



# Debates

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## Thursday, 3 June 2021

Planning—district level (Ministerial statement) .....	1665
Transport—Molonglo Valley (Ministerial statement) .....	1667
Agriculture—food (Ministerial statement) .....	1674
Health—mental health (Ministerial statement) .....	1676
Planning—schools (Ministerial statement) .....	1681
Loose-fill Asbestos Legislation Amendment Bill 2021 .....	1685
Estimates 2021-2022—Select Committee .....	1687
Administration and Procedure—Standing Committee .....	1691
Executive business—precedence .....	1693
Courts and Other Justice Legislation Amendment Bill 2021 .....	1693
Questions without notice:	
Planning—Coombs .....	1698
Planning—Woden town centre .....	1698
Planning—Woden town centre transport .....	1699
Business—ChooseCBR .....	1700
Roads—Boboyan Road .....	1702
Health—dental .....	1703
Government—land sales .....	1705
Planning—Woden town centre .....	1706
Planning—green waste .....	1707
Planning—schools .....	1708
Municipal services—Tuggeranong dog park .....	1709
Roads—Well Station Drive .....	1711
Arts—Gungahlin .....	1713
Planning—green waste .....	1714
Industrial relations—work health and safety .....	1716
Canberra—proposed national park city .....	1717
Children and young people—out of home care education .....	1735
Adjournment:	
Murrumbidgee electorate—Weston Creek .....	1749
Arts—Stronger Than Fiction film festival .....	1750
COVID-19—racism and abuse against Asian Australians .....	1752
National Reconciliation Week—events .....	1753
Waste—green waste .....	1755
Yerrabi electorate—community engagement .....	1755
World Elder Abuse Awareness Day .....	1756
Brindabella electorate—community engagement .....	1757
Answers to questions:	
ACT Policing—staffing (Question No 180) .....	1759
Parks and reserves—budget (Question No 184) .....	1761
Sport—grounds maintenance (Question No 189) .....	1762
Trees—urban canopy (Question No 190) .....	1763
Roads—pedestrian crossings (Question No 192) .....	1764
Housing ACT—maintenance (Question No 194) .....	1765
Racing—policy responsibilities (Question No 195) .....	1772
Housing—Justice Housing Program (Question No 198) .....	1772

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders—Yarrabi Bamirr program (Question No 199) .....	1773
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders—legal services (Question No 200) .....	1775
Municipal services—resident parking permits (Question No 202) .....	1776
Parking—licence plate recognition technology (Question No 205).....	1777
Active travel—Lawson (Question No 207).....	1778
Transport—flexible bus service (Question No 208).....	1778
Development—Hawker (Question No 210).....	1779
Alexander Maconochie Centre—remandees (Question No 212).....	1780
Child and youth protection services—government response (Question No 213) .....	1781
Child and youth protection services—review (Question No 214) .....	1782
Office for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs—staffing (Question No 215) .....	1782
Children and young people—pregnancy during residential care (Question No 216) .....	1783
Youth—pregnancy and maternal health services (Question No 217) .....	1785
Children and young people—adoptions (Question No 218) .....	1787
Domestic and family violence—Family Safety Hub (Question No 219).....	1787
Domestic and family violence—safer families levy (Question No 220).....	1789
Alexander Maconochie Centre—staff mental health services (Question No 223) .....	1792
Health justice partnerships—funding (Question No 224) .....	1794
Alexander Maconochie Centre—detainee searches (Question No 225) .....	1795
Domestic and family violence—online training (Question No 226).....	1796
Access Canberra—numberplates (Question No 230).....	1796
Animals—dogs (Question No 231) .....	1797
Symphony Park complex—complaints (Question No 235) .....	1797
Environment—water projects (Question No 240).....	1798
Municipal services—playgrounds (Question No 241) .....	1799
Municipal services—neonicotinoid use (Question No 245).....	1800
Waste—green waste service relocation (Question No 250).....	1800
Municipal services—play spaces (Question No 251).....	1802
Waste—green waste services (Question No 254) .....	1802
Alexander Maconochie Centre—methadone use (Question No 275) .....	1803
Questions without notice taken on notice:	
Planning—vacant shops .....	1803
Roads—traffic management .....	1803
Municipal services—tree removal.....	1804
Municipal services—tree removal.....	1804
Municipal services—glyphosates use.....	1805
Environment—Climate Change Action Plan .....	1805

**Thursday, 3 June 2021**

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

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

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

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

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

### **Planning—district level Ministerial statement**

**MR GENTLEMAN** (Brindabella—Manager of Government Business, Minister for Corrections, Minister for Industrial Relations and Workplace Safety, Minister for Planning and Land Management and Minister for Police and Emergency Services) (10.01): District planning is a new element of the planning system that is being developed as part of the ACT planning system review and reform project. It is one of the ways for us to address what we have already heard about the ACT planning system and deliver improvements.

Our city's population is expected to continue to grow. It is anticipated that we will have a population of 589,000 by 2041. Our new Canberrans will need to live somewhere, so we need to plan for their new suburbs and places of work, pleasure, schooling and recreation. The planning strategy already establishes locations where this growth may take place, but there will be other opportunities. All of Canberra's districts will need to accommodate some of this growth and change. Every area will have different rates of growth and different community needs. We are asking key questions about Canberra's future like, "Where will people live and work?" and "Where will they access services and facilities?" We are reaching out to the community to hear answers directly from Canberrans.

We need a good planning system to help us facilitate this change and growth across our city. We will need a system that is clear, easy to use and understand. We will also need a system that encourages improved design, not just for buildings but also for open spaces. Throughout 2019 and into 2020 we have been reviewing the ACT planning system. We have benchmarked against other planning systems, both within Australia and internationally. We have listened to the community, and we have looked at technical requirements. The outcomes of the review are outlined in a series of policy direction papers that I released in November 2020.

I have heard, and the government has heard, from many Canberrans about what they want their local area to look like. District planning will involve planning for what we have established as Canberra's eight urban districts: Belconnen, Gungahlin, north Canberra, south Canberra, Molonglo Valley, Weston Creek, Woden Valley and Tuggeranong. This will be planning that fits between the broad metropolitan planning strategy and the smaller site-specific Territory Plan—a special scale that is currently missing in our planning system but is critical on many levels.

District planning is proposed as a way to better link the planning strategy and the Territory Plan, to increase the importance of all our government's long-term strategies. District planning will include a strategic plan, like a map, to show a desired future direction for the development of an area. It will also include descriptions of desired future outcomes for the district, which will be developed from community input. As populations in existing areas grow with urban infill, we will continue to ensure that we have right infrastructure for changing demographics. We have demonstrated this with our investments in schools, health and community facilities in the inner north and the inner south.

Over the last two years we have listened to what Canberrans love about their local areas. Throughout June we will be visiting each of the eight districts across Canberra to listen to residents. We want to better understand what Canberrans value about their local area and what is important to capture in this level of planning. This feedback will be used to develop future outcomes descriptions for each district. We want to make sure future planning decisions reflect what is important to the people living in them. This will help prioritise investments in vital infrastructure, not just roads and water, but also schools, parks and community facilities.

District planning is being undertaken in stages. We are undertaking engagement on district planning throughout June. We will seek community and industry input on what locals value and what might change. We will report back to the participants in late 2021 with feedback on the workshops and how they have informed our district planning. Then we will develop the eight strategic district plans and establish the best mechanisms for incorporating them into the new planning act. Work will progress on district planning in 2022 to fit with a reformed Territory Plan and align with an updated planning strategy, which is likely due in 2023.

Madam Speaker, this is an important new level of planning that builds on our current system. It will allow us to better inform land use planning and development decisions. We look forward to continuing to engage with the Canberra community on this important work.

I present the following paper:

District level planning—Ministerial statement, 3 June 2021.

I move:

That the Assembly take note of the paper.

**MS CLAY** (Ginninderra) (10.07): I am pleased to hear Minister Gentleman's ministerial statement on district planning, and I thank the directorate for its hard work on this planning review. Our city does continue to grow, and we have the challenge of accommodating our growing population with affordable housing that is close to public transport, health services, schools and community facilities without drastically expanding our urban footprint. We need to make sure we do not keep sprawling and that we maintain our status as the bush capital.

This planning review is a unique opportunity to provide inputs into the way we want our city to be planned. It is great to learn that our planning system is being benchmarked against other planning systems and that feedback from the community over the years is being listened to. As elements such as district planning are being considered, this is an important time to not only disseminate information but to welcome and listen to the views of community. Because district planning is not yet a feature of our planning system, it is all the more important that extra efforts are made to ensure community consultation is done in the right way—talking to the broader community but also specialist community organisations who, by virtue of their interest in their local community—the environment, planning and transport—have so much to contribute to our ACT planning.

As I mentioned in my question to Minister Gentleman yesterday, this is a great opportunity to walk the community through this process, and good informed consultation is required. I was really happy to hear that we are moving in that direction and that we are making a lot of changes. If there is overwhelming interest in community consultations on district planning, I really look forward to seeing some reports so that we can all understand exactly what our community has said. We do not get this opportunity very often, and it is really important that people have their say and that they get a chance to listen to each other and hear what everybody is saying as well. We want to continue to build our Canberra community by consulting with them on these issues that impact them now and in future. I am really looking forward to hearing more about the planning review as it continues to roll out.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

## **Transport—Molonglo Valley Ministerial statement**

**MR STEEL** (Murrumbidgee—Minister for Skills, Minister for Transport and City Services and Special Minister of State) (10.09): I am pleased to take this opportunity to update the Assembly on the transport investments the ACT government is making in the Molonglo Valley. The Molonglo Valley's transport connections have been the subject of substantial preparation and planning now for well over a decade. This planning has involved the establishment of strategic transport corridors, as committed to in the ACT government's planning strategy. These corridors connect the residents of new suburbs to town centres and regions where they will work, go to school and engage with the local community.

When we build roads, we are establishing the backbone upon which we deliver all forms of transport for Canberrans. Our roads connect our new suburbs to the rest of

our city, they provide routes for our buses to drive along, they provide the direct connections between key locations for our shared path network to follow and they are increasingly used by Canberra's expanding zero emissions vehicle fleet. Without these strategic transport corridors, residents in our new communities would be disconnected from the services and facilities that all other Canberrans enjoy and be isolated from different transport options that help make Canberra livable.

In the Molonglo Valley, planning of our strategic transport corridors has occurred in stages as the region has developed. With stage 1 already on-line, stage 2 under development as we speak and stage 3 progressing through the planning stage, we are ensuring our road network supports population growth. We delivered the duplication of the Cotter Road in 2018 and we opened the first two sections of John Gorton Drive in the middle of last year. In January last year, we also changed the line marking on Adelaide Avenue to create a dedicated on-ramp onto the Cotter Road, preventing queuing of traffic coming out of the Molonglo Valley.

We also finished upgrades to the north Weston park and ride in October last year, providing over 40 new car spaces to help residents connect with our rapid bus network. The strategic transport model tells us that, as this population continues to grow, there will be additional pressure on the transport network. Particular roads we know will face pressure include William Hovell Drive, Tuggeranong Parkway and Parkes Way. That is why the ACT government is investing in these roads today.

The ACT government has a major investment in the pipeline for road upgrades around Molonglo and Weston Creek, which are currently at either the feasibility, concept design or detailed design stages, with construction to follow. These investments are made on evidence, with the communities' needs at the forefront of our thinking.

The most significant project currently underway in the Molonglo Valley is the completion of John Gorton Drive and the construction of a new bridge over the Molonglo River. The project is progressing well, with the development application approved in February this year. In addition to providing carriageway for private vehicles, the bridge will be future-proofed for light rail and public transport priority is currently under investigation for the intersections along John Gorton Drive. As a key transport corridor, the bridge will also include both on-road shared and an off-road shared path. We look forward to commencing the process to procure a design and construction contractor later this year, with the intent of undertaking detailed design work next year and commencing construction in mid-2023 ahead of the bridge opening as early as 2025.

We are also progressing work on the duplication of 4.5 kilometres worth of carriageway along William Hovell Drive, connecting the Molonglo Valley to Belconnen. Detailed design is nearing completion, which will take the project to a shovel-ready state ahead of construction commencing next year. In Weston Creek, feasibility studies are about to commence for the intersections of Streeton Drive with Namatjira Drive and Heysen Street to make getting in and out of the group centre safer.

The ACT government will also shortly be commencing a study to determine future improvements to Canberra's south-west corridor, which will consider things like capacity upgrades on the Tuggeranong Parkway. We are also examining improvements that can be undertaken further up the road network along Parkes Way, where the majority of traffic heading from the Molonglo Valley to the city will be evident.

Of course, the key to ensuring population does not lead to excess congestion on our roads is to ensure Canberrans are looking to public transport as their first option to get around. The early residents of the Molonglo Valley were doing a great job at this, with patronage on Molonglo's R10 so strong in 2019 that Transport Canberra increased the frequency of this route in our last network update from every 20 minutes to every 15 minutes, seeing an additional 12 services running each weekday.

A lot of things changed in 2020. As members have heard me talk about before, the challenges brought by COVID-19 have had an enormous impact on the way that people choose to move around our city. At the height of the public health restrictions in April 2020, public transport patronage fell to a staggering 14 per cent across the ACT. As most work and education was done from home, traffic volumes also dropped to as low as 60 per cent of pre-pandemic levels across the Molonglo Valley.

Whilst we have resumed a lot of our normal habits since then, public transport patronage is still low, which means more Canberrans than ever are using their cars. As of April this year, in some cases traffic volumes in the Molonglo Valley were as much as 60 per cent higher than pre-pandemic levels. On the other hand, patronage for Molonglo's rapid bus, the R10, is still only at around 85 per cent of pre-pandemic levels. This is despite there being more residents and more buses running than before the pandemic. Unfortunately, this shows that new residents are choosing to use their cars to get around, which is leading to increased congestion on our roads.

The ACT government has been continuously monitoring traffic in the growing Molonglo region and listening to feedback from the Molonglo community. This includes monitoring traffic congestion and the extent of any delays experienced by road users, as well as testing out how traffic movements can be improved as the region continues to grow. For example, we have acknowledged feedback from the community around recent congestion coming out of the Molonglo Valley onto John Gorton Drive and the Cotter Road. As an immediate response, the government has amended the traffic signal timings at the Cotter Road, Dargie Street and Kirkpatrick Street intersection. This has already led to improvements with the traffic flows, particularly in the morning peak. We will continue to monitor and adjust the signal timings to optimise traffic movements from Weston and Molonglo. We are also currently investigating further measures to improve the operation of the signalised intersection.

While the health advice will always remain paramount, the ACT government is conscious of the need to get Canberrans back onto public transport. Public transport needs to play a key role in managing the challenges that any growing city faces and avoiding the congestion and urban sprawl that we are all too familiar with in other places around the world.

Last month, I hosted a public transport recovery forum and I spoke about that topic in the Assembly during the last sitting. Residents of the Molonglo Valley know the importance of returning to their public transport habits as soon as possible, and the government will continue to support them to do this.

Encouraging the use of active travel is another important pillar of our investments in the Molonglo Valley. As identified in the ACT transport strategy 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic was great for getting Canberrans walking and cycling, with a sharp increase in the number of people choosing active travel to commute around the city. The ACT government has been supporting this by fast-tracking footpath and cycle path network upgrades since the beginning of last year.

Active travel will play a key role for the residents of Molonglo. Our planning and community consultation processes have identified the key walking and cycling connections needed to serve the Molonglo Valley and to connect residents to the wider active travel network. Key active travel connections for the Molonglo Valley include links to the city, Woden, Weston Creek and Belconnen, as well as to Lake Burley Griffin, the Arboretum and Stromlo Forest Park. These links will be delivered in stages through a coordinated program of suburban development, major road projects and dedicated active travel works.

New shared paths will be delivered as part of major road projects, including the John Gorton Drive bridge and the William Hovell Drive duplication. The future Molonglo east-west arterial project would also include a city to Molonglo cycle route, providing a direct cycle route to the city. The Suburban Land Agency is also completing the Molonglo River trail. A new bridge at north Weston near Klos Crossing will connect to Harold White Avenue in Coombs to the Molonglo River trail and make it easier and more convenient for people to enjoy the river corridor and reach both the lake and the city.

We are working to deliver a transport network that gives people in the Molonglo Valley and across Canberra a genuine choice and flexibility about how they move around. That means well-thought-out strategic transport corridors which can connect our growing communities and town centres by car and public transport alongside well-integrated, safe and convenient active travel infrastructure.

The government continues to invest in connecting the Molonglo region with the benefit of past and current transport and land use planning. Those strategies include the planning strategy, the transport strategy, the infrastructure plan, the Molonglo Valley staging plan, the transport for Canberra plan 2012-31, planning design frameworks for Molonglo stages 1, 2 and 3, the Coombs and Wright concept plan, the north Weston concept plan, the Weston Group Centre master plan and the Molonglo Valley independent review of planning, development and built form.

In addition to that planning work, the government responds to the changing and evolving needs of the community over time. We continue to use the strategic transport model to predict future travel demand across the network by taking into account land use projections like population growth, employment, shopping precincts and school

enrolments, as well as proposed transport network improvements and future transport costs.

As we know, the Molonglo Valley and the surrounding region are growing rapidly. By the end of 2031, we expect that close to 37,000 residents will live there, up from fewer than 5,000 in 2016. We have been working hard to keep ahead of that population growth through our investments in new roads and public transport. We will continue to strategically invest in our transport network today because we know that this will be essential to keeping our city moving and ensuring people in the Molonglo Valley enjoy the same quality of life as those in other parts of Canberra as this new region progressively takes shape.

