport Canberra had been instructed to provide advice on the matter to the incoming government, what was Transport Canberra’s advice to the Minister regarding the proposals I made for rerouting the Ginninderry shuttle bus along Britten-Jones Drive.
- (2) Can the Minister please provide an update regarding the formal assessment of these proposals, including any outcomes or recommendations that resulted and when those recommendations will be implemented.

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

- (1) The 903 service is a joint venture with the Ginninderry developers, created to encourage the use of public transport within the new suburb of Strathnairn from day one of residents moving in. The shuttle service is specifically designed for residents in this area to then connect onto the broader Transport Canberra network including connecting to local school catchments. Transport Canberra is investigating the option of routing the service along Britten-Jones Drive.
- (2) A review was conducted to investigate the proposal to operate services along Britten-Jones Drive. It is not possible to operate services to these locations as Britten-Jones Drive is too narrow to accommodate bus movements and therefore, is not suitable as a regular bus route. Transport Canberra continues to work on strategies to offer alternative transport options to the community who cannot access the regular network.

Animals—dog ownership (Question No 174)

Ms Lawder asked the Minister for Transport and City Services, upon notice, on 1 April 2021:

- (1) Can the Minister advise exactly how many merchandise flyers and responsible dog owner booklets were handed out for the “Own a Dog, Own the Responsibility” campaign and of that number, how many were to members of the public.
- (2) How many viewers did each of the videos involved in the “Own a Dog, Own the Responsibility” campaign receive.

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

- (1) The Domestic Animal Services’ team delivery of the “Own a Dog, Own the Responsibility” campaign included handing out merchandise, flyers and booklets during interactions with the public during patrols and over the counter to members of the public who were rehoming a dog at DAS. In addition, booklets are included in infringement notices that are being posted to current dog owners. Of the 1000 flyers ordered around 40% remain for future engagement activities.

- (2) The Responsible Dog Ownership campaign in January 2020 and February 2020 had strong activity. On the ACT Government Facebook and Instagram accounts, the video social activity performed positively generating 2,058 clicks. There was a reach of 51,568 people in the area. During the campaign the video was viewed in full 7,004 times.

Lake Tuggeranong—water quality (Question No 175)

Ms Lawder asked the Minister for Water, Energy and Emissions Reduction, upon notice, on 1 April 2021:

- (1) How many days has Lake Tuggeranong been closed as a consequence of poor water quality in (a) 2015, (b) 2016, (c) 2017, (d) 2018, (e) 2019 and (f) 2020.
- (2) What data has been collected for Lake Tuggeranong water quality, for example, levels of blue green algae and other bacteria.
- (3) Can the Minister please provide this data by month for each year of (a) 2015, (b) 2016, (c) 2017, (d) 2018, (e) 2019 and (f) 2020.

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

- (1) Lake Tuggeranong has had an advisory status of no primary contact recreation for the following number of days in each year (Table 1).

Table 1. Summary of number of weeks swimming sites on Lake Tuggeranong were advised as no primary contact recreation, 2015 – 2020.

Site	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Tuggeranong Town Park (LT3)	9*	16	27	22	21	11
Nguru (LT5)	7*	11	17	14	16	9
Ngadyung (LT7)	7*	14	18	15	14	11

* Data begins from mid-2015

- (2) The management of the urban lakes primary contact recreation (activities such as swimming, diving and bathing) is prescribed in the *ACT Guidelines for Recreational Water Quality* (2014). <https://www.health.act.gov.au/sites/default/files/2018-09/ACT%20Guidelines%20for%20Recreational%20Water%20Quality.pdf>

Data on bacteria (specifically faecal indicator bacteria, *Enterococcus* spp.) are routinely collected by ACT Health, and data on blue-green algae are collected by Access Canberra, as per the ACT Guidelines for Recreational Water Quality (2014). Based on advice from ACT Health and Access Canberra to TCCS, TCCS provide advisory 'closure' information via their website (https://www.cityservices.act.gov.au/news/news-and-events-items/water_quality_in_our_lakes_and_ponds), and via signage at swimming locations on Lake Tuggeranong. Monitoring of bacteria and blue-green algae by ACT Health and Access Canberra respectively, is undertaken weekly throughout the summer swimming season (October – April).

In addition to the routine water quality monitoring undertaken for bacteria by ACT Health and blue-green algae by Access Canberra, EPSDD also maintain a background surveillance water quality monitoring program for Lake Tuggeranong. This program collects water quality information six to eight times per year to inform the long-term management of Lake Tuggeranong, including data on the phytoplankton community, which is comprised of many groups of aquatic organisms including blue-green algae (called cyanophyta). In addition, EPSDD also supports the Upper Murrumbidgee Waterwatch program. This citizen science program supports volunteers to undertake monthly water quality testing around Lake Tuggeranong and its catchments, as well as undertake bi-annual macroinvertebrate (waterbug) diversity and biennial riparian (streamside) vegetation condition assessments. These data are published in the annual Upper Murrumbidgee Waterwatch CHIP report, released in March each year (<https://www.act.waterwatch.org.au/data/chip-reports>).

(3) The following data for Lake Tuggeranong is provided as spreadsheets:

- **Attachment A:** ACT Health faecal indicator bacteria (*Enterococcus* spp.) coliform counts from 2015 – 2020. This data consists of counts of ‘coliform forming units/100mL’. Three sites in Lake Tuggeranong are monitored weekly during the swimming season. ACT Health publish much of these data via the ACT open data portal: <https://www.data.act.gov.au/>
- **Attachment B:** EPSDD phytoplankton community data 2015 – 2020. These data consist of six to eight grab-samples per year from two locations in Lake Tuggeranong. Data consists of cell counts (number of cells/mL) of major taxonomic groups of algae. Blue-green algae species are present in the group ‘Cyanophyta’
- **Attachment C:** Access Canberra blue-green algae species data for Lake Tuggeranong, 2015 – 2020. This data consists of cell counts (cells/mL) and biovolumes (m³/L) for individual genera of algae, sampled at three locations in Lake Tuggeranong.

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

Questions without notice taken on notice

Environment—urban vegetation

Ms Vassarotti (*in reply to a question by Ms Castley on Tuesday, 30 March 2021*):

- The Question on Notice is premised on a graph presented in the report “*Temperature check: Greening Australia's warming cities*” by Monash University and the Australian Conservation Foundation (ACF) which showed that between 2013 and 2020 the ACT had the largest reduction in urban forest cover of any Local Government Area (LGA) covered in the report. This report indicates a reduction of total urban vegetation in Canberra from 62 per cent in 2013 to 34 percent in 2020.
- This report used data from “*Where will all the trees be? An assessment of urban forest cover and management for Australian cities*” produced by NESP Hub for Clean Air and Urban Landscapes at the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT).

- As this was clearly a concerning outcome for the ACT and one which required further investigation, Mr Braddock MLA's office were able to contact the researchers from RMIT.
- Through these discussions I can confirm that an error was identified in the ACT results reported in the national assessment of urban tree cover. This has arisen due to the characteristics of the ACT, which differs from other Local Government Areas in Australia. This means that reported land-cover average results for the ACT are incorrect, as there was no calculation step in the workflow to allow for the different areas of the sub-regions, an issue not present in any of the other 130 LGAs covered.
- The RMIT researchers are confident that this is an isolated error, affecting the ACT data only and have now recalculated the ACT-wide results published in the report.
- The recalculated results indicate that the combined tree and shrub coverage in the ACT in 2013 was 61.7 per cent, declining to 50.1 per cent in 2016 and increasing again to 67.4 per cent in 2020. Canberra and Hobart are the only capital cities that had more vegetation in 2020 than in 2013.
- Accordingly the ACF and Monash University have updated their report, *"Temperature check: Greening Australia's warming cities"* which is available at the following link:
https://www.acf.org.au/natural_solutions_needed_for_our_overheating_cities
- While it is encouraging to see the tree and shrub cover increase, the methodology used by RMIT for this study may not be appropriate for large Local Government Areas or where there are large non-urban areas such as we have in the ACT.
- The ACT Government uses advanced remote-sensing technology (known as LiDAR) to measure and track Canberra's canopy cover in an accurate and repeatable manner.
- In 2015, overall urban canopy cover was calculated at 19.08% using LiDAR data. The Government has acquired updated 2020 LiDAR data and is currently analysing this using the same methodology to ensure results are comparable. Results are expected to be available in mid-2021.
- For the purposes of the canopy cover target, Canberra's urban footprint is taken to be the ACT urban Divisions.
- The ACT Government is committed to achieving sustainable development outcomes that meet the needs of the growing population, while retaining the values, features and landscape setting that make Canberra unique.
- A range of actions are already underway, such as the Whitlam Display Village demonstration project which trials innovative living infrastructure solutions such as passive irrigation, permeable driveway surfaces and advanced street tree planting.
- The ACT Government is also planting 54,000 trees in Canberra between 2020-21 and 2023-24 to contribute to the 30% canopy cover (or equivalent) target for Canberra's urban footprint.