We look forward to continuing to work with the residents in Molonglo to keep them moving and connected and ensure that Molonglo grows into a vibrant and sustainable place to live. I present the following paper:

Transport investment in the Molonglo Valley—Ministerial statement, 3 June 2021.

I move:

That the Assembly take note of the paper.

**MS CLAY** (Ginninderra) (10.20): Molonglo Valley will be one of Canberra's high-density regions. If we build our transport infrastructure right, we will need fewer cars and we will get more cycling, walking and public transport use. I welcome Minister Steel's statement today and his recent statements in his public forum. I am pleased to see he is placing active and public transport so high on his list of priorities. I also welcome his separate announcement today about leasing electric buses. It is great to see his ongoing support for climate-friendly transport and it is really important that we get the details of our investment right.

There are already congestion problems for residents in Molonglo and Weston Creek. We all understand that you cannot fix congestion by building more roads. More roads simply fill up with more cars. Cities choke on cars, and Canberra is a rapidly growing city. We need to fix our congestion by increasing public and active transport. There are lots of ways to do this. For active transport, we need separated corridors through Molonglo and throughout all of our regions. We need separated shared paths that provide a continuous route for all of the major roads we are building and extending, like William Hovell, John Gorton and Parkes Way.

We need to spend 20 per cent of our roads budget on building and maintaining our shared paths and footpaths. We need to make sure that we are counting that 20 per cent properly to ensure we are getting new infrastructure that is dedicated and built primarily for active travel not simply getting new accounting. We need to ensure our public transport network takes people to where they need to go. We need stops close enough to people's homes so they can walk there. We need regular services, cross-town connections and connections to our group centres and suburbs.

Our bus network needs to cater for those who are not just commuting between Civic and the suburbs in peak hour. It must also cater for those who are taking local trips outside of peak hours. We need to look after parents, seniors, people with disabilities, shift workers, students and people of all abilities at all stages of life and in all different types of employment. We also need to give public and active transport traffic priority to make it easy and convenient for people to use.

Transport habits are formed when people first plan their home purchase and move in. In our new suburbs it is incredibly important to offer the best services as soon as possible. People form their habits early, and they need to know they can rely on these services. If they do not feel confident, they will buy a car or a second car, and they may not come back to public and active transport at all after that.

Our connections between Belconnen, Molonglo, Weston Creek and Woden will become incredibly important as the development of this region makes a more connected urban area between these town centres. We need to invest for the future now. Building public and active transport infrastructure and getting the best grade-separated shared path infrastructure is incredibly important. We cannot lose sight of that while building more multi-lane roads. We are looking forward to the ACT government consulting with user groups, residents and stakeholders on how we can improve our transport plan in the Molonglo Valley and all through Canberra.

**DR PATERSON** (Murrumbidgee) (10.24): As a local member for Murrumbidgee, I am always interested in matters affecting my local constituents. Molonglo Valley is the ACT's newest greenfield development, with a population that is consistently growing and will continue to grow considerably over the next decade. As with any of our urban access areas across the ACT, the travel and transport patterns and needs of the community are diverse and complex. Due to the growing nature of the Molonglo Valley population, transport issues and initiatives affecting Molonglo Valley residents also affect those in the neighbouring areas of Weston Creek and elsewhere.

I thank Minister Steel for the work he is doing, together with the excellent work across the ACT government and within the Transport Canberra directorate, to address traffic issues and congestion in the Molonglo region. Following recent traffic monitoring and surveys, there have been a number of improvements implemented, including changes to the sequencing of traffic lights on Cotter Road. Constituent feedback about these changes has been very positive, with a noticeable reduction in congestion in the morning peak hour.

I look forward to the government's large-scale and major project infrastructure outcomes that will continue to address the needs of the growing population in the Molonglo Valley. Some of these works, as noted by Minister Steel, include the bridge over the Molonglo River and the extension and completion of John Gorton Drive. Connecting the Molonglo Valley to Belconnen through the duplication of sections of William Hovell Drive will help relieve pressure from Cotter Road and the Tuggeranong Parkway.

The incorporation of on-road cycleways and off-road shared paths as part of major road upgrade projects is also welcomed. It is also great to see a range of other investments being made by the ACT government for public transport and active travel initiatives. The commitment to construct the missing network gap connecting the Molonglo Valley to the shared path near the RSPCA in Weston Creek is a significant step.

I note Minister Steel's comments and the commitment of the ACT government, having fast-tracked a number of footpath and cycle path network upgrades since the start of 2020, largely in response to the number of people who took up or increased walking and cycling during the pandemic. The introduction of light rail to Canberra's southern suburbs will have a significant positive impact for the communities of Woden Valley and the people of Murrumbidgee more broadly.

Good connections and integrations between all forms of public transport—buses and light rail—as well as first-last mile solutions for people walking and people riding bikes, together with continued and expanded park and ride opportunities, will be critical in contributing to Canberra's net zero greenhouse gas emissions strategy.

The transport sector accounts for 62 per cent of carbon emissions in the ACT and is the largest contributing sector. This figure is dominated by private vehicle use. I welcome the ACT Conservation Council's "make the move" campaign launched last week by Minister Rattenbury, in conjunction with the Canberra Environment Centre. For anyone who is not yet familiar with this program, I encourage you to visit the "make the move" website and review the array of information to assist individuals, families and workplaces to change their habits to embrace walking and cycling as regular modes of travel.

Canberrans make over a million trips every day. In the ACT, around 30 per cent of trips made are either less than five kilometres or between five and 10 kilometres. These are distances that are easily walkable or rideable. Shifting even a small proportion of those short distance commuters to active modes of travel would increase the capacity of Canberra's transport network.

Often, the hardest part for individuals is making the change and creating a new habit. "Make the move" supports people and workplaces to do just that. Transport is an issue of health and wellbeing. The amount of time we each spend in our daily commutes to work and also in other everyday activities and errands contributes to our balance or juggle of life, work, family, social activities and recreation.

For most of us, getting from A to B is a means to an end, and the less time we spend on the road, particularly in private cars, the better. I once heard a phrase, "You're not stuck in a traffic jam; you are the traffic jam." There is a lot of truth in that statement, and it is a very powerful one. From this perspective, and that of a work-life balance for our community, I am very encouraged by the transport recovery plan's reference to flexible working arrangements. There are some really important and interesting intersects between transport solutions and flexible working arrangements to bring about a range of benefits for individuals, large-scale workplaces, local businesses, the economy and the environment.

I look forward to working closely with Minister Steel and other colleagues in the coming years to undertake further work in this space, ultimately working to remove more cars from our roads and getting people onto public transport, while developing robust, comprehensive solutions to a range of transport matters that address the needs of all Canberrans.

We need flexible, reliable and sustainable options for Canberrans to move around our city. Those options need to be affordable, easy and convenient. They need to be socially equitable and account for all sectors of our community. I thank Minister Steel and the staff and executive of Transport Canberra for their work to understand these important community issues around transport and to develop holistic, long-term solutions for the benefit of our community and the environment.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

### **Agriculture—food Ministerial statement**

**MS VASSAROTTI** (Kurrajong—Minister for the Environment, Minister for Heritage, Minister for Homelessness and Housing Services and Minister for Sustainable Building and Construction) (10.30): I was delighted to give the opening address at the second Food in the Capital event in mid-May and attend the delicious local dinner. This key event highlights the incredible food grown, processed, and cooked in our region, the passionate people behind it, and the promise of how much more we can achieve for the ACT by working to transform our food system.

Food is a necessity, a fundamental human right, and one of life's great pleasures. Food sustains life, it shapes culture, tradition, customs and beliefs, and brings our community together. We want to ensure that every Canberran has access to healthy, affordable, locally grown and sustainably produced food. We want to support and grow our local food economy.

To fulfil this promise, we need a new vision for our territory's approach to our agriculture and food systems with a goal of establishing a food bowl for Canberra. To this end, I will be reviewing the ACT's agriculture policy. Working closely with my ministerial colleagues with carriage on land management, water, waste and climate action in the coming months, I will develop and release a draft policy for public consultation that lays out a clear vision of the settings we need to grow a food bowl for Canberra and transform our food system.

Establishing a Canberra food bowl is a critical piece of the puzzle as we re-envisage our city and territory to be resilient, sustainable and prosperous in a climate changing world. We need local food to build our resilience. It is estimated that over 90 per cent of our fresh leafy green and fruit supply comes from Sydney. That is a vulnerability for our community. As we prepare for more frequent and severe natural disasters, history tells us that it is important we reduce our reliance on external fresh food supply.

When Brisbane was hit by the major floods a decade ago, it was just three days from running out of food. We saw last year how severe fires can affect our transport routes, and all of us have felt the pain of higher fresh food prices during times of major disaster when it affects food supply. This reliance on Sydney also speaks of a lost opportunity for our current and future farmers, food manufacturers and retailers. Growing a food bowl in Canberra is the way to seize that opportunity, and we are fortunate that we are blessed with all the right ingredients to create one. We can grow more food, social connection and equity, community happiness, jobs and prosperity.

Our city is surrounded by good agricultural land, close to key centres. Some 15 per cent of agricultural land in our territory enjoys strong environmental stewardship from our farmers, thanks to them working in partnership with the Environment Directorate and Parks and Conservation and with each other and the wider community through our catchment and land care groups.

Our farmers are often overlooked in our focus on our city, but they are so important to our food future. Despite our love of farmers markets, there is much more we can do to connect local growers and local eaters. Over the last six months I have had the absolute pleasure of meeting with many of our region's rural famers. What they need is security of tenure in return for their stewardship so they can invest with confidence and a new agricultural policy that spells out the opportunity and support we can offer to ensure they are the foundation of our food bowl. This would allow our rural leaseholders to explore new local supply and value-adding opportunities. They can also strengthen their vital part in our response to climate change by building healthy soil, storing more carbon and helping reduce the impacts of flooding.

A plan for the Canberra food bowl does not just benefit our rural farmers; it also is a benefit the budding urban agriculturalists and support industries in our city. Canberra is full of green spaces and green thumbs, and we already see innovative backyard businesses growing and thriving, and there could be so much more. I have seen this through visiting community gardens and growers and seeing the enthusiasm for our grants programs that have been helping them expand.

Our city can provide some of the key resources to grow a Canberra food bowl, and these are resources that currently go to waste. As we roll out collection of household organic waste, we have the opportunity to turn it into tonnes of compost to build the soil and the food enterprises that need it, from community gardens to market gardens and more.

In the same way, we can explore reusing wastewater to drought-proof our local agriculture and get a much greater return than just sending treated sewage one way down the pipe. The jobs and investment we can grow from local food is exciting, but we must ensure that at the heart of any new vision for our food system is food justice—that is, the right to healthy affordable food for all. We will have failed if we build a food bowl that is only good for producing high-end, expensive gourmet food, but does nothing to ensure healthy fresh food is accessible and affordable for every Canberran.

How we grow our food bowl will also be critical to the number of opportunities we can create. With careful planning and community input we can open up the space for food and farming cooperatives, working with our education institutions to create school gardens, training courses and utilise their commercial kitchens to support start-up food processing. We can boost growing in your backyard or in community lots, kick start local food processing and manufacturing, and support social enterprises and volunteering.

We can learn from other leading cities around the world, such as Seattle, Toronto, Barcelona and Melbourne, who have invested in urban agriculture and protecting agricultural land in their surrounds as part of building local food security. In doing so they have created jobs, local manufacturing, new businesses, reduced climate emissions and connected their population to local growers for cheaper, healthier food.

Local food systems create meaningful work, social enterprises and tourism, and local pride. The bush capital would make for a wonderful food brand. These outcomes mesh beautifully with our new wellbeing framework for the ACT. You can see how transforming our food system can build our individual and collective health, our living standards, social connection, identity and belonging, our economy and help prepare us for climate change while reducing our impact.

Canberra has an incredible opportunity. We can inspire and facilitate a sustainable food and agriculture system for the ACT and surrounding region. We are blessed with many innovative thinkers and doers in our city who are ready to work with us. I want Canberrans to get excited with me about the vision of a food bowl for Canberra. I look forward to releasing a draft agriculture policy to help make that vision a reality, together.

I present the following paper:

Growing a food bowl for Canberra—Ministerial statement, 3 June 2021.

I move:

That the Assembly take note of the paper.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

## **Health—mental health**

### **Ministerial statement**

**MS DAVIDSON** (Murrumbidgee—Assistant Minister for Seniors, Veterans, Families and Community Services, Minister for Disability, Minister for Justice Health and Minister for Mental Health) (10.39): It has been one year since this Assembly passed a resolution on 4 June 2020 regarding the mental health service system. The ACT government has had several significant mental health achievements since the resolution, and I am pleased to be able to update the Assembly on progress and improvements on mental health this past year.

The mental health of Canberrans is a priority for this government, especially as the community continues to experience the compounding effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. When the Assembly passed this resolution in June 2020, COVID was still a fairly new crisis. Now as we emerge from the pandemic we can plan with a recovery focus, and the government is committed to ensuring we have the right services in place to address COVID's mental health impacts.

I take this opportunity to highlight the investments made to further support Canberrans during this challenging time. Providing for our community is of paramount importance to the ACT government. The ACT government's 2020-21 budget committed an additional \$15.8 million to extend a range of mental health programs and services that were initially funded through the COVID-19 mental health support package in May 2020.

These programs and services were aimed at growing capacity in the service system to meet the increased demand on services. The funding included an additional \$720,000 to maintain the current expansion of the access mental health team and the home assessment acute response team; \$14.1 million over four years to extend the Police, Ambulance and Clinician Early Response—PACER—service and continue its operation for seven days a week; over \$800,000 to non-government organisations to support the provision of community-based mental health services in the ACT, including Menslink, Mental Health Foundation, Mental Illness Education ACT and Relationships Australia; and \$120,000 for a continued community mental health and wellbeing communications campaign.

Funding these programs on top of the \$4.5 million COVID-19 mental health support package announced on 6 May 2020 reflects the ACT government's commitment to supporting the mental health and wellbeing of Canberrans through the ongoing impacts of the pandemic. The funding has also provided approximately \$420,000 in funding to deliver to safe haven cafes for the Canberra community. These cafes are an important initiative to support patients in a non-clinical, community environment, rather than the emergency department. This funding will assist with various aspects of implementing the project, including the co-design process, infrastructure, and establishment and running costs.

The safe haven cafes will be warm, non-clinical, safe spaces, where people can freely go if they are experiencing emotional distress, mental health concerns, isolation and loneliness and are seeking social connection and support. The cafes represent an important addition to the mental health service system, offering a different approach to people in distress and enabling emergency department diversion.

The service model resulted from co-design with consumers, carers, and clinicians, and I have been pleased to be able to speak to some of these participants myself. The co-design process created a robust model that outlines how the safe haven cafes will adopt a peer support approach using an experienced peer workforce to assist people to navigate their distress and access additional supports where needed. The cafes will provide care and support that responds in a timely way to the needs of people that is recovery focused and meaningful to them. Options for the location of a community

safe haven cafe are being explored and preparations are underway for engaging a non-government organisation for a pilot of the community-based model.

This government has also focused on community-based care through funding for PACER and the home assessment and acute response team, which provide ongoing support for hospital diversion. The ongoing funding for a seven-day-a-week PACER service is assisting in reducing emergency department presentations. Because of PACER, 80 per cent of people seen are able to remain and receive care in the community, with only 10 per cent of those re-presenting to hospital within 14 days.

CHS experienced considerable pressure in providing acute adult mental health services throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. While this is understandable due to the mental health impacts of the pandemic, the government is focused on reducing acute pressure for the wellbeing of consumers and staff. Through the mental health support package, CHS established an innovative partnership with the Mental Health Foundation to provide a supportive discharge option and avoid people being discharged into homelessness. As of 24 May 2021, the Mental Health Foundation discharge support program has offset 512 acute adult inpatient bed days.

In addition to the budget initiatives, the government has also funded a range of activities to support long-term mental health and wellbeing. The mental health support package grants to non-government organisations and the COVID-19 mental health and wellbeing innovation grants program aimed at innovative programs that help build connection and mental wellbeing in local communities have been processed, with most programs and services already being implemented.

A needs assessment for an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander suicide prevention service in the ACT was conducted through the Black Dog Institute and completed in July 2020. This assessment established overwhelming support for such a service, and the mental health support package included \$250,000 to commission an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander suicide prevention service.

The ACT Health Directorate hosted an information session for the proposed new service on 26 March of this year. The session was a success, with 24 attendees from key local Aboriginal community-controlled organisations and mental health service providers. The discussion was collaborative and constructive around the requirements for the service. A commissioning process is being undertaken to ensure the service is designed and delivered by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. This commissioning process is expected to be completed in mid-2021.

On 3 May 2021, the ACT government opened the new Southside Community Step Up Step Down facility to deliver effective community support for people at transition points in their care needs. The step-up step-down model is a best-practice model proven to provide effective support in the community for people with more intensive support needs. Step-up step-down services offer prevention and recovery-focused care including early intervention support as soon as a person becomes mentally unwell to prevent deterioration in a person's mental health and unnecessary hospital or acute inpatient admissions—the step-up element of the service—or transitional support for people exiting acute mental health inpatient units and returning to their usual home

environment and the community, to provide sustainable long-term outcomes—the step-down element of the service.

Investment in subacute services such as step-up step-down is part of a broader commitment to shift the focus of mental health investment away from acute care and to provide care as early in life, illness and episode as possible. The six-bed facility offers a six-week program of support for people with the aim of providing a safe alternative to hospital admission. Southside Community Step Up Step Down is a short-term community bed-based mental health service operating in a comprehensive rehabilitative two-week residential and four-week community outreach program where Canberra Health Services provides clinical services, alongside provision of non-clinical residential support services by Stride and outreach community support services by Woden Community Services.

As of 12 May this year the step-up step-down is being fully utilised. Infrastructure work is underway which will deliver additional acute beds by mid-2021. There will always be a need for this type of support, and the government is committed to ensure we have a range of appropriate options to meet all mental health needs.

The delivery of more acute beds is through the refurbishment of Ward 12B at Canberra Hospital to create a purpose-built 10-bed mental health low-dependency unit, with internal capacity to increase to 14 beds if required. In addition, the existing Adult Mental Health Unit will undergo internal works to create the capacity for the existing 10 high-dependency unit beds to increase to 18 beds, if required. The infrastructure work will mean a total of 56 acute mental health beds at the Canberra Hospital site. In addition, the unit will have flexibility to match bed availability to patient need through the ability increase HDU by 80 per cent, if required.

The work of the Office for Mental Health and Wellbeing has also continued its success over the past year. Since its establishment in 2019, the office has delivered on a range of initiatives towards the territory-wide vision of a kind, connected and informed community working together to promote and protect the mental health and wellbeing of all. The office has conducted reviews into children and young people in the ACT and older persons' mental health and wellbeing, which were identified as priority groups in the office's workplan for 2019-21.

The review into children and young people has provided valuable insights into the landscape for children and young people in the ACT, the challenges, and issues they are currently facing, and the factors that impact their mental health and wellbeing. The ACT government is currently undertaking key initiatives as a result of this review, including making services more accessible, increasing education and awareness of mental health, and supporting those individuals experiencing moderate to severe mental illness. A notable example of this is the youth navigation portal that is currently being developed and is due to be launched later this year.

The review of older persons mental health and wellbeing highlighted the strengths and weaknesses in the current older persons mental health service system, and the office is currently developing an older person's mental health and wellbeing strategy. This strategy will guide the ACT government on initiatives that can be implemented to enhance the mental health and wellbeing outcomes of older Canberrans.

The office has reported annually on progress against its work plan as part of the ACT Health Directorate annual report. A mid-term review of the office conducted in late 2020 found that through its leadership the office has begun to change the conversation about mental health in the ACT community and has significantly influenced the conversation about mental health across the ACT government.

Additionally, the review found that the office serves a valuable bridging function to connect actors and improve the flow of information across the ACT's mental health system. The office endeavours to conduct genuine community engagement and co-design that has ensured more voices are heard to shape its work. This has been widely welcomed in the community. These significant accomplishments are contributing towards improving system integration and most importantly the mental health and wellbeing outcomes of our community.

Looking to the future, there is still much to do. As many in this place will know, the Productivity Commission handed down its report on the inquiry into mental health in Australia. The report highlights that poor mental health affects all Australians either directly or indirectly, with one in five Australians experiencing mental illness in any given year. It also highlights the social, environmental and economic determinants of mental health.

In line with this government's commitment to improving both mental health and wellbeing, the report notes that there are multiple factors that can adversely affect mental health and contribute to this burden of disease. These factors include factors across all aspects of our lives from our relationships, home life, school or work, and the social or environmental crises affecting us, such as COVID-19, the 2019-20 bushfire crisis, and climate change.

The report goes on to state that many who experience mental ill-health do not receive the treatments or supports that they need and this leads to preventable physical and mental distress, disruptions in education and employment, relationship breakdowns, stigma and loss of life satisfaction and opportunities. This is why we stand committed to working with all stakeholders to make sure the ACT can use any and all learnings from work such as this to make sure all mental health support services for Canberrans continue to improve. I look forward to seeing the impact of these exciting improvements to the mental health service system, and I commend this statement to the Assembly.

I present the following paper:

Mental health services—Update on Assembly resolution of 4 June 2020—  
Ministerial statement, 3 June 2021.

I move:

That the Assembly take note of the paper.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

## **Planning—schools**

### **Ministerial statement**

**MS BERRY** (Ginninderra—Deputy Chief Minister, Minister for Early Childhood Development, Minister for Education and Youth Affairs, Minister for Housing and Suburban Development, Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence, Minister for Sport and Recreation and Minister for Women) (10.52): I am happy to have the opportunity today to talk about how the government is responding to growth in our community and the corresponding enrolment growth in public education through long-term schools planning and infrastructure investment. I am proud of the high standard of ACT public education, and I begin my remarks today by acknowledging the work of principals, teachers and staff in ACT public schools who support Canberra students to learn, develop and reach their potential every day.

We are all aware that Canberra is a growing city that is experiencing significant economic and population growth. Between 2010 and 2020 population increased by 19 per cent, and public school enrolments grew faster. In 2010 there were approximately 39,000 students studying in public schools in the ACT. This had increased to over 50,000 by 2020—an increase of around 30 per cent. Over this time period, Canberrans have been demonstrating an increasing preference for public schooling. This has been a key driver of the growth in public school enrolments, as has more children being born. In the established areas of Canberra, as more children are born and reach school age, the majority of these children are attending public schools. Canberran families are confident in public education and I expect that this will continue.

We are living in uncertain times and there is some uncertainty about population growth and what the future will hold. In particular, migration in Australia has decreased during the COVID-19 pandemic, and this is expected to continue in 2021 and 2022. We are pleased Canberra has held up strongly throughout the pandemic. Our city continues to be an attractive destination and our public school system continues to be attractive to families.

The government is monitoring the impacts of COVID-19. These impacts potentially include changes to migration, birth rates and school affiliation across public education, independent and Catholic schools. The government will assess any implications for public school enrolments as part of planning now and throughout the decade to ensure the right school capacity in the right parts of our city.

As Canberra grows to a population of 500,000 and more, the government is building upon the 2019 ACT government infrastructure plan, which identified a pipeline of infrastructure investments, including new and upgraded schools. I assure the community and members that planning is well underway to ensure there is sufficient public school capacity to meet future demand. This planning ensures infrastructure needs are identified and provided for in the right place ready for use when needed.

This work is underpinned by a sophisticated approach to forecasting future student enrolments. The Education Directorate undertakes modelling of future student

demand in collaboration with the ANU School of Demography. The directorate's partnership with the ANU School of Demography ensures a high level of integrity and confidence in enrolment forecasts, which are a key input to schools planning.

Enrolment forecasting takes into account the unique demographic lifestyle of each ACT region, which is influenced by factors such as residential development and how long ago it was established. For example, new suburbs will see families moving in and having young children who enter and then eventually exit the school systems as they age. Planning for a new greenfield suburb will require a different response compared to an established suburb that is undergoing urban renewal. Enrolment forecasting is one of many inputs into school planning and is considered alongside a number of other important factors.

All ACT students are guaranteed enrolment at their local school, and this is enshrined in the Education Act 2004. Planning for growth ensures this commitment is able to be guaranteed for all students, including in high-demand areas of significant growth. The government takes a long-term, regional approach for planning for schools that considers the needs and capacity of each school individually as well as in the context of the broader region. This allows the design of integrated measures that respond to long-term growth and makes the best use of capacity of the overall region. This can include a combination of the following four responses: non-infrastructure demand management through enrolment policy, short-term infrastructure through transportable learning spaces, permanent expansions, and new schools.

The community and members would be aware that the government has committed significant resources into delivering new schools and is expanding and modernising existing schools. Across this term of government, we will deliver more than one new school every year across both greenfield and existing urban areas and we will be redeveloping a range of existing schools.

As the fastest growing region in the ACT, investing in the future capacity in Gungahlin has been a priority in recent years. Since 2008 the ACT government has built five new schools across the district as well as undertaking several significant school expansions. Projecting steady enrolment growth in Canberra's north, the government has committed to expanding Margaret Hendry School to accommodate additional growth in north Gungahlin. The expansion is planned to accommodate up to 600 additional primary school students to be ready for the 2023 school year.

The government has also committed to a new high school in north Gungahlin to accommodate up to 800 students. In addition to general and specialist educational spaces, the school is planned to include a double gymnasium. The government will also expand the capacity of the Amaroo School and the Gold Creek School senior campuses by 200 places each for next year.

In the south east of Gungahlin the government is expanding Franklin Early Childhood School into a full primary school to be known as Franklin School. This expansion will be ready for next year. To the north west, the new primary school in Throsby is currently being built and will also be ready for next year.

The government is also working towards a new high school in the future suburb of Kenny that will be open in 2023. The school will accommodate up to 800 students and include general and specialist learning spaces, a performing arts space, double gymnasium, small group programs, natural turf playing fields, external hardcourts, a kitchen garden and various external learning environments. The high school will be ready for students to commence at the start of the 2023 school year.

To meet public school enrolment demand at the college level, the government has begun planning for a future expansion of north side college capacity. In Molonglo, Evelyn Scott School opened its doors this year. It is Canberra's second zero emissions school. It is exciting to see years of planning and design come together in a new school, and I congratulate the staff and students at Evelyn Scott School as they head towards the completion of their very first year. This \$70 million investment will also include a new high school at Evelyn Scott to be built for the 2023 school year.

The government will continue to plan for new schools in greenfield areas of Canberra. However urban infill, urban renewal and population growth in the established areas of Canberra will increasingly be a focus. This will include the inner north, the inner south, Woden and central Belconnen. In the inner north the government is modernising Campbell Primary School. The modernisation will replace older classroom spaces with modern teaching and learning facilities with capacity for up to 450 students. Consideration is also being made to the most appropriate responses to meeting the demand in the inner north. This includes consideration of demand and feasibility in the Northbourne corridor area to ensure public schools can cater for growing demand.

I acknowledge the work of the Standing Committee on Education and Community Inclusion through the inquiry into the management of ACT infrastructure which is currently underway. The ACT government looks forward to its findings and recommendations. I know a number of community responses, including submissions from local schools have already been made to the inquiry, and I assure members and the community that consideration will be given to those responses both through the inquiry and following it. The community's views on school infrastructure are an important input into future planning and the government will continue to engage with public schools and their communities.

I thank the Assembly for the opportunity today to speak about investment in public education and the planning for new schools in the ACT to cater for growth in ACT public education. I am proud of the free public education provided in each of our 89 schools every day, and once again I take the opportunity to thank all public school teachers for their hard work yesterday, today and tomorrow.

The government is focused on planning for and investing in public school infrastructure to meet the growing demand and ensuring every ACT student has access to their local public school. In the ACT every public school is a great school, and we are committed to building more of them.

I present the following paper:

New school builds to cater for growth in our community—Ministerial statement,  
3 June 2021.

I move:

That the Assembly take note of the paper.

**MS ORR** (Yerrabi) (11.02): I rise to support the education improvements outlined in Minister Berry's ministerial statement in regard to my electorate in particular. Gungahlin is a growing region and the number of families with school-age children is also growing. As stated by Minister Berry, education is extremely important, and it is something that the ACT government takes seriously. The government actively works to ensure that it meets the needs of the growing number of students across Canberra. Expansions to existing schools and funding allocations to build new schools around Yerrabi have already been very well received by young families and students alike.

The 2020-21 budget provided funding for additional school infrastructure in Gungahlin so that every local student can have access to a great public education. The funding will help to deliver a new high school in Kenny that will provide 800 places for students in year 7 to year 10 from the eastern side of Gungahlin. This new high school will feature a double gymnasium and multipurpose performing arts space that can also be used by the Gungahlin community.

Having new schools that not only accommodate growth in student numbers but also provide additional community facilities is greatly appreciated by students and the rest of Yerrabi. This approach to ensuring our schools have facilities available to the community helps to expand our education system. Not only do our schools provide fundamental education to students; they also become a community hub for others to enjoy these wonderful facilities.

Other schools in the area already host different sporting groups and community groups. Harrison School has netball courts which are always well utilised, and I know that the East Gungahlin Netball Club is looking forward to the possibility of extra space to train and play. The school will be open from the beginning of the 2023 school year, and I look forward to seeing its facilities in use.

The expansion of Margaret Hendry School will be greatly appreciated by Yerrabi residents. The expansion will allow an additional 600 students to attend. This is excellent news for those who are raising young families in Gungahlin. The ACT government is provisioning school spaces where they are needed. Those families with very young children can be assured that they can send their child to a publicly funded primary school within their local area. There is not much that is more important to the development of a region and its young families than well-funded, high-quality public education.

The expansion of the senior campus at Amaroo School is also a welcome development. This expansion will not only allow for an extra 200 students but also allow upgrades to the teaching facilities. The expansion will now make it possible for

specialist learning areas, including electronics, robotics, art, dance, drama and food technology. It is vital that students have a variety of learning opportunities that will help to make school engaging and teach them skills that will remain with them for life. The Amaroo expansion will also assist in improving the amenity and learning environment at the school and the outdoor learning and play areas. I also welcome the Gold Creek School senior campus expansion that will make way for an additional 200 places by the beginning of the 2022 school year.

If it is not clear by now, the schools located around Yerrabi are getting vital improvements and upgrades to ensure that we are providing a great education to students. These expansions ensure that students can attend a school in their region. This has multiple benefits, including reducing travelling times and helping to ensure that students can rely on our public transport network.

I would also like to touch on and praise the government's efforts in expanding Franklin Early Childhood School into a full primary school. This will result in the school being known as Franklin school, and it is expected to be ready for students in 2022.

Lastly, there is also a new primary school being built in Throsby that will be ready by 2022. It will help to cater for the students who will be calling the new suburb of Throsby home. This school will also have additional sports and other community facilities, not only improving access to these facilities for the students but also providing additional amenity and facilities for the broader community.

It is evident that the ACT government takes providing quality public education seriously, not only through the schools themselves but through our education system. I am proud to be part of a government that is actively working to ensure that our schools can accommodate the population growth of Gungahlin and have facilities that can be used by the wider community as well.

Yerrabi is a wonderful place to live, and it pleases me that our schools are able to accommodate all of the wonderful residents and provide students with a comprehensive public education at the same time.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

## **Loose-fill Asbestos Legislation Amendment Bill 2021**

**Ms Vassarotti**, pursuant to notice, presented the bill, its explanatory statement and a Human Rights Act compatibility statement.

Title read by Clerk.

**MS VASSAROTTI** (Kurrajong—Minister for the Environment, Minister for Heritage, Minister for Homelessness and Housing Services and Minister for Sustainable Building and Construction) (11.08): I move:

That this bill be agreed to in principle.

I am pleased to present the Loose-fill Asbestos Legislation Amendment Bill 2021. This bill makes amendments to allow the eradication of loose-fill asbestos insulation from Canberra homes to continue beyond closure of the Loose-Fill Asbestos Insulation Eradication Scheme Buyback Program on 17 August 2021.

Since the introduction of the scheme in 2014, the ACT government has provided a mechanism for home owners whose properties are affected by loose-fill asbestos to consider options available to them in managing their properties. The scheme was developed to address the risks to the Canberra community of the continuing presence of loose-fill asbestos insulation in more than 1,000 homes across Canberra.

As at the end of April 2021, 992 of the 1,027 affected Canberra properties identified as containing, or having once contained, loose-fill asbestos insulation have been demolished, both within the scheme and privately. Of the 35 properties remaining on the Affected Residential Premises Register, 11 have been surrendered to the territory with demolition planning underway. The goal of eradicating loose-fill asbestos from the ACT community can only be achieved when every affected property has been safely demolished.

The effect of the bill amends the definition of “buyback scheme” within the Civil Law (Sales of Residential Property) Act 2003, the Dangerous Substances Act 2004, the Government Agencies (Land Acquisition Reporting) Regulation of 2019 and the definition of “loose-fill asbestos insulation eradication buyback program” in the Planning and Development Regulation 2008, so that these definitions no longer refer to the Appropriation (Loose-fill Asbestos Insulation Eradication) Act 2014-2015. The appropriation act provides funding for the buyback program until 17 August 2021. From 18 August 2021, all financial and budget implications for any newly identified properties that participate in the scheme will be funded through existing budgetary mechanisms.

Since the announcement of the scheme in 2014, five additional Canberra properties have been identified as affected by loose-fill asbestos insulation. The five properties contained loose-fill asbestos insulation in only part of their roof cavity. It is understood that in addition to Mr Fluffy installing loose-fill asbestos by blowing it into entire roof cavities, bags of loose-fill asbestos were available for purchase and were used either as stand-alone insulation or mixed with other insulation products. These were typically installed by home owners or other tradespeople. It is possible that there could be additional affected properties in Canberra’s older suburbs that are yet to be identified as containing loose-fill asbestos insulation.

By providing that the funding arrangements are no longer associated with the appropriation act, the bill supports the ongoing effect of the scheme and the buyback program for affected properties identified after 17 August 2021.

Not continuing a buyback program for properties identified as affected by loose-fill asbestos insulation after 17 August 2021 would be inconsistent with the government’s commitment to eradicate loose-fill asbestos from the ACT residential community. We must remain vigilant in identifying any further affected properties and act to ensure that the health of the community is protected.

In introducing the bill, I would like to reflect on the substantial human impact that has occurred as a result of the loose-fill asbestos issue in the ACT. In introducing the original scheme in 2014, and these amendments today, the ACT government has aimed to respond to the community safety issues faced and provide a pathway to affected home owners. I do know that this has been a difficult journey for the more than 1,000 home owners affected, and I want to publicly acknowledge that this has been a very challenging time for them. I commend the bill to the Assembly.