- As a final note, it is important to note there are many variables that affect canopy cover other than Government-managed removals and plantings over time.

Environment—urban vegetation

Ms Vassarotti (*in reply to a question by Mr Parton on Tuesday, 30 March 2021*):

- The Question on Notice is premised on a graph presented in the report “*Temperature check: Greening Australia's warming cities*” by Monash University and the Australian Conservation Foundation (ACF) which showed that between 2013 and 2020 the ACT had the largest reduction in urban forest cover of any Local Government Area (LGA) covered in the report. This report indicates a reduction of total urban vegetation in Canberra from 62 per cent in 2013 to 34 percent in 2020.
- This report used data from “*Where will all the trees be? An assessment of urban forest cover and management for Australian cities*” produced by NESP Hub for Clean Air and Urban Landscapes at the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT).
- As this was clearly a concerning outcome for the ACT and one which required further investigation, Mr Braddock MLA’s office were able to contact the researchers from RMIT.
- Through these discussions I can confirm that an error was identified in the ACT results reported in the national assessment of urban tree cover. This has arisen due to the characteristics of the ACT, which differs from other Local Government Areas in Australia. This means that reported land-cover average results for the ACT are incorrect, as there was no calculation step in the workflow to allow for the different areas of the sub-regions, an issue not present in any of the other 130 LGAs covered.
- The RMIT researchers are confident that this is an isolated error, affecting the ACT data only and have now recalculated the ACT-wide results published in the report.
- The recalculated results indicate that the combined tree and shrub coverage in the ACT in 2013 was 61.7 per cent, declining to 50.1 per cent in 2016 and increasing again to 67.4 per cent in 2020. Canberra and Hobart are the only capital cities that had more vegetation in 2020 than in 2013.
- Accordingly the ACF and Monash University have updated their report, “*Temperature check: Greening Australia's warming cities*” which is available at the following link:
https://www.acf.org.au/natural_solutions_needed_for_our_overheating_cities
- While it is encouraging to see the tree and shrub cover increase, the methodology used by RMIT for this study may not be appropriate for large Local Government Areas or where there are large non-urban areas such as we have in the ACT.

- The ACT Government uses advanced remote-sensing technology (known as LiDAR) to measure and track Canberra's canopy cover in an accurate and repeatable manner.
- In 2015, overall urban canopy cover was calculated at 19.08% using LiDAR data. The Government has acquired updated 2020 LiDAR data and is currently analysing this using the same methodology to ensure results are comparable. Results are expected to be available in mid-2021.
- For the purposes of the canopy cover target, Canberra's urban footprint is taken to be the ACT urban Divisions.
- The ACT Government is committed to achieving sustainable development outcomes that meet the needs of the growing population, while retaining the values, features and landscape setting that make Canberra unique.
- A range of actions are already underway, such as the Whitlam Display Village demonstration project which trials innovative living infrastructure solutions such as passive irrigation, permeable driveway surfaces and advanced street tree planting.
- The ACT Government is also planting 54,000 trees in Canberra between 2020-21 and 2023-24 to contribute to the 30% canopy cover (or equivalent) target for Canberra's urban footprint.
- As a final note, it is important to note there are many variables that affect canopy cover other than Government-managed removals and plantings over time.

Environment—Big Canberra Battery site

Mr Gentleman (*in reply to supplementary questions by Mr Cain and Mrs Kikkert on Tuesday, 30 March 2021*):

Neoen Australia Pty Ltd (a private proponent) is responsible for their own site investigations and submitted a referral application to the Commonwealth Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment (DAWE) for proposed battery storage at Blocks 1634 and 1635 Belconnen.