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

## **Estimates 2021-2022—Select Committee Proposed establishment**

**MR HANSON** (Murrumbidgee) (11.14): I move:

That, notwithstanding the provisions of the resolution of the Assembly on 2 December 2020, as amended 30 March 2021, establishing the general purpose standing committees, that:

- (1) a Select Committee on Estimates 2021-2022 be appointed to examine the expenditure proposals contained in the Appropriation Bill 2021-2022, the Appropriation (Office of the Legislative Assembly) Bill 2021-2022 and any revenue estimates proposed by the Government in the 2021-2022 Budget and prepare a report to the Assembly;
- (2) the Committee be composed of:
  - (a) one Member to be nominated by the Government;
  - (b) one Member to be nominated by the Opposition; and
  - (c) one Member to be nominated by the ACT Greens;
- (3) members of the Committee are to be notified in writing to the Speaker within two hours of this motion passing; an Opposition Member shall be elected chair of Committee by the Committee;
- (4) funds be provided by the Assembly to permit the engagement of external expertise to work with the Committee to facilitate the analysis of the Budget and the preparation of the report by the Committee;
- (5) the Committee is to report by Tuesday, 7 October 2021;
- (6) if the Assembly is not sitting when the Committee has completed its inquiry, the Committee may send its report to the Speaker or, in the absence of the Speaker, to the Deputy Speaker, who is authorised to give directions for its printing, publishing and circulation;
- (7) for the purpose of taking evidence the following will constitute a quorum: (a) two members of the Committee; or (b) one member of the Committee and any other non-executive Member of the Assembly;
- (8) the foregoing provisions of this resolution, so far as they are inconsistent with the standing orders, have effect notwithstanding anything contained in the standing orders; and

- (9) with the establishment of the Select Committee on Estimates 2021-2022, the general purpose standing committees will not now inquire into expenditure proposals contained in the Appropriation Bill 2021-2022.

This is the standard motion to establish a select committee on estimates. It is the normal form. Previously, there have been five-member committees and three-member committees. This is the three-member committee version. It is pretty self-explanatory. The only thing that is different from the normal establishment of a select committee is that it deals with the fact that currently the standing committees, based on a motion moved in this place previously, have that responsibility, and it discharges them from having that responsibility.

The reason I have moved this motion today is that if the committee is going to be established, we need to get on with it. There is a lot of work that needs to be done, as people would be aware, with committees. If we are going with the select committee process, we do not want the standing committees, that currently have responsibility for that role, still thinking that they have to schedule ministers, hearings and diary appointments. There is a lot of work that needs to be done to make sure that it is done properly. That involves not just time lines for members but for the committee office, who work very hard on our behalf.

We have had a crack at the standing committees looking at the budget. We have been through that process, so we are aware of what was happening. It was certainly the will of this place that a trial be conducted. That trial has concluded. We have had a look at it. It is very important, if we are going to form a view, that members look at how the select committee works. There are a number of new members in this place. All of the Greens backbenchers are new to this place. There is a new Labor backbencher who sits on committees. There are two Liberal members who sit on committees. If we are doing a trial of it being referred to standing committees, we have to look at what happens the other way; otherwise how are we going to come back and say, "Yes, that's the way to proceed"? If you have not seen it operating both ways, and the bulk of members that sit on committees have not, how are you going to form a view?

Ms Cheyne is looking at me quizzically, but how are members of this place going to form a view if they have only seen it happen in one way? She looks confused about that. It is pretty simple, isn't it? My understanding is that Ms Cheyne has been the one driving this, and I can talk to that later, if she wants me to.

We need to have a balanced view on which way to proceed. All said and done, we have formed a view. We have looked at it. We have been able to sit on those standing committees and form a view. The view is that the select committee is the way to go; it is the preferred way to go. At its core, if you do this through the standing committees, there is no holistic look at the budget. All you get is a sliver of the budget. You might be looking at the health aspect, the education aspect, the JACS aspect, the planning aspect and so on. Certainly, you are not having that holistic view; you are only seeing a small portion.

You can think about how you would look at any budget, in its entirety, in order to form a view of it. With a household budget, it is like saying, "I'm going to look at the

mortgage but not at the energy costs of running a house; I'm not going to look at how much school fees might cost, or the cost of raising kids." You cannot form a view on a budget if you are only looking at a fifth or a sixth of that budget.

There is also an impact on standing committees that needs to be considered, when we just shovel this over to the standing committees. Mr Assistant Speaker, when you look at what the standing committees already have to do, it is increasing their workload. The committees' role is two-fold. One is to scrutinise government. We do that through annual reports hearings and so on. We also have the important role to do some deeper thinking and look at issues in detail. By involving the standing committees in this process, we are limiting the work that the committees can do, having regard to their important role in digging into more complex issues.

I will give an example of the JACS committee, on which I sit. We are doing an inquiry into the election. Normally, that is the role of a select committee. This cobbled-together government has decided to refer that to a standing committee. We now have referral of legislation to inquiries. That is new. Our committee has not been able to look at any, because of other work. That committee has the Integrity Commission function, which was previously the role of another committee. Based on the current plan, it will be conducting two estimates inquiries this year.

All of these committees have the same problem. That is just an example from my committee, which I know well. With respect to that balance regarding the scrutiny of government, those committees are being precluded from or limited in perhaps looking at other business.

My understanding is that the real reason that we are not having a select committee, or that the cobbled-together government does not want a select committee, is that the Labor and Greens backbenchers do not want to do the work. That is my understanding: they do not want to do the work. They are all busy doing their other important stuff and they are thinking, "No, I don't want another committee to sit on; I want to do less work."

*Mr Rattenbury interjecting—*

**MR HANSON:** Mr Rattenbury is interjecting; he does not like this, but that is the reality, and I have heard it from members. I will not out them, but they do not want to sit on more committees. They are already sitting on committees. They do not want another committee to sit on; no doubt they have better things to do, haven't they—head off on a triathlon?

*Ms Cheyne interjecting—*

**MR HANSON:** Ms Cheyne is interjecting; she is worried about the number of committees that people sit on. My understanding, from what I have been told—it might be wrong; you can debate this—is that a lot of this was driven by you because you did not want to sit on any more committees. Maybe that is wrong; maybe that is a rumour. Maybe that is a rumour. You have only three backbenchers; I accept that.

If members were to look at the Latimer House principles, though, there is a solution to this. It is probably not one that you would go to! You are all government backbenchers. The Liberal Party are happy to step up and have two members on each committee, and aid government backbenchers. It does not bother us which version of socialist we get on our committee. We could have a red socialist or we could have a Green socialist on the committee. Based on the Latimer House principles, we would make sure that we are actually doing the job of scrutinising government.

The Greens used to love the Latimer House principles before they had 50 per cent of their members being ministers. They used to love scrutiny; they used to love this stuff—Ms Le Couteur used to, anyway. Now that half of them are in government and the others are government backbenchers, they are not so keen on it.

I do not think that is likely to happen. It is a gesture made in good faith, in that we are happy to take those two members on, and you could just have one green or one red socialist on the committee. If you do not want to do that, because you do not want to scrutinise the government, it is disappointing, but I anticipate that that would be your view.

**Ms Berry:** Just stick with the red socialists.

**MR HANSON:** Just stick with the red socialists, not the green socialists; fair enough. As I said, we do not mind, Ms Berry; we are happy with either colour socialist.

The opposition, at the end of the day, is here to scrutinise government. The problem is that the Labor Party and the Greens, forming the government, have the opposite view. We get that. We will always look for the most effective way to scrutinise the government. Our view is that that is best done through a select committee on estimates because it can look at the budget in its entirety, as a whole. It also ensures that the standing committees are not stuck with doing that work which could be done by a select committee, and they can get on with other, more substantive issues.

That is our view, Mr Assistant Speaker. It is important that we get this dealt with today. If we get it done today, we can get that important work done. I commend the motion to the Assembly. I think we have seen enough to enable us to make this decision today. We do not need to refer it for further consideration, which really means the Labor Party and the Greens getting together behind closed doors and working out what it is that they actually want to stitch up.

**MS ORR (Yerrabi) (11.24):** The Labor Party and I will not be supporting this motion today, because Mr Hanson knows full well, as a member of the Administration and Procedure Committee, that the admin and procedure committee was going to do a review, and will be doing a review, of how the committees are working, given the new process that we have undertaken this term.

There is a view that we need to give it a bit more thought, because we have had a process at the beginning of the term that was a little different to how it will play out for the rest of the term, given that annual reports and estimates were combined

because of the election, which was usual practice. We would like to see standalone scrutiny of the budget through an estimates process by the standing committees, to get a good idea of how this process will work, before we draw conclusions on it.

I suggest that, rather than Mr Hanson bringing this matter into the chamber, and not raising it through admin and procedure, thus undermining that process that admin and procedure had already committed to undertaking, we actually refer this motion. I have circulated another motion in the chamber, but we should refer Mr Hanson's motion back to admin and procedure so that all of the good points that Mr Hanson feels inclined to raise can go to that forum. It has already been determined that we will have a review of all the points he has just raised in that forum.

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

### **Administration and Procedure—Standing Committee Reference**

**MS ORR** (Yerrabi) (11.26), by leave: I move:

That this Assembly:

- (1) notes that the Standing Committee on Administration and Procedure, in its review of possible structures of the Committee system for the 10th Assembly, recommended a trial of budget estimates going to the general purpose standing committees;
- (2) acknowledges that the budget estimates consideration for the 2021-2022 budget estimates will be the first stand-alone process for the general purpose standing committees; and
- (3) refers the evaluation of the trial to the Standing Committee on Administration and Procedure after the 2021-2022 budget process as part of a broader review of the estimates process for inquiry and report by the end of 2021.

Mr Assistant Speaker, I am glad to give you a new process to learn about while you are in the chair. I will not go into detail, as I have already covered it off when speaking to Mr Hanson's motion. We have a process in place on admin and procedure to consider all of the things that Mr Hanson feels inclined to consider. This motion covers off on that, so that the process that we are undertaking and how it will work are very clear.

I look forward to Mr Hanson's passionate debate during admin and procedure, as we reconcile these issues with a good understanding of what it is that we want to achieve and how it is working, in practice, once we have had one stand-alone review of the estimates and budget process by the standing committees.

**MR BRADDOCK** (Yerrabi) (11.28): I would like to thank Mr Hanson for bringing the previous motion to this Assembly. I appreciate the irony, in terms of his bringing a motion to the Assembly when it is a matter that is under consideration by the committee, but I will not say anything further on that.

The reason that I moved to adjourn the matter earlier was that we need more time. It is essential that we get the budget process right, to ensure that we have efficient, effective and high-quality scrutiny of the spending of public money in this place. I can see the strengths and weaknesses of both approaches, and I can see why we must take the time to deliberate on the best way to move forward.

I note that the previous Assembly and the previous Administration and Procedure Committee developed, after lengthy debate, the approach that we have just walked through. This approach had tripartisan agreement, and it is important that we follow that through.

I see the benefit of having standing committees scrutinise the budget as issue experts within their committee process. However, the process can be administratively challenging, and we need to ensure that nothing falls through the cracks. Likewise, I see the benefit of a single committee having oversight of the budget in its entirety, and being able to weigh the different budget priorities against each other without being constrained to one lane.

I note, as Ms Orr mentioned, that the administration and procedure committee has already committed to a review of the use of standing committees for estimates processes following the 2020-21 budget process. Should that committee have moved earlier to commence that review? As a member of that committee, I am prepared to accept my share of the responsibility for that, as should all of the other committee members here today, including Mr Hanson.

Ms Orr is seeking to refer this matter to the admin and procedure committee and for this already agreed review to take place in a timely manner. I appreciate that, with this referral and review, it is practically impossible to set up the select committee in time for the 2021-22 budget. This is not necessarily a bad thing. Due to the pandemic, we have not seen a normal budget process take place while we are trialling the use of standing committees for this process. Therefore it makes sense to give it a fair go during a normal process so that we can properly test its robustness, allowing the Assembly to make an informed decision on the best way to move forward following the review.

This review will need to be completed in a timely manner so that the question does not impact on the 2022-23 budget process. It is therefore the Greens' expectation that the review shall be completed by the end of 2021. I, as a member of that committee, will endeavour to see that that target is achieved.

I wish to flag to this Assembly one issue that I will also be working on. During the 2020-21 budget process the Greens received feedback from multiple community groups lamenting the lack of a day when they are able to present their views to the Assembly, providing the Assembly with the opportunity to garner and test a diversity of viewpoints surrounding the budget. Therefore the Greens will be calling for these days for community groups to return. I will be advocating for these as part of the admin and procedure review. I will also be examining means of enabling the 2021-22 budget process to include community hearings. I look forward to working with all parties in this place to determine how this can be done.

**MR HANSON** (Murrumbidgee) (11.31): “Andrew the adjourner” did his business again, so we flicked from one motion to another.

*Ms Orr interjecting—*

**MR HANSON:** I withdraw “Andrew the adjourner”, Mr Braddock. I apologise, Mr Assistant Speaker. As Mr Barr pointed out yesterday, if you have 13 votes, you do what you like. We can refer this to admin and procedure, and we will see what comes of it. The opposition have made their position clear through their motion today.

I look forward to those debates in admin and procedure. I hope that it is done as a clean process and that a decision is not made, as we often see in this place, in the back rooms between the Labor Party and the Greens, with them coming in here with their 13 votes. I hope that any decision that is made is in the best interest of parliamentary and committee process. I will endeavour to make sure that is followed to the best of my ability.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

## **Executive business—precedence**

*Ordered that executive business be called on.*

## **Courts and Other Justice Legislation Amendment Bill 2021**

Debate resumed from 20 April 20201 on motion by **Mr Rattenbury**:

That this bill be agreed to in principle.

**MR GENTLEMAN** (Brindabella—Manager of Government Business, Minister for Corrections, Minister for Industrial Relations and Workplace Safety, Minister for Planning and Land Management and Minister for Police and Emergency Services) (11.34): I am happy to talk to the courts bill. It is important, of course, that we bring these amendment bills every now and again to ensure that we can bring legislation up to date across the ACT. Of course, I have had a look at the discussion so far for this particular bill. In renewing legislation across the ACT for courts and bringing other legislation up to speed we see a need to ensure that we can provide the appropriate balance, I think, and management for our court systems for the ACT.

**MR CAIN** (Ginninderra) (11.35): I rise today on behalf of the Canberra Liberals in support of the Courts and Other Justice Legislation Amendment Bill 2021. The primary purpose of this bill is to improve court and tribunal efficiency, something that the Canberra Liberals wholeheartedly support. I am advised that after consultation with a range of stakeholders involved in tribunal and court administration the bill addresses many concerns about court and tribunal processes.

It would be useful though, for example in explanatory statements, if the Attorney-General could provide advice on who was actually consulted and include commentary on any concerns raised by these stakeholders. The scrutiny of bills committee reviewed this bill and requested that the Attorney-General provide further information and explanation in the explanatory statement with respect to three of the amendments.

The ACT Civil and Administrative Tribunal Act 2008 will be amended under this bill to allow the tribunal to make orders for a particular matter even if this means dispensing with a prescribed rule. The scrutiny committee rightly requested clarification on when such a power would be exercised. I note that the ES has been expanded to address this at least to some degree and thank the Attorney-General's officers for providing me with this revised ES prior to this debate.

Secondly, the Judicial Commissions Act 1994 is to be amended to allow information obtained under that act to be provided to the Integrity Commissioner. The scrutiny committee was concerned that this secondary disclosure may unreasonably breach the privacy of an individual. After reviewing the revised explanatory statement I am satisfied that such disclosures should be permitted to allow the Integrity Commissioner to exercise their powers of investigation more comprehensively.

Thirdly, the scrutiny committee noted that the bill amended the Public Trustee and Guardianship Act 1985 to allow the Public Trustee and Guardian to dispose of the remains of a deceased person and administer their estate when the executor or next of kin cannot be located after reasonable inquiries have been made. The scrutiny committee requested clarification in the explanatory statement as to whether this amendment was unreasonably detrimental to the human rights of surviving family members and those of the kinship group. I am satisfied that this too has been addressed and support this extension of the Public Trustee and Guardian's powers in such circumstances.

The other amendments in this bill range from minor and technical to providing improvements to the efficiency or clarity of tribunal and court procedures and are unremarkable in my view. I thank the Attorney-General for the briefing from both his department and his office and close by affirming the Canberra Liberals' support for this bill.

**MR RATTENBURY** (Kurrajong—Attorney-General, Minister for Consumer Affairs, Minister for Gaming and Minister for Water, Energy and Emissions Reduction) (11.39), in reply: I thank Mr Gentleman and Mr Cain for their contributions to the debate. I am pleased to speak in support of this bill as part of the government's commitment to the review and reform of the justice legislation to ensure that the ACT has an accessible, fair and efficient justice system that can also protect our community's most vulnerable.

This omnibus bill makes a number of practical improvements and creates greater efficiencies through amendments across courts and justice legislation, including the ACT Civil and Administrative Tribunal Act 2008, the Common Boundaries Act, the Coroners Act, the Guardianship and Management of Property Act, the Judicial Commissions Act, the Magistrates Court Act, the Power of Attorney Act, the Public Trustee and Guardian Act and the Supreme Court Act. The need for the amendments has been identified through direct consultation with the ACT courts and tribunals, government directorates and agencies and from recommendations arising from the Australian Law Reform Commission's report on elder abuse. I thank stakeholders for their collaboration in identifying and developing the amendments in this bill.

As a result, the bill will make both minor or technical and more substantive amendments to courts and other legislation, improving the justice system in the territory. It is important to recognise the valuable contributions made by stakeholders to this bill. Their contributions support our ongoing efforts to improve the administration and operation of the territory's laws.

A significant feature of this bill is that it improves the efficient operation of the territory's courts and the ACT Civil and Administrative Tribunal, ACAT as it is of course commonly known. Amendments to the ACAT Act and the Common Boundaries Act promote more accessible, less complex and less costly justice services for all.

The amendments to the ACAT Act will allow the ACAT to better manage its own practices and procedures and to resolve matters, including dividing-fence disputes, in a more timely and cost effective manner for all parties. The ACAT will have more flexibility to manage its own practices and procedures to ensure the tribunal can comply with and uphold the principles of natural justice and procedural fairness in its proceedings. The amendments will allow the ACAT to dispense with the application of a provision of the ACAT rules to a proceeding on conditions it considers appropriate. This will ensure the ACAT can change its case management processes if a matter becomes more or less complex as it progresses.

Efficiency will also be improved by setting clear expectations of cooperation and engagement by parties with the legislation and clarified provisions in the ACAT Act which will reduce confusion and make it easier for people to participate in tribunal processes.

Amendments to the Common Boundaries Act create time and cost efficiencies for the tribunal and parties to a dispute by removing restrictive processes relating to dividing-fence disputes. These amendments will improve access to justice for parties to a dispute and provide greater flexibility for the tribunal to resolve disputes.

The bill also makes amendments to support the efficient operation of the Magistrates Court and Supreme Court by clarifying each court's processes. The bill will make a technical amendment to the Magistrates Court Act to clarify that a recruitment process, including our public expression of interest process, is not required for the appointment of an acting chief magistrate. In the event where the Chief Magistrate may be required to take unexpected leave or is unable to act in that position, it is imperative an acting chief magistrate is appointed quickly and efficiently, noting that an acting chief magistrate can only be appointed from existing magistrates.

Minor amendments to the Supreme Court Act will enable the executive to determine the conditions of appointment for acting judges and the associate judge, which are not otherwise dealt with by the Supreme Court Act or the ACT Remuneration Tribunal. The Supreme Court Act will also be amended to provide a compulsion for judicial officers to complete outstanding matters as soon as possible at the end of their term. This aims to ensure that judicial officers complete minor unfinished aspects of a case and that this will not attract remuneration. If they are required to complete more

substantial matters they may be able to be appointed an acting judge, with its associated remuneration and entitlements, while they complete these matters.

A minor amendment to the Coroners Act will repeal a provision which empowers the coroner to issue a warrant to a police officer to take and remove a body to a place for post-mortem examination. This reduces duplication of powers as ACT Policing and the Coroners Court have advised that this provision is not used in practice. It is important to note that this will not change the current practice of coroners and ACT Policing. Rather, this amendment removes an outdated provision as ACT Policing rely on existing powers contained in the Coroners Act and commonwealth powers to assist the coroner to be able to remove a body to a place for post-mortem examination.

Australia's population is ageing, and our community expects that we, as government, will help to look after our ageing population. It is the responsibility of each government across Australia to ensure that older people who are vulnerable are adequately protected. Our older community deserves to live their lives free from any kind of abuse. The startling reality, however, shows that there is plenty of room for improvement. Unfortunately, there are some people in our community who abuse their relationship of trust to exploit some of our community's most vulnerable members.

In 2017 the Australian Law Reform Commission made 43 recommendations in its report *Elder Abuse—A National Legal Response* on how laws and legal frameworks could be reformed to better protect older persons from abuse and improve safeguards to protect their autonomy. I am pleased to say this bill will implement recommendation 5-2 of this report which facilitates enhanced access to justice for vulnerable elderly people who have experienced financial abuse. Importantly, these amendments will deliver better protection for vulnerable older people and are also consistent with the objectives of the national plan to respond to the abuse of older Australians 2019-2023.

The amendments to the Powers of Attorney Act and the Guardianship and Management of Property Act recognise the vulnerability of people who are dependent on substitute decision makers—such as attorneys, guardians or financial managers—to make important decisions on their behalf. These amendments deliver important protections to safeguard the rights of such persons and protect them from financial abuse by making it easier to seek redress and justice from financial abuse.

Specifically, the amendments to the Powers of Attorney Act and the Guardianship and Management Act provide power to the ACAT to order compensation to be paid by substitute decision makers where there is evidence of financial abuse. The tribunal is able to order this on its own initiative or on application by an interested person.

The amendments provide a less complex and less costly option than the current pathway of applying to the Supreme Court for a decision which can be prohibitive from any older person subject to abuse. The amendments also provide the tribunal the discretionary power to refer such matters to the Supreme Court. These powers complement existing jurisdiction of the ACAT to oversee the use of substitute

decision makers' powers and to make order to terminate appointments where these powers are being abused.

Another important aspect of this bill is that it makes amendments to legislation to support the functions of two statutory authorities: the ACT Public Trustee and Guardian and the ACT Judicial Council. Amendments to the Public Trustee and Guardian Act provide the Public Trustee and Guardian with a clear legislative function to make necessary arrangements for the disposal of the remains of unclaimed bodies and investigate and administer their estate as necessary. These amendments, which follow on from interim arrangements introduced initially in response to COVID-19 in 2020, will provide certainty as to which agency has the function of making necessary arrangements for unclaimed bodies in the territory.

The ACT Judicial Council is a complaints-handling body for complaints against judicial officers in the ACT and has a legislative responsibility to refer corruption complaints against judicial officers to the ACT Integrity Commission where necessary. Section 28 of the Judicial Commissions Act makes it an offence for a current or past member of the Judicial Council to divulge information acquired by them by virtue of their role with the council. The amendment to the act puts beyond doubt the ability of the council to refer corruption complaints against judicial officers to the ACT Integrity Commission without contravening section 28 of the act.

There is strong expectation from the public that our justice system operate efficiently and that protections are provided for those vulnerable members of our community. I am confident the amendments in this bill will improve the efficiency of our courts and tribunals, support the redress rights of our most vulnerable citizens and improve effective administration and operation of the laws in the territory. I thank all our justice stakeholders for their participation in the process of developing the important amendments in this bill.

As Mr Cain touched on, there were a number of comments or questions raised by the scrutiny committee. I have written back to the scrutiny committee with a detailed answer to that. In addition, I now table a revised explanatory statement which goes to the questions that were raised by the scrutiny committee. Mr Cain flagged it had been provided to him directly but I now table it for the benefit of all members and obviously for the records of the chamber. On that basis, I commend the bill to the Assembly.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Bill agreed to in principle.

Leave granted to dispense with the detail stage.

Bill agreed to.

**Sitting suspended from 11.49 am to 2 pm.**

## Questions without notice

### Planning—Coombs

**MS LEE:** My question is to the minister for planning. Minister, on the SLA marketing materials for Coombs in 2017 there was planned a community activity centre on section 17, block 3. Currently this site is a paddock. Minister, why now, four years later, is there still no community activity centre on section 17, block 3?

**MR GENTLEMAN:** I thank the member for the question. It is important that we plan for community facilities into the future. That is why we do it during our estate development planning programs. In relation to the Coombs space, I know that there is quite a bit of interest in community facilities at Coombs. I have met with the community representatives from that area. In relation to the detail of the facility being organised and sold, I will take that on notice.

**MS LEE:** Minister, why have Coombs residents been promised community facilities which have not been delivered?

**MR GENTLEMAN:** There is a time line with all delivery of facilities for the Canberra community as we go through new suburbs across the ACT. I remember moving into Higgins when it was a brand-new suburb in 1969. It took quite a while for those facilities to be built for the Canberra community. But they were constructed, and you will see that in communities that are a bit older than the newer suburbs of Coombs. So it will be done.

**MR HANSON:** Minister, why has the government also failed to provide functioning shops for Coombs residents?

**MR GENTLEMAN:** Shops are commercial entities. We provided the opportunity for commercial owners to purchase land to build shopping centres and therefore lease them out.

### Planning—Woden town centre

**MRS JONES:** My question is to the Minister for Planning and Land Management. Minister, we know that the Labor-Greens government has approved a building for Woden town centre next to Woden town square which will be 24 storeys high. We also know that all sides of the Woden town centre's small public square will be up to 28 storeys. On 22 May 2018 the *Canberra Times* reported the ACT Greens saying that a proposal for Geocon's 16-storey hotel at Garema Place should be rejected as it would cause long-term damage due to overshadowing to the city. Minister, why is Woden's zoning around its focal point, the town square, 28 storeys when the zoning around City Walk is unlikely to go over six?

**MR GENTLEMAN:** I thank Mrs Jones for the question. The design of the Woden master plan strategy goes back some time, Madam Speaker, to when you and I were still backbenchers, I think. Of course, at that time there was quite a lot of work with the Woden community on what they wanted to see for the future.

The local community council did approve the plans in the master plan for Woden and those are the plans that are being delivered now. They are not being delivered by government. Individual construction is certainly being approved by the independent Planning and Land Authority but of course they are being delivered by commercial interests for the people of Woden.

**MRS JONES:** Minister, why is there such a vast difference between what is allowed in the two different town centres?

**MR GENTLEMAN:** The National Capital Plan.

**MR HANSON:** What are you going to do to address community concerns which were shown in the last election that residents are concerned about development at the Woden town centre if it is not properly done?

**MR GENTLEMAN:** We have been working of course with the community of Woden, during the development of the master plan and the delivery of development after the master plan, and we will continue to work with them well into the future. As I said this morning in my statement, we are expecting 583,000 people in the ACT in the not-too-distant future. We need to plan well for that. We need to plan for density in local centres, along transport corridors to ensure efficiency—

**Mrs Jones:** On a point of order, Madam Speaker: while the minister's speech is very interesting, the question was what is he doing about the community concern. What exactly is being done about the community concern?

**MADAM SPEAKER:** The minister has been responding as far as the planning attributes and also the input from community into different aspects of the plan. He still has a minute-plus to go in his answer. Minister.

**MR GENTLEMAN:** We are working with the community on those concerns to see how we can address them.

### **Planning—Woden town centre transport**

**MR HANSON:** My question is to the Minister for Transport and City Services. Woden bus interchange is a major transport hub for Canberra's south. The government is reducing the size of the interchange by removing the two functional and safe bus loops and moving the buses to Callam Street, along with the light rail. The September 2020 Veitch Lister Consulting report on infrastructure requirements revealed that the design brings up numerous safety concerns, and it recommended an operational risk assessment to determine if the facility could operate safely. The January 2021 Jacobs traffic modelling revealed that further investigation was required to address issues on the road network in Woden so it could operate satisfactorily for coming decades. Can you table the traffic modelling that demonstrates that there is enough future capacity in the proposed bus interchange?

**MR STEEL:** I thank Mr Hanson for his question. Yes, I can come back to the Assembly with some further detail about the traffic modelling, but the traffic modelling shows—consistent with the work that was done in the Woden town centre masterplan—that there is sufficient capacity on the existing road network, including on roads like Melrose Drive and Yamba Drive to enable people to go around the town centre, which would enable us to prioritise buses on Callam Street.

The Woden town centre masterplan provided the vision of an on-street bus interchange. That is exactly what we are going to deliver, together with the east-west pedestrian boulevard as part of the CIT Woden campus project and the new Woden transport interchange project. So we are getting on with those works. Those are based on work both that happened early in the masterplan process and which has now been confirmed with more up-to-date traffic modelling that has been undertaken in the development of this very important project for the regeneration of Woden town centre.

**MR HANSON:** I have a supplementary question. Has a qualified engineer provided a more detailed risk assessment of the proposed interchange?

**MR STEEL:** I thank the member for his question. We have, of course, been undertaking a variety of detailed work on the development of the interchange and the design of the interchange, which has since gone into the independent planning authority for approval with all of the documentation attached. That went through a period of notification, and the planning authority is currently assessing the detailed information that has been provided in relation to package 2. Package 1, which was the bus layer of the package, has already been approved by the authority, and we are looking forward to hearing from the authority in relation to the second package.

**MRS JONES:** Minister, will you table the qualified engineer detailed risk assessment of the proposed interchange, which was made post the Jacobs and VLC reports?

**MR STEEL:** I will take that on notice.

### **Business—ChooseCBR**

**DR PATERSON:** My question is to the Minister for Business and Better Regulation. Minister, can you please outline how the upcoming ChooseCBR program will work, and how it will benefit Canberra businesses and consumers?

**MS CHEYNE:** I thank Dr Paterson for her question. Participating in the ChooseCBR program is a great way for small businesses in Canberra to attract new customers and to get their existing customers spending more. For consumers, ChooseCBR is a fantastic opportunity to explore and discover local Canberra businesses that they may not have purchased from before.

ChooseCBR is also a great way for Canberrans to reward their favourite local businesses, which have supported the entire community through the pandemic. The program is about encouraging Canberrans to ‘spend local’. It gives Canberrans digital vouchers which effectively double their buying power. For consumers, that means

they can buy more and experience more. For businesses, that means their customers can spend more and try new products or services.

The government has allocated \$2 million in digital vouchers to ChooseCBR. Customers can start using ChooseCBR vouchers at participating businesses from next Wednesday, 9 June. That is ahead of the Queen's birthday long weekend. Customers will be able to access \$80 worth of vouchers each and every day of the program until the \$2 million has been spent. There are nearly 50,000 consumers already registered to spend at participating businesses from next week. So whether you are a small business or a consumer, signing up is free and it is easy at [choosecbr.act.gov.au](http://choosecbr.act.gov.au).

**DR PATERSON:** Minister, what changes have been made for the rollout of ChooseCBR following last year's trial?

**MS CHEYNE:** Last year's trial gave us great feedback from businesses and consumers. Although it only ran for 15 days, hundreds of businesses signed up, and over \$300,000 of digital vouchers were claimed. Following the trial we sought and assessed qualitative feedback, and we looked at the quantitative data, to make changes to the rollout of the full ChooseCBR program.

Firstly, we have increased the value of the ChooseCBR vouchers. The vouchers are now worth \$10, \$20 and \$50, with \$10 off when you spend \$20 or more, \$20 off when you spend \$40 or more and \$50 off when you spend \$100 or more. That also means that we have changed the value proposition. Consumers can now effectively double their purchasing power with ChooseCBR.

In the trial, vouchers were worth 25 per cent of the transaction value. We have changed that to 50 per cent of the transaction value. That is following feedback from businesses, business groups and consumers about simplifying it. This means customers are more likely to shop where they would not otherwise or purchase more than they would otherwise. We have changed the eligibility criteria for businesses, primarily by removing the JobKeeper eligibility requirement, so that more businesses can participate.

To make participating in ChooseCBR as simple as possible, we are providing businesses with a range of posters, badges, stickers and other point-of-sale material when they register. A range of digital resources and translated material are available for businesses to download from the ChooseCBR website. Just yesterday we uploaded gifs to Instagram with ChooseCBR, to help promote that further on social media. We have translated the key materials for businesses into 13 of the most—(*Time expired.*)

**MS ORR:** Minister, how can businesses and consumers sign up for ChooseCBR?

**MS CHEYNE:** I thank Ms Orr for the question. Signing up is free and easy at [choosecbr.act.gov.au](http://choosecbr.act.gov.au). It is very much still open to businesses and consumers. Businesses that registered during the trial can simply reactivate their existing account. New businesses to ChooseCBR fill in a simple online form, with basic details of their business. There is a short video on the website that takes businesses through a step-by-step guide of how to register. All that businesses need to have on hand to

register is their ABN, proof of business address, such as a utilities bill, and a bank statement for the account they wish to be reimbursed to.

To be eligible to register, businesses need to operate in the ACT, be in the retail, tourism and accommodation, arts and recreation, personal services or hospitality sectors, and have less than \$10 million in annual turnover. When you dive into those eligible sectors, there is a wide range of businesses that fit them. They include all manner of retailing and experiences, from toys to jewellery, flowers to tyres; hairdressers, laundry services, printing services, museums, escape rooms and the performing arts are all eligible businesses.

For consumers, registration is likewise free, quick and easy through [choosecbr.act.gov.au](http://choosecbr.act.gov.au). You will get an account and then, every day from 9 June, you can access ChooseCBR digital vouchers from your phone to double your buying power.

### **Roads—Boboyan Road**

**MR PARTON:** My question is to the Minister for Transport and City Services. Minister, back on 12 May, I asked you about the parlous state of Boboyan Road. You assured the Assembly that repairs would be done, and that you do undertake consultation with the local community on these matters. As recently as last weekend, a couple of regular users of this road told me, at the Snow Goose pub, that it is in the worst condition they can ever remember. Minister, the Boboyan Road users group has informed me that they have contacted you seven times in the past two months, with no response to any of those queries. Minister, why have you ignored the community members so worried about this dangerous stretch of road?

**MR STEEL:** We are not; we are getting on with upgrading those rural roads, and we are doing that with the support of the federal government through the Roads to Recovery Program. In terms of Boboyan Road alone, nine kilometres have been completed from the New South Wales border at the southern end, and capital works have been established onsite at the end of the sealed road, as well as on the southern side, with another one-kilometre section to be re-gravelled, starting about two kilometres from the New South Wales border.