During the referral process, DAWE sought comment from the planning and land authority (the authority). In preparing a response to DAWE, the authority sought advice from a number of entities, including the ACT Conservator of Flora and Fauna.

DAWE determined the development to be a controlled action and that it would be assessed under the bilateral assessment agreement between the Commonwealth and ACT governments.

The proposal will now be assessed through a bilateral Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The EIS will be prepared by the proponent and submitted to the authority for assessment. The EIS will provide greater detail on the site being proposed for the battery storage and will be required to identify environmental impacts relating to the proposal. The *Planning and Development Act 2007* requires the proposal to be assessed as submitted and in the location proposed in the application.

The EIS will need to address all impacts relating to Commonwealth matters of national environmental significance and ACT protected matters. For each impact identified, the EIS will need to detail any proposed avoidance, mitigation and as a last resort, offset measures.

Environment—water quality

Mr Rattenbury (*in reply to a supplementary question by Ms Lawder on Tuesday, 30 March 2021*):

The mesocosms in Lake Tuggeranong were used over the summers of 2018-19 and 2019-20 to conduct experiments into 1) a potential treatment—‘Phoslock’—for locking phosphorus in the lakebed so it does not pollute the overlying water column and 2) agents to diminish algal concentrations, clearing blue-green algal blooms once they arise.

This work has been completed with the findings that Phoslock combined with hydrogen peroxide (as an algicide) show good potential as treatments for algal blooms in Lake Tuggeranong. However, these agents will only be effective once the amounts of pollution coming from the catchment are reduced to manageable levels.

The mesocosms were left in the lake for possible experiments in the summer of 2020-21, however, it was decided to refocus research work on investigating the sources of pollution in the Tuggeranong catchment.

Blue-green algal concentrations have been too high since that decision was made for divers to remove the mesocosms. The blooms should soon dissipate as temperatures drop this autumn, and the mesocosms will then be removed.

Research into Phoslock and algal control agents will resume once the predominant sources of phosphorus pollution, which are coming from the catchment, have begun to be mitigated.

Energy—solar

Mr Barr (*in reply to a supplementary question by Ms Lee on Tuesday, 30 March 2021*):

The Sustainable Household Scheme (\$150 million zero interest loan scheme) has been designed to support households and not-for-profit organisations to purchase a range of products in recognition of their different individual energy needs. These include swapping out gas appliances, household batteries and electric vehicles.

It is difficult to make a precise assessment of how the scheme will affect the level of electricity exported by rooftop solar photovoltaic (PV) as each of the eligible products have different implications for the electricity grid. Some products will export energy, others will draw energy, and some will do both.

The \$15,000 upper loan limit was selected to allow households to finance combined packages of rooftop solar with household batteries. Household batteries reduce network congestion as they store energy during times of peak generation rather than exporting.

Consistent with this scheme design, of those registrations of interest who are interested in solar PV 68% are interested in a combined PV and battery system. A number of registrations were only interested in a household battery (13%), most likely to add to their existing solar PV system.

There are currently around 28,000 small and medium solar PV installations in the ACT (2019-20 Annual FiT Report). On the basis of the current registrations, the net increase in 'solar only' systems would equal around a 6% increase in solar PV over the life of the scheme. This increase is not anticipated to have a significant impact on network congestion given its size, though this would depend on factors such as where the new solar PV systems are geographically located.

The ACT Government is also taking steps to support grid stability and reliability for the ACT as a whole. The delivery of at least 250MW of new 'large-scale' battery storage distributed across the ACT (the Big Canberra Battery) will support grid reliability and reduce congestion. A market sounding exercise is currently underway for industry to contribute ideas and innovative solutions for how the Big Canberra Battery ecosystem could be built in the ACT.

The Big Canberra Battery may include a small number of large-scale batteries (50 MW+), as well as a larger number of smaller, 'precinct-scale' batteries. Batteries could be connected to the ACT's transmission or distribution network, located at government sites such as bus depots or co-located with large-scale renewable generation in the ACT.

The delivery of other ACT climate commitments (e.g., supporting all-electric infill developments) should result in an increase demand for electricity across the network, and therefore a reduced likelihood of increased solar capacity leading to congestion.

The ACT will monitor the impact of both the scheme and implementation of other climate action commitments on grid stability and reliability throughout the 10th Legislative Assembly.