We know that there was significant damage to the road and we understand that significant regrading and re-gravelling needed to occur. That work is happening. We will continue to undertake that work. We will do that in consultation with the community. Officials are most likely to be undertaking that consultation directly, and I am happy to put them in touch with officials so they can discuss those works more broadly.

**MR PARTON:** Minister, do you ever plan on meeting the Boboyan Road users group or even getting back to their emails, or will you continue to treat them with contempt?

**MR STEEL:** I reject the premise of Mr Parton's question. Of course, we hear from all members of the community about upgrades to roads, and we are undertaking those. The important thing is that we actually get on and do the upgrades that are needed on

those roads. That is exactly what we are doing through the work on Boboyan Road, Smiths Road, Sunshine Road and Booroomba Road, and the Angle Crossing works have been going on as well.

We have got to get on and do those works. At the point in time when they are being progressed, officials will discuss those matters with them, at the appropriate time, to get their input and to make them aware of those works happening. Of course, a lot of these relate to safety issues that have been the result of what has been occurring on the roads with rain and also on some of our rural roads with the recent bushfires. Those need to be prioritised. We just need to get on and do those works because there are safety issues that need to be addressed in the short term.

**MS LAWDER:** Minister, can you outline what immediate steps you have taken to address the most parlous safety issues?

**MR STEEL:** Madam Speaker, I did that in the first answer to the question that Mr Parton put to me.

### **Health—dental**

**MR DAVIS:** My question is to the Minister for Health and it relates to dental care in the ACT. We know that due to lack of foresight by the federal government that, unfortunately, dental care is not included in the Medicare system, in spite of a considered long-term campaign by the Australian greens. I am curious to know what work the ACT government is doing specifically to fill that gap and ensure that there is affordable dental care in Canberra for Canberrans from low-income families.

**MS STEPHEN-SMITH:** I thank Mr Davis for the question. Of course, the Australian Labor Party did also go to the last federal election with a very significant commitment in relation to expanding dental care, which is completely contrary to the approach that the coalition government has taken. It has more than halved the funding for the dental national partnership in 2017-18. It was \$2.23 million for the ACT in 2015-16 and was reduced to \$0.9 million in 2017-18. But despite that and despite the ongoing discussion between health ministers about the need for a long-term national dental partnership that appropriately funds this area of critical service, we are continuing to get on with the job.

The oral health service in the Division of Rehabilitation, Aged and Community Services of Canberra Health Services is a multidisciplinary team that provides diagnostic, preventive, restorative oral surgery and dentures for the Canberra community. This team provides dental services through mobile dental clinics, through community health centres across Canberra, through the Hume Health Centre at the Alexander Maconochie Centre, at Bimberi Youth Justice Centre and at Dhulwa mental Health Unit.

Of course, ACT Labor has continued to expand these services, and in 2018 we expanded appointment times for child and youth dental services at the Belconnen and Tuggeranong health centres, and in 2019 two additional mobile dental centres

commenced delivering services to identified schools and to vulnerable clients throughout the Canberra community.

**MR DAVIS:** Minister, are there any plans to expand the provision of affordable dental services closer to home for my constituents in Brindabella?

**MS STEPHEN-SMITH:** As I am sure Mr Davis is aware, it is not appropriate to ask for policy announcements to be made during question time. But what I can say is that we have made additional investments in the oral health service—

**Mr Hanson:** Madam Speaker, on a point of order, the minister has just pointed out that the member asked for a statement of policy, which would mean that the question is not in order, and I ask you to rule the question out of order.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** No, it is a comment by the minister; it is not my ruling in any way, shape or form. Minister, you have the floor.

**MS STEPHEN-SMITH:** In terms of additional investment, the oral health service has, of course, been working on the recovery program for public dental health throughout the 2020-21 financial year, under the additional recovery funding provided as part of the COVID response. The waiting list has been reduced from 16.4 months—which I think we would all agree was too long—to a current wait time of less than 9½ months. This is now below the target that we have set of 12 months.

In order to reduce the dental waiting time to below 12 months it was identified that 1,900 clients would have to be removed and offered dental treatment outside the oral health service. And that was exactly what we funded through our recovery program. So a total of 3,661 of the longest-waiting clients have, in fact, been offered an appointment through this program. To date 1,826 of these clients have accepted these offers and have been referred for dental work.

Within that waiting list those clients who identified as Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander were prioritised, 67 clients were identified, and from those 24 clients have accepted the offer.

**MR BRADDOCK:** Minister, can you outline the number of Canberrans missing out on dental care because of the cost?

**MS STEPHEN-SMITH:** I do not think it is possible for me to provide a precise answer on that because there will be people on the public dental waiting list who are missing out. There are also people who will not have placed themselves on the public dental waiting list but who may not be accessing dental services because they are high cost or because of the gap they may be required to pay even if they have private health insurance.

What I can say is that as of 31 May there are just over two and a half thousand adult clients on the restorative waiting list for dental treatment, and there is no waiting list for youth services. As of 31 May, as I have indicated, we brought down the waiting

time and the restorative waiting list time has been reduced to 10½ months. There were 97 clients waiting for full dentures with a waiting time of just under 11 months.

Again, if the commonwealth would come to the party and if the commonwealth had not halved funding under the dental national partnership over time—

*A member:* Shame!

**MS STEPHEN-SMITH:** Shame, indeed—we would, of course, be able to do more in this very important space. But the ACT Labor government has consistently invested and funded and expanded services, and through our recovery plans for COVID-19 we have seen more of our vulnerable Canberrans able to access dental health services.

### **Government—land sales**

**MS CLAY:** My question is to the Minister for Housing and Suburban Development. The ACT government has a commitment in the parliamentary and governing agreement to refine land sale processes so that major sites are released for high quality proposals, not just to the highest bidder. In recent estimates, the CEO of the Suburban Land Agency said that the SLA sometimes uses place-making and tendering processes for major projects to get good outcomes but they use auctions for smaller sites. But a collection of small sites is what builds the neighbourhood. These small site sales lean on the Territory Plan and DA processes to ensure that they get good outcomes. The SLA recently sold small parcels of land in Whitlam and Taylor for packaged lots and multi-unit sites at auction. How does the SLA ensure that these sales lead to high quality development for the suburbs?

**MS BERRY:** I thank Ms Clay for the question. As she noted, the Suburban Land Agency is engaging in lots of different ways in communities to make sure that it is not just building homes for revenue for the government but also building great suburbs that people want to live in and can call their homes. Examples of smaller sites where the government was able to use that place making work and consult with the community differently are the Gold Creek Homestead out at Gungahlin—I know that Yerrabi members will be interested in how that process is getting along—and the waterfront police station at Belconnen, which was also pulled off the indicative land release program so that the Suburban Land Agency, after conversations with me, could have a different conversation with the community to engage that kind of place making activity to ensure that the community had a chance to be able to participate in some of those smaller sites.

The Suburban Land Agency work really hard to make sure that they get feedback from the community about how future developments meet the needs of that community in suburbs, particularly through engaging them once they move into those suburbs with the Mingle program. The Mingle program has been an outstanding success in getting feedback and feeding that back into the Suburban Land Agency and the board so that they can consider, in their future activities within suburbs, how the feedback from the Mingle programs can be fed into that sales work.

**MS CLAY:** How do you ensure that, with the neighbourhoods that are being built block by block when the sites are sold at auction, we are getting high quality outcomes, not simply selling to the highest bidder?

**MS BERRY:** That is the commitment that the ACT government has made through the Suburban Land Agency—to build great suburbs for everybody, to build homes that people want to live in and not just for the highest cost.

**MR DAVIS:** Minister, what percentage of land sold through the Suburban Land Agency is sold through auction?

**MS BERRY:** I will take that question on notice.

### **Planning—Woden town centre**

**MR MILLIGAN:** My question is to the Minister for Planning and Land Management. According to the Woden Town Centre Master Plan, the community expressed mixed views about building heights and lessees raised concerns about building heights of 12 storeys or more. Why, according to the Woden Valley Community Council's research, did the government put the wishes of the developers to build 28 storeys around the central Woden town square before the needs raised by the community and lessees?

**MR GENTLEMAN:** I thank Mr Milligan for the question. It is not the case. We do not put the views of developers and the needs of developers in front of the ACT community. We of course put the values of the ACT community up front in our planning and land management for the future. That is why we went to the community many years ago with the Woden Town Centre Master Plan and succeeded in getting their assistance and authority to go ahead with the plans that you are now seeing being delivered in the Woden town centre. In regard to approvals of this course, they are approved by the independent Planning and Land Authority based on the allowances available in the town centre master plans, and of course the National Capital Plan and the ACT Territory Plan.

**MR MILLIGAN:** Minister, what is the government's plan to allow for attractive open space for the many residents coming to live in the town centre? Is there one?

**MR GENTLEMAN:** Yes, as well articulated by the community during that master planning process, and those attractive open place areas for recreation are being delivered as per the master plan.

**MRS JONES:** Minister, will you change the zoning for Woden in any way to reduce the building heights around that central town square to align with the city? Is it too late? Where are these recreational spaces that you refer to?

**MR GENTLEMAN:** They are well articulated in that master plan, as I said earlier. No, I won't be changing any zoning around Woden. That was well designed with the master planning process and of course with the consent, agreement and input from the Woden community, at the time.

**Planning—green waste**

**MRS KIKKERT:** My question is to the Minister for Transport and City Services. The Parkwood green waste facility is essential for many people in Belconnen, who are furious it is closing. The government has advised residents to go to Mitchell or Mugga Lane. The current operator has said that they have been in discussions with ACT NOWaste about relocation options for close to three years. Mitchell is at 90 per cent capacity and cannot handle more traffic. Mugga Lane is too far. Minister, a start-up gardening business has calculated that going to Mugga Lane will cost them an additional \$400 a week. Minister, when the Mitchell facility becomes overwhelmed, what will the government do when people are turned away and cannot afford to drive to Mugga Lane?

**MR STEEL:** I answered this comprehensively in the previous sitting week for Mrs Kikkert, noting that we understand the importance of having green waste collection throughout the ACT and that we are undertaking a review of waste facilities right across Canberra at the moment, particularly noting that there is a lot of growth in the north of the city. That is one of the reasons we have rolled out household green waste collection, and we intend to extend that to FOGO in the future—

**Mrs Kikkert:** I have a point of order. The question is specific, and I did not ask this several weeks ago. The question is: when the Mitchell facility becomes overwhelmed, what will the government do when people are turned away and cannot afford to drive to Mugga Lane? It is about when they are turned away from Mitchell.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** The Minister has a minute and a half to get to it, but he is talking about the general planning, so I think he is on track.

**MR STEEL:** We are currently reviewing the waste facilities around Canberra and the provision of waste facilities, including any future sites that may be needed. I mentioned that in my previous answer in the last sitting week, and I mentioned it again in answer to your question, Mrs Kikkert. There are a range of places to drop off green waste in Canberra, including at Mitchell, at a cost. There are also many private businesses—some of which the Canberra Liberals sided with, against our free household collection scheme around Canberra—which can take that green waste and bring it to a place like Corkhill Bros at Mugga Lane for it to be turned into compost.

So there are a range of options for people, and the government is undertaking further work to review the provision of waste facilities across the ACT. We will continue to roll out our Food Organics Garden Organics collection scheme in line with our commitments to provide better services to Canberrans. The reason this particular site will be closing is— (*Time expired.*)

**MRS KIKKERT:** I have a supplementary question. Minister, given that Belconnen is the largest suburban population centre in the ACT, why is it acceptable to have no local green waste facility for them?

**MR STEEL:** I have just mentioned that we are providing all households with free household collection for garden waste.

*Mrs Kikkert interjecting—*

**MR STEEL:** That is literally collected from the front of their houses every single fortnight, and we are looking to extend that, through food organic collections, because that is what Labor committed to at the last election. It is something that the member fought against every step of the way.

*Mrs Kikkert interjecting—*

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Mrs Kikkert, your colleague has the floor.

**MR CAIN:** Minister, can you explain why, in an answer to a question on notice, you said that the government had not consulted operators about possible relocation options, when in fact the operators had been consulting with ACT NOWaste for close to three years?

**MR STEEL:** I thank the member for his question. As I have mentioned, we are undertaking a review at the moment. That review has not been completed.

### **Planning—schools**

**MS ORR:** My question is to the minister for education. Minister, how is the ACT government leveraging the expertise of the tertiary sector to inform decision-making in the education portfolio?

**MS BERRY:** I thank Ms Orr for her question, and note that Gungahlin is one of the highest population growth areas in the country. Of course, meeting the needs of that growing community through our public school builds has been a priority for this government. As our population grows and our school enrolments are growing even higher, we need to make sure that we provide those school facilities in a timely way.

We are also seeing more families choosing public education, which shows that Canberrans have great trust in our public schools. The ACT government works with the ANU School of Demography to incorporate their demographic research into our enrolment forecasting. These are not matters that are just decided on each year after the enrolments are made. Careful work is done using the expertise within the ANU School of Demography to ensure that we can meet the needs of our populations in our growing school communities.

The forecasts are continually updated with new information as that arises, and consider a range of factors, including demographic changes such as suburbs' age, birth rates and new developments. Using this information, the government looks ahead and plans for additional school infrastructure where it is needed. The planning can be seen in the 2019 infrastructure plan, which outlines a pipeline of education projects, new schools, expansions of existing schools and school improvements.

**MS ORR:** Minister, when is the next new public school opening in Canberra?

**MS BERRY:** The next new school opening in the ACT will be in Throsby. In 2021, people will recall that at the start of this year our new school in Denman Prospect, Evelyn Scott School, opened. There will be a new primary school in Throsby, as I said, this year. In 2023 a new high school in Kenny will be opening as well. The school in Throsby will include areas such as a large community room and kitchenette, a multipurpose double gym, changeroom facilities, turf sports fields and outdoor multipurpose hard courts for all the students, school staff and others to enjoy. The school will also be Canberra's third zero emissions school, something that the ACT government is enormously proud of.

Then the new high school in Kenny will accommodate 800 students, and will include general and specialist learning areas, a performing arts space, a double gymnasium, small group programs, natural turf playing fields, external hard courts and a kitchen garden as well as various external learning environments.

**MR PETTERSSON:** Minister, how does the design of new schools meet the needs of an increasingly complex student population?

**MS BERRY:** I thank Mr Pettersson for his really important question. The government sets its design specifications for school infrastructure to set the functional and technical requirements for new schools, expansions and modernisation projects. These specifications are informed by research and evidence on how physical spaces can best support learning and create great workplaces for staff.

The aim for the school designs is to enable personalised learning, develop community partnerships, honour diversity and foster wellbeing. Design also must consider cultural connection to Ngunnawal country, the land on which the school is built. Infrastructure improvements are underpinned by the principles of universal design to increase accessibility of school sites for all students, improve the provision of inclusive education programs, and design aspects in school designs, such as inclusive playgrounds.

In the last term of government the ACT government invested over \$15 million in infrastructure improvements for the development of safe and inclusive public school environments. This included projects and upgrades such as sensory gardens, outdoor courtyards and playgrounds, classroom modifications to support sensory play, and appropriate withdrawal spaces, as well as the establishment of spaces for small group learning. These kinds of areas were carefully designed and established in collaboration with the school communities and allied health experts to ensure that they were safe and appropriate, and met the needs of those school communities.

### **Municipal services—Tuggeranong dog park**

**MS LAWDER:** My question is to the Minister for City Services, relating to the closure of the Tuggeranong dog park in Greenway. Minister, dog owners have informed me that signs regarding the closure of the dog park were erected on 19 May,

advising of the closure a few days later, on 24 May. The park is scheduled to be closed again shortly after this for a further three months. Minister, is four days notice what your government considers good community consultation?

**MR STEEL:** I thank the member for her question. The reason we are undertaking improvements at Tuggeranong dog park is that we know how much this space is valued by our community, people who want to exercise their animals as responsible pet owners. That is why we are undertaking improvements at the park. We undertake those improvements across a variety of different dog parks. That includes Yarralumla at the moment. Works are underway at a variety of different dog parks, and that includes Tuggeranong, and those include additional tree plantings—

**Ms Lawder:** Point of order, Madam Speaker.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Mr Steel, resume your seat.

**Ms Lawder:** My question specifically related to community consultation and whether four days notice was sufficient.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** It was very early into the minister's time to answer. I will allow the minister to conclude.

**MR STEEL:** We know that there are a variety of different parks that are available for people to use at any one time, as well as off-lead spaces that they can use around other parts of Canberra that are not fenced off necessarily. We understand that the community can use those at a time when these improvements are happening.

They are important improvements, because they will see the installation of new irrigation which will make sure that there is plenty of green space for dogs to exercise in as well as other improvements that we will be exploring, including tree planting in the Tuggeranong town centre. These are improvement works that happen from time to time in order to ensure that our assets are fit for purpose, are well maintained and can be used well into the future.

I know, having used Tuggeranong dog park quite a bit myself, that it can be a bit of a dustbowl at times in areas. Many paws have used the dog park over a long period. The park does need this work undertaken. We understand that that may be inconvenient for people, but there are other options for dog owners if they want to exercise their dogs elsewhere and there are other dog parks around Canberra. *(Time expired.)*

**MS LAWDER:** Minister, is four days notice what your government considers good community consultation?

**MR STEEL:** We have given notice that these improvements need to be made. I think the community will understand that there are going to be important improvements for the future of the dog park that are being undertaken by the government. We understand that they may be inconvenient, but there are other spaces for them to use if they want to exercise their animal in a public space.

**MR PARTON:** Minister, why wasn't a temporary dog park erected in Tuggeranong as it was in Yarralumla? Given the high population of dogs in Tuggeranong, where exactly do you expect dogs to exercise if people are specifically looking for a dog park?

**MR STEEL:** There is an inner north dog park; there are dog parks in Gungahlin and Belconnen. There is a whole range of different enclosed dog parks. There are also many spaces right across Canberra that are provided. People can have a look on ACTmapi; it very clearly states where dogs can be exercised. They can do so on a leash if the dog tends to run off or, if people have control over their animal and it can be recalled, they can do it off leash on many ovals around Canberra, while this important work is being undertaken.

Our government is committed to making sure that we have great quality public spaces, including for recreation of animals. We committed to build two new dog parks at the election—something that only Labor committed to—in Franklin and in Lanyon. We are committed to making sure that our existing dog parks are also available for the community. That includes Duffy, which is also available on the south side for people who may want to use a dedicated dog park while this work is being undertaken at Tuggeranong.

In relation to Yarralumla, while we did explore the provision of a temporary dog park, we consulted with residents in the area and, as a result of that consultation, we did not provide that temporary dog park. We do talk to the community about these issues, but these are important upgrades, and they just need to be undertaken.

### **Roads—Well Station Drive**

**MS CASTLEY:** My question is to the Minister for Transport and City Services. I refer to the recently released proposals to upgrade Harrison roads to prepare for the 2023 opening of Kenny High School. The plans do not include duplicating Well Station Drive other than a few metres outside the school entrance even though the road duplication was recommended by the independent traffic impact assessment report. The report also recommends other measures that TCCS have ignored. Minister, you told the Gungahlin Community Council in May that there wasn't time to duplicate the road and it could be done in the future. Why cannot this 300-metre stretch of road be duplicated within 18 months, before the school opens?

**MR STEEL:** I thank the member for her question, noting the investment that our government is making to improve road connections but also to make sure that we have got the provision of great education facilities for young people in the Gungahlin region. As part of that work and to make sure that we have a brand new school available in Kenny—I think it opens in 2023—we need to undertake upgrades to facilitate the school. We know that the scope of upgrades that we need to undertake within that time period is the extension of Albatross Crescent to facilitate access to the school. And that is what we are doing.

Of course, a recommendation has been provided as part of the due diligence and planning work that we have undertaken on this project that does recommend the future upgrade of the road to a duplicated road, and that is something that we have taken into account. We have not ignored it, and we will continue to look at it in the future, but the main reason we undertook these upgrades was to facilitate access to the school. And that is exactly what the upgrades are doing, with the extension of Albatross Crescent. We will be providing active travel paths as well along Well Station Drive as part of the work as well as signalised intersections.

This is a substantial investment that the government is making here and of course we will continue to look at upgrades around the Gungahlin region. As I mentioned at the Gungahlin Community Council, the government is committed to undertaking and developing a mesoscopic model, which is an operational traffic model, over the next year which will help to inform future improvements to roads around Gungahlin and what the priorities are. They could include Well Station Drive but we are collecting the evidence to make sure that our decisions are based on the best possible information available.

**MS CASTLEY:** Minister, don't you think it would cause less traffic impact for Gungahlin by doing it sooner rather than later, with fewer safety concerns for the students?

**MR STEEL:** No. In fact, it would cause more of a problem because we cannot duplicate the road in time for the school to be operational. So we need to facilitate this brand new school being opened in 2023, and that is what this project will do. If we need to come back into the future we have made sure that the way that the road upgrades are being designed is that they are future-proof for a future duplication, if it is needed. The intersection will be the correct width, and so if we do need to add an additional lane to the road on either side then we absolutely can do that without having undertaken redundant works in the first package.

**MR MILLIGAN:** Minister, what is the point of having an independent traffic report if you do not implement their recommendations?

**MR STEEL:** We may do it in the future. It has provided us with a great deal of information that we will use in that future planning. But as I have said, we are undertaking a mesoscopic model. That was Labor's commitment that we brought to the election to help inform future upgrades to roads around Gungahlin—not just looking at Well Station Drive as one road within the broader traffic network in Gungahlin but all of the roads, Horse Park Drive, Mirrabei Drive, Nudurr Drive, Gungahlin Drive. Looking at all these roads and what we need to do to make sure that people can remain connected and move around appropriately as the region continues to grow as well as the connections into the town centre. That also includes active travel connections.

That work is happening over the next year and that will be yet another input into the decision-making that the government will be undertaking around how we improve our road network, our public transport network and our active travel connections around

Gungahlin. But we are getting on with the work and investing in the budget in making sure that we can facilitate access to the brand new school in Kenny, because we are committed to providing that safe access and good school education to all young people.

### **Arts—Gungahlin**

**MR BRADDOCK:** My question is for the Minister for the Arts. The Gungahlin arts program was very welcomed and is coming to an end this financial year. In the absence of an arts centre based in Gungahlin, what will be available to assist Gungahlin artists going forward?

**MS CHEYNE:** I thank Mr Braddock for the question. A little bit of background to this before I get to the substantive point of the question, if I may; what Mr Braddock is referring to are pop-up arts activities and events in Woden and Gungahlin. They were announced as part of a new funding package in the 2017-18 budget. They provided collaborative opportunities for an artistically active and connected community to engage and participate throughout the 2019-20 and 2021 years. They have been incredibly well received, including very recently with the Celebrate Gungahlin Festival. I note that Mr Braddock wrote to my office about his thanks for the festival and how well coordinated it had been.

Consultation on the future of pop-up arts activities and events for Woden and Gungahlin is ongoing. Both the Belconnen and the Tuggeranong arts centres that administer these have established an advisory group to provide information and strategic advice. artsACT is preparing to review the outcome of the program as careful consideration will need to be given at the end of the three-year period.

The final report on this is due in December 2021, with an acquittal date of April 2022. I certainly understand that communities may have ongoing and high expectations of ongoing support. We very deeply value the impact these programs have had, but I simply cannot comment on the possible extension of this program while that review is underway.

**MR BRADDOCK:** Will there be space available in the Gungahlin multipurpose community centre for artists to create and display their works?

**MS CHEYNE:** All of that work is still subject to government decision, and that work particularly is being led by the Chief Minister.

**MS CLAY:** Minister, what plans are in place for long-term opportunities to support arts careers outside the year-to-year festival or one-off grant models?

**MS CHEYNE:** It is very important to note that the ACT government provides an incredibly wide and broad amount of arts funding to Gungahlin and to Tuggeranong, but right across the community. There are many funding opportunities that are available to artists—one is AMPitUP, which we have recently been discussing and about which I will have more to say hopefully later this month.

Also, this is a good opportunity to remind the community that arts activities funding is available year round. That includes up to \$5,000 for projects, which artists can apply for at any time during the year. In addition to that, there are two rounds of funding available for activities, of between \$5,000 and \$50,000. The round for that has just re-opened two days ago and closes at the end of July, and I strongly encourage artists and creatives from right across the community to engage with that.

I can also inform members that all details about funding and other opportunities are available on the artsACT website. I would strongly encourage anyone interested to look at the creative recovery and resilience program, which is providing a very wide range of innovative and new opportunities for artists particularly to engage with the city, with government directorates and with businesses in different ways, which is another opportunity too.

### **Planning—green waste**

**MR CAIN:** My question is to the Minister for Transport and City Services. Minister, I have received numerous calls and emails from constituents about the closure of the green waste facility in Belconnen at the end of this month—more engagement than any other issue that I have dealt with thus far. In a letter to you, the operators of the facility have proposed a number of potential solutions, such as extending the lease and alternative sites in Belconnen. The operators have also made it clear that their Mitchell green waste facility is almost at capacity. Minister, have you read the letter from the operators outlining alternative options to ensure this service can continue in Belconnen? If so, what is your response?

**MR STEEL:** I thank Mr Cain for his question. As I have stated, the ACT government is undertaking a review of the provision of waste facilities in the north of Canberra. We understand that this is a growing region and we are investigating what options might be available. We have not ruled out potentially providing the acceptance of green waste at the Mitchell Resource Management Centre, for example. There are currently drop-off points both at CSG on Vicars Street in Mitchell and at Weilwun Landscape Supplies on Morisset Road in Michell. Both of those have fees that apply.

What we have done in recent years is we have rolled out the green waste collection service to every household that wants a bin and we have committed also to extend that to food waste. That is an important service that did not exist before in Canberra. In the past, the only way you could get rid of your green waste was to go to a collection point. Things have changed dramatically, and we have taken that into account in our future planning. We have not ruled out potential additional drop-off sites on the north side, but we are waiting for the review to come in. There is the availability, we understand, at those sites that I have mentioned to drop off waste if people do not want to go to Mugga Lane and drop it off for free.

That is the process that we have been engaged with. The reason why we have had to stop this service is the longstanding commitment, as part of the work that is being undertaken to develop Ginninderry, that block 1586 will be turned into open space with parkland, a sports field and other suitable features, which are going to be fantastic recreational facilities for the whole north of Canberra to use. Of course, we

will continue to look at how we provide the green services going forward, but we have also extended those services. *(Time expired.)*

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Mr Cain, do you have a supplementary?

**MR CAIN:** Minister, why is the Labor-Greens government closing a facility so clearly needed by the community and for which green bins cannot compensate without proposing an acceptable solution now?

**MR STEEL:** Madam Speaker, we have been very clear, on a longstanding basis, about the closure of this site. The Liberals may have only just picked up on this now, but it has been a longstanding discussion that has been occurring over a long period. At the same time, we have been rolling out extra services for Canberrans. They have the option of providing their garden waste in their 240-litre green waste bin right at their property and it will be collected on a fortnightly basis.

We are looking at how we can extend those services in future. We are currently in that planning stage now, ahead of the waste contracts being up for procurement in 2023. As well, we are looking at further options to provide drop-off points on the north side as part of the waste review that is underway at the moment. In the interim, people will have to find a new place to drop off their waste at one of the locations in Mitchell that I mentioned, or they can do so for free down at Mugga Lane.

**MRS KIKKERT:** Minister, do you think it is acceptable to expect Belconnen residents to make more than an hour's round trip to the Mugga Lane Resource Management Centre to dispose of green waste?

**MR STEEL:** I think Mrs Kikkert has just ignored the answer that I have just given to the questions. There are, of course, drop-off points on the north side that are currently available—

*Mrs Kikkert interjecting—*

**MR STEEL:** and we have provided every single household the opportunity to have a green bin, a 240-litre green bin—

*Mrs Kikkert interjecting—*

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Mrs Kikkert, that is enough!

**MR STEEL:** collected from their household on a fortnightly basis, something that you argued against—

*Mrs Kikkert interjecting—*

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Mrs Kikkert! Mrs Kikkert, you are now warned.

**MR STEEL:** every single step of the way.

**Industrial relations—work health and safety**

**MR PETTERSSON:** My question is to the Minister for Industrial Relations and Workplace Safety. Minister, how will the outcomes of the meeting of workplace safety ministers affect workers in the ACT?

*Members interjecting—*

**MADAM SPEAKER:** I assume the minister heard the question.

**MR GENTLEMAN:** I did.

*Members interjecting—*

**MADAM SPEAKER:** There was a little bit of static in the room, members.

**MR GENTLEMAN:** I thank Mr Pettersson for his question and for his interest in the safety of workers across the ACT. Two weeks ago, I met with state and territory workplace safety ministers and the commonwealth minister to discuss Marie Boland's 2018 review of the model work health and safety laws. The review was a win for workers. It made 34 important recommendations for improving the model work health and safety laws, from which the ACT's own work health and safety laws are derived.

At this meeting ministers agreed with the recommendations to create regulations to deal with psychosocial hazards. These important regulations will ensure that psychosocial risks, including workplace bullying and harassment, are treated with the same seriousness as risks to physical safety. I was pleased that all ministers agreed on the importance of these matters. Unfortunately, one thing that ministers could not agree on was the introduction of industrial manslaughter as an offence under the Work Health and Safety Act. The ACT voted in favour of this recommendation, as did all of the other Labor states, but the commonwealth and the Liberal states voted against it.

**MR PETTERSSON:** Minister, will the ACT be moving forward with its own industrial manslaughter legislation?

**MR GENTLEMAN:** Yes, the ACT will be moving ahead with the introduction of industrial manslaughter—

**Mr Hanson:** Madam Speaker, I would just ask if that is an announcement of policy that the question asked for. Will it be moving ahead with its own legislation? It sounds like it, doesn't it?

**MR GENTLEMAN:** We made that announcement several months ago, Madam Speaker.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Mr Gentleman has the floor.

**MR GENTLEMAN:** As previously announced, yes, we are moving ahead with the introduction of industrial manslaughter as an offence under the Work Health and Safety Act. We knew that we could never count on the federal Liberal government to stand up for workers and their right to strong protections. That is what the industrial manslaughter legislation is. It is a protection for workers. It provides a strong deterrent against dangerous workplace practices by increasing penalties. It also expands the scope of who is responsible for workplace safety. Every worker has the right to return home safe from work.

It is because of this right that we are establishing industrial manslaughter as a work health and safety offence, because sometimes people do not come home safely. We need to ensure that their families have every opportunity to access justice for their loved ones. I am pleased to have the support of industry and employee representatives in the ACT on this important matter, and look forward to introducing the legislation soon.

**DR PATERSON:** Minister, can you please update the Assembly on the implementation of the labour hire licensing scheme?

**MR GENTLEMAN:** I thank Dr Paterson for her interest in safety across the ACT, too. The scheme commenced last week, on 27 May. The scheme is administered by WorkSafe ACT, and labour hire providers can now apply for a licence via the WorkSafe ACT website.

The scheme is designed to encourage responsible employment practices in the ACT labour hire sector, recognise legitimate providers and ensure that workers can expect equity in workplace standards. Those working under labour hire arrangements can be vulnerable to poor treatment at work, such as underpayment, unauthorised deductions from wages and unsafe working conditions.

The licensing system creates a framework for preventing and responding to noncompliance, and it provides appropriate mechanisms to ensure that the health, safety and rights of workers are being protected to the high standard expected in the ACT. Labour hire providers will be required to have a licence from November this year, and information sessions on the scheme, including the application process, are being run in the coming weeks. I encourage labour hire providers to visit the WorkSafe ACT website to learn more about the scheme and book into an information session.

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

## **Canberra—proposed national park city**

**DR PATERSON (Murrumbidgee) (3.03):** I move:

That this Assembly:

(1) notes that:

- (a) Canberra was recently named the world's most sustainable city;
  - (b) accolades such as this are the result of policy decisions made by the ACT government, together with important contributions from the business and not-for-profit sectors, and from individuals and other groups within our community;
  - (c) over the past decade, there has been a significant change to Canberra's brand, image and identity with an improved sense of pride;
  - (d) the exponential growth in tourism, with visitor expenditure growing from \$1.3 billion in December 2009 to \$2.8 billion in December 2019, combined with being ranked third by Lonely Planet's Best in Travel in 2018, are testament to this;
  - (e) despite this, national and international media and other outlets sometimes portray Canberra as being nothing more than the seat of federal politics;
  - (f) the ACT government's "Brand CBR" and "More Than" campaigns position the city prominently and positively within the local and national psyche;
  - (g) Canberra is currently facing a skills shortage and needs to compete with many other cities across Australia to attract people;
  - (h) there is opportunity to leverage additional strategies to continue to develop Canberra's reputation as a progressive, sustainable and contemporary city, offering a great quality of life, such as the global National Park City status;
  - (i) the National Park City Foundation has been established to recognise those cities in which government, business and community work together for improved relationships between people and nature;
  - (j) national park cities:
    - (i) have a vision and framework, developed through collaboration between city partners—government, organisations, businesses, groups and communities;
    - (ii) do not require a fee for application;
    - (iii) sit outside of legislation and do not impose any levels of planning restriction, approval processes or bureaucracy;
    - (iv) encourage reporting by the city to the National Park City Foundation to track progress; and
    - (v) provide international recognition and celebration of initiatives and projects underway, and of the city's future aspiration;
  - (k) to date, London is the only city to be declared a National Park City;
  - (l) Adelaide has commenced the process to become recognised as a National Park City; and
  - (m) Canberra possesses the requisite qualities to become a National Park City; and
- (2) calls on the ACT government to:
- (a) explore whether there is benefit for Canberra to apply to become a National Park City through:

- (i) dialogue with the National Park City Foundation; and
  - (ii) community consultation to identify the level of support from organisations, business and the community;
- (b) continue to undertake important branding to position Canberra as “more than” meets the eye to attract people to visit, study, work, do business and live; and
- (c) continue to engage with, and provide content to, local and national media outlets; enabling them to portray Canberra’s unique identity and characteristics as a great place to visit, study, work, do business and live.

Recently Canberra was named the world’s most sustainable city. This is a great honour and testament to the incredible work undertaken at all levels across our community, from robust policymaking by the ACT government to contributions made by business, industry, not-for-profits, advocacy and individuals. It takes a village.

However, I was dismayed, following this news, to see many media channels, nationally and even internationally, splashing images of Parliament House alongside these headlines. Very often Canberra and the goings-on at Parliament House and politicians are conflated in the national media. Canberra is more than just Parliament House. Perhaps it is time for a divorce. I recognise and am grateful for the contribution that Parliament House brings, not least of which is the very reason for our being. This fact is not lost on me. But we have grown up, evolved and matured into a city in our own right, and this city has so much to offer.

Over the past decade we have seen the success of the Brand CBR campaign. I think we would all agree that this has helped us to reimagine our city, particularly in the eyes of the nation. It has contributed to fostering a renewed sense of place, pride and identity.

The work of Visit Canberra, in many of its marketing campaigns over the last 10 or so years, has helped cast Canberra in a different light. Testament to this is the growth of our visitor economy, with visitor expenditure increasing from \$1.3 billion in December 2009 to \$2.8 billion in December 2019.

We were recognised by Lonely Planet as ranking third in their salubrious “Best in Travel” in 2018. Accolades like this do not come easily. They are achieved by a multifaceted approach to place-making. This Saturday night you can even tune into SBS to see Canberra feature on episode 1 of *Trail Towns*, showcasing Canberra as a leading bicycle tourism destination in Australia and New Zealand.

I am so proud to call Canberra home. I made a conscious decision to move here 16 years ago and there is not a single day that I have regretted that decision or given it a second thought. In Canberra it is hard to keep up with weekend activities. There is always some festival, activity or celebration. There is always something to do and something different to do, as a visitor or a local.

Some of our advantages include our proximity to and the ease of being able to connect with different places and experiences within the ACT. The relative lack of traffic

congestion sets us apart. Our changing seasons, our natural and man-made environments, our suburban shopping centres, our heritage as a planned city, and our treed landscape and nature reserves all help provide our unique character and sense of identity and place. Over 60 per cent of the ACT is managed as a national park, nature reserve, urban open space, forestry or other green space.

Canberra was founded on principles of the garden city movement, a concept and design which is still very much alive and well today. Our green spaces, urban forest canopy and tree cover are going to become increasingly critical as the ACT continues to work towards reducing the urban heat island effect and providing climate change solutions.

We are all reasonably familiar with the concept of national parks—protected areas that are home to flora and fauna, unique geology and cultural heritage; inspiring places which capture people’s hearts and minds—and we are all familiar with urban areas. More than half the world’s population live in towns and cities.

National park cities recognise the important relationship between urban and natural areas, including the role of nature in our everyday lives for mental health and wellbeing. Globally, recognition of a national park city status is being awarded to cities where people and nature are well connected. To date, London is the only city in the world that has achieved this status. In Australia, Adelaide has commenced its journey towards this recognition; but I believe Canberra has what it takes.

National park cities provides a framework, a vision, a narrative for those cities where government, businesses, not-for-profits and the community come together to achieve shared goals towards clean air, green spaces, outdoor recreation, health and wellbeing, wildlife and habitat protection, and sustainable initiatives, activities and projects. Crucial to the success of an application to become a national park city is collaboration and community support, together with the backing and leadership of local politicians.

On reviewing what it takes and what it means to be a national park city, it is almost as though the founders of the National Park City Foundation had Canberra in mind. They described a national park city as:

A large, city-wide landscape; a place, a vision and a community that aims to be healthier; a city that includes a wide range of places, projects and initiatives that its residents would be proud to show other residents and both national and international visitors; a city that has an active civic society and an appetite, energy and mood to deliver key aspects of the National Park City; a city that has a robust, collaborative and healthy network of cross-sector organisations to implement actions to make the National Park City a success; and a city that implements meaningful policies to protect, increase and enhance nature, culture, heritage, the environment and public space.

National Park Cities have been described as those where:

... people and nature are better connected; Cities are rich with wildlife; Where every child and young person benefits from exploring, playing and learning outdoors; Cities where we all enjoy high-quality green spaces, where the air is

clean to breathe, where it's a pleasure to swim in the rivers and where we can all live lives that are more harmonious with ourselves, our communities and our planet.

Sound like Canberra? National park city status for Canberra would provide us with yet another feather in our cap. It would add credentials to our marketing campaigns, our sense of identity, place and pride. It would challenge us to further our aspirations for a healthy, green, clean city. Canberra offers an unparalleled intersect between urban living and natural environments. We have the best of both worlds, where the most indulgent, civilised and sophisticated experiences of city living are just a hop, skip and jump from our nature parks and natural environments.

Organisations, groups and businesses across the ACT contribute in many ways and from many different perspectives. Their work shows the breadth of talent and interest that we have within our community, from the cultural heritage embedded in the ACT from our traditional custodians to our environmental and social groups and our innovative, imaginative businesses that make such a considerable contribution to the fabric of this city. Within government, projects and initiatives, including those from the City Renewal Authority, Floriade Reimagined, Enlighten, the Multicultural Festival, Nature Play and others, all contribute to place-making and liveability.

It is often said that, in our city of 470,000 people, we have 460,000 planners. I see this as a real positive. Canberrans are active, engaged and passionate about their city and its future. Let us embrace the opportunity that a national park city status would present by working collaboratively and cohesively for a joint vision that brings us all together.

If Canberra were to become a national park city, a robust framework that sets out our vision would need to be developed. I would encourage that this align with a wide range of existing government policies and objectives, including our wellbeing indicators; ACT transport strategy and active travel framework; our statement of planning intent; the current planning reform work that is underway; and the draft reserve management plan for the Canberra Nature Park which is currently available for public comment.

Unlike UNESCO World Heritage Sites or national parks, as we commonly know them, national park cities, overseen by the World Urban Parks Association and the National Park City Foundation, do not carry the burden of legislation, regulatory restriction or bureaucracy. They do, however, carry accountability through annual reporting and measurement against stated outcomes.

National park city status is an ongoing journey. It is a continual engagement with the National Park City Foundation and with other national park cities worldwide. It is an ongoing opportunity to challenge ourselves, to pursue continual improvement in merging the benefits of city living with our surrounding and immersive natural environments and experiences through strategic policy and everyday actions.

It is a continual dialogue between city leaders, community groups, businesses and organisations. It provides an ongoing opportunity to promote our identity, our sense of

place and pride; an ongoing platform from which we can leverage and build our narrative as a sustainable, healthy, smart, innovative, progressive and contemporary city.

The National Park City Foundation has an ambition to name 25 national park cities by 2025. I call on the ACT government to explore, through dialogue with the foundation and with our community whether there is benefit for Canberra to become a national park city.

I also call on the ACT government to continue the important branding work already underway to position Canberra as 'More Than', to encourage people to visit, study, work, do business and live; to continue to work closely with local and national media outlets to help them positively advocate Canberra's unique identity and charm.

**MR BARR** (Kurrajong—Chief Minister, Treasurer, Minister for Climate Action, Minister for Economic Development and Minister for Tourism) (3.15): I thank Dr Paterson for raising this really important matter this afternoon and I can say from the outset that the government is very pleased to undertake the work that she has asked us to do in this motion.

I want us to just reflect though on point 1(c) of the motion, the journey over the past decade and the significant change in Canberra's brand, image and identity. I reflect on this, having been part of that journey and change as tourism minister now for 15 years. When I came to the job, I inherited a set of circumstances for the destination that could, frankly, only be described as grim.

Tourism Research Australia had undertaken some work to assess Australia's views of their national capital. In short, it was not fitting of an aspirational or short break; not fashionable; not a short-break destination for young people; not a destination associated with sporting events, shows or entertainment; not a city that is fun or active; not a city that offered a food or wine experience; not a city that offered any nature-based attractions or activities; and, finally, not being a friendly destination. That is a pretty devastating set of research findings that Tourism Research Australia undertook of the market. It did, within all that, show some positives for us: that it was a place to learn about the nation, that it did provide a memorable cultural experience, that it was a great short break for mature people and that it was a great place for families.

The task, essentially, over the last decade has been to build on those strengths and address the many destination weaknesses that we faced more than a decade ago. In reading out that list and then thinking if you were asked the same questions now, we would certainly get different answers on a food and wine experience, and on our destination's attractiveness to younger people.

We are not the Gold Coast; this is not a schoolies market. But certainly our demographic has shifted down somewhat below people 60 years of age, which is a good thing. We were also perceived poorly as a romantic short-break destination. Wintertime, glasses of red wine in front of the fire—I am sure there is something that can be done in this space.

The reason I reflect upon this is that more than a decade's worth of work in partnership with the tourism industry, with the hospitality industry, with arts and the cultural organisations, has seen most of those perceptions shift dramatically. Whenever a city introduces a new brand, as we did with CBR back pre-Canberra centenary, when you first launch, there are a variety of views on the branding. Some people say it is fantastic and others say that it is the worst city branding exercise ever undertaken.

**Mr Parton:** Of course, we will always support you, mate. Don't worry about that.

**MR BARR:** I do note this: at the time there was a somewhat muted response but there was an outright hostility from the opposition. But you normally take that as a barometer of these things. Over time people do voluntarily pick up and start using the brand; and clearly that has been the case, in that CBR has become very well established and well utilised across many different sectors of the community. I note many members proudly wear their CBR badges, not every day but most of the time. The flexibility and adaptability of the brand have proven its worth over nearly a decade now, together with the evolution of the city's marketing and, importantly, product development.

The recognition in Dr Paterson's motion of the various awards that the city has received over that time is important, but, of course, in seeking branding and new marketing there is always the question of what is next. In that context, I think what Dr Paterson has outlined, and the process and engagement that I think would be possible through the National Park City Foundation, represents an opportunity for us—and one that we are pleased to pursue.

Prior to the pandemic the ACT was smashing all-time records for both domestic and international visitation. The city's reputation had improved considerably and the quality of the tourism and visitor experience in Canberra had improved exponentially from where it was back in 2006.

I am very confident in the underlying strength of our product and our offering. As we put back together our domestic aviation network and as we put back together our international aviation network in time, making it cheaper and easier for people to come to Canberra, I am very confident that we will see a quick rebound and return to the all-time record levels of tourism that Canberra had been experiencing.

It is not just about tourists. As Dr Paterson has indicated, it is also about the people who live here. When you go back to the essence of the brand and its authenticity, it had to be embraced by Canberrans. This is a lesson we learnt from our sister city, Wellington, who for two decades have been running the Absolutely Positively Wellington campaign. It works. Wellington was given the title of the coolest little capital in the world as a result of a concerted, long-term effort by the buy-in of their own residents. If you do not believe it yourself, it is very hard to sell it to everyone else.

What I am pleased to be able to say is that from where we were in 2006 to where we are now there is a much greater sense of pride in this city. We have high-quality, authentic and world-class tourism experiences; and we live in the city that has been regularly, by many different sources, named as, if not the best then, amongst the top five cities in the world to live in on almost any measure. That is something to be proud of. It has not just happened by accident. It has been a long-term project. We look forward to building on that.

I think this motion, and the ideas within it, present a great way to take a further step to promote Canberra and to reinforce the things that are unique about this city. Thank you, Dr Paterson, for bringing this forward today. I hope it receives the unanimous support of colleagues in the Assembly. That would be a really important next step in our city's journey. I commend the motion to the Assembly.

**MS CASTLEY (Yerrabi) (3.23):** I want the Assembly to take a walk through our national capital's wonderful history, in particular a piece of art that is a favourite of many people in our great city. I refer to the larger-than-life bronze sculpture of the former Labor Prime Minister John Curtin and his treasurer, later Prime Minister, Ben Chifley—two men walking deep in conversation from the Hotel Kurrajong back to what is now the Old Parliament House after lunch. The sculpture is based on a photo that was taken in 1945 and is located at the spot where the snap was taken. It was made by the outstanding artist Peter Corlett, who is also applauded for *Simpson and his Donkey*, the sculpture outside the War Memorial.

Members might know that the iconic heritage-listed Hotel Kurrajong first opened in 1926, when our nation's capital began. The hotel was designed by the Commonwealth Chief Architect, John Smith Murdoch, who also designed what is now the Old Parliament House. The hotel first housed staff transferred from Melbourne to set up our new parliament. It continued as a home for our federal politicians and public servants for decades to follow.

Like so many cherished buildings in our capital, the Hotel Kurrajong's corridors are steeped in political democratic history. The hotel's website boasts of a lounge that is filled with books and artworks on the city's political history and leaders. The website remarks that the hotel team consider themselves proud custodians of its heritage. Our light on the hill Prime Minister, Ben Chifley, lived at the Hotel Kurrajong throughout his parliamentary career, including his four years as Prime Minister, until his death in 1951. He preferred it to the Lodge, and he basked in his morning 700-metre walk to the office.

Dr Paterson's motion speaks about Canberra's brand, image and identity. It suggests that our national capital status, the fact that we are the seat of federal parliament, is somehow holding us back from achieving our full marketing potential, or something like that; and that the political blood pouring from the house on the hill is a pollutant, a brake on what Canberra could be, impeding the progress we could make. That seems to be the message from the Labor-Greens government on this motion.

The Canberra Liberals disagree. Along with many Canberrans, the Canberra Liberals respect, cherish and celebrate our history—our rich tapestry of political history on display across our city in so many diverse, vibrant and creative ways, such as our towering Curtin and Chifley figures and other gems like those revealed in a Canberra secrets tour that I recommend to Assembly members.

Good luck to this ACT government with campaigning to promote our city to lure more tourists and residents. But let us not for one moment seek to make light of, revise or dilute our identity, which is steeped in the fact that we are Australia's proud national capital, announced on 12 March 1913 by the Governor-General's wife, Lady Denman.

We are a national capital, the seat of national government, the place where critical decisions are made that affect all Australians, not least decisions made by Labor luminaries like Curtin and Chifley who steered our country through war, showing courage and steely determination. We are a national capital boasting a strong skilled army of federal public servants, more than 55,000 of them based in Canberra, according to a 2018 report. We have an array of impressive national institutions, including the War Memorial, the National Gallery, the National Archives, the National Electoral Education Centre and Old Parliament House. The list goes on. The Canberra Liberals would not have it any other way; nor would other Canberrans.

I turn to the motion about Canberra's brand, image and identity. While so many Canberrans shiver in cold rentals with no heating or live in substandard public housing, while many struggle with punishing rate hikes and cost-of-living increases and while many Canberrans make a valiant effort to keep their small businesses afloat, the Labor-Greens government elected to represent them show how out of touch they are by raising issues that could not be more removed from the day-to-day reality of Canberrans.

Australians are smart. They overwhelmingly back Canberra as our national capital. An Australia Institute survey of almost 1,500 Australians in February found that people believe Canberra should remain the capital, the Prime Minister should live in the Lodge, and politicians should spend more time in Canberra. Almost 70 per cent of respondents believed that parliament should sit for more days each year. Clearly Australians respect our federal parliament; the important role of law making; and the democratic beacon that is Canberra, our national capital. As is often the case, the Labor-Greens government is out of step and out of touch with many Australians and what they hold dear.

The motion refers to media that sometimes portray Canberra as being nothing more than the seat of federal politics. It is not surprising that in media reports about federal political issues, journalists and commentators refer to Canberra, the home of federal parliament. Dr Paterson has said that this is annoying. In a radio interview on Tuesday, she remarked that this motion would divorce us from Parliament House. She added, "We are so much more than Parliament House and the politicians that go there."

The way the media refer to and portray Canberra is an issue that the Labor-Greens government might like to take up with those media organisations. To suggest that Canberra needs to divorce from Parliament House is concerning and shows a complete lack of respect for the system of parliamentary democracy that we cherish, the system that has seen Labor and Greens MLAs—in fact, all of us—elected to this place. I am unsure what the government is advocating as to where the federal parliament should go, along with its politicians, but the government's desire to revisit how our national capital is portrayed is disappointing.

The Labor-Greens statement about divorcing Parliament House appears as a slur on the tens of thousands of hardworking federal public servants who toil to implement programs across the nation to improve our communities and the standard of living for all Australians. How do such government remarks align with the fact that, day after day in this place, the Labor-Greens MLAs bellow for action from the federal government in all manner of ways. Just yesterday, we had Greens MLA Ms Clay saying that the Australian government should endorse a fossil fuel non-proliferation treaty. Her Greens colleague Mr Braddock called on the Australian government to move more federal public service agencies to Gungahlin. Isn't this the same federal parliament that the government seeks to divorce in its quest to boost Canberra's image, brand and identity?

In 2019 more than 114,000 Australians from 2,000 schools across our country landed in Canberra to fill their hungry little minds with knowledge about our democracy and the country that they are lucky enough to call home. The federal government provides a rebate for these students to travel to Canberra as part of their civics and citizenship education. Earlier this year it increased the rebate by 50 per cent. This means that more students will have the chance to visit our nation's capital and learn about our history and democracy.

Mr Assistant Speaker, 2,000 schools across our nation cannot be wrong. The teachers and principals at those 2,000 schools cannot be wrong. They know how important it is that our children learn about our parliamentary system of government, our electoral processes and our democratic history, and that they experience it firsthand in Canberra, the seat of our national institutions. It is worth noting that these school excursions are worth about \$150 million to the ACT, so they make a strong contribution to our local economy. The Canberran Liberals welcome this flood of young scholars, particularly from regional and rural areas, flocking to our nation's capital. They do not seem to fit the Labor-Greens government vision for Canberra's brand, image and identity.

In closing, I draw the attention of the Assembly to the "Chifley experience", an opportunity offered at the Hotel Kurrajong where guests can live like Chifley by staying in the room he resided in during his parliamentary career. There is no end to the experiences offered in our nation's capital that provide visitors and residents with wonderful opportunities to learn about our rich political and democratic heritage and freedoms. Canberrans young and old know that we live in the nation's capital and are proud to share that with tourists who often believe that the capital must be Sydney or Melbourne. That invites locals to spruik Canberra to explain