Alexander Maconochie Centre—oversight committee

Mr Gentleman (*in reply to a question and a supplementary question by Mrs Jones on Wednesday, 31 March 2021*):

As stated in my response to Estimates Question on Notice 118 from the Standing Committee on Justice and Community Safety, Ms Nixon will be paid \$2,000 per day for approximately one day per fortnight in her role as Independent Chairperson of the Blueprint for Change Oversight Committee (the Committee).

I am advised that this estimate is provided as an average over time as it is likely that more intensive work will be required at the initial stages of the work of the Committee and is dependent on actual hours worked.

In addition, travel- expenses are provided for consistent with the *Justice and Community Safety Travel and Related Services Guidelines*.

I am further advised that these terms are commensurate with comparable roles.

Ms Nixon was appointed as Independent Chairperson on 17 February 2021. As at 31 March 2021, Ms Nixon has worked approximately two full days on matters relating the Committee, with activities including (but not limited to):

- Reviewing reports and associated documentation;
- Obtaining and providing briefings in preparation for the Committee meeting;
- Visiting relevant sites (and interacting with staff); and
- Chairing the inaugural Committee meeting on 24 March 2021.

As at 31 March 2021, Ms Nixon has not yet been paid.

Parking—Greenway

Mr Steel (*in reply to a question by Ms Lawder on Wednesday, 31 March 2021*):

Transport Canberra and City Services (TCCS) has responded to complaints from residents which related to illegal parking by construction workers and non-compliance with temporary traffic management plans.

Parking enforcement and temporary traffic management compliance inspections are ongoing, and construction workers have been instructed to use nearby all-day paid parking areas to help free up short-term parking spaces near the development.

Some temporary disruption is unavoidable for developments of this scale. However, TCCS will continue to work closely with Access Canberra, WorkSafe and the developer to minimise inconvenience and to ensure safety.

Regarding traffic and parking planning, a Transport Impact Assessment (TIA) was required to support the development application for this site. TIA involves compiling and analysing information on the impacts that a specific development proposal is likely to have on the operation of roads and transport networks.

Crime—antisocial behaviour

Mr Gentleman (*in reply to a question and a supplementary question by Mr Hanson on Wednesday, 31 March 2021*):

Canberra is a safe city with low crime rates.

We are ensuring that the growing Molonglo region is adequately served by police and emergency services. I appreciate resident concerns and we are working with ACT Policing to respond. However, crime reports in this part of Canberra are decreasing.

For example:

- Property damage is down. So far in the 2020-21 financial year, there have been 102 reports in Weston Creek and 68 in Molonglo. This compares to 239 in Weston Creek and 88 in Molonglo last financial year.
- Burglaries are tracking considerably lower than the 2019-20 figure of 173 in Weston Creek and 84 in Molonglo. As of 7 April 2021, there have been 77 in Weston Creek and 42 reported burglaries in Molonglo.
- There were 104 motor vehicle thefts in Weston Creek and 37 in Molonglo last year, and there have been 53 in Weston Creek and 23 in Molonglo so far this year.

The Officer-in-Charge of Woden Police Station recently addressed the Weston Creek Community Council and the Denman Prospect Community Action Group to discuss concerns in the community, and late last year, the Weston Creek community were advised that ACT Policing had made arrests relating to burglaries in the area.

Education, disruption, prevention, diversion, and strong community engagement are central to ensuring a strong policing service into the future. Since the easing of COVID-19 restrictions, ACT Policing has begun to increase its in-person engagement opportunities.

In the 2019-20 Budget, the ACT Government provided \$33.9 million to enable ACT Policing to transition to a community-focused, proactive model of policing under the Police Services Model. With this funding, ACT Policing has recruited and developed Operationalised Intelligence and Community focused proactive teams, marking the first step towards this new police service. A Strategic Accommodation Plan is also in development to consider community policing needs into the future.

I would encourage members of the community to report any anti-social behaviour to Crime Stoppers on 1800 333 000 or online via <https://www.crimestoppersact.com.au>.

ACT Policing plans to continue these engagements and encourages people in the community to attend and speak to officers directly. Further information about ACT Policing's upcoming community events is available through: <https://www.police.act.gov.au/connect-us/community-events-and-engagement>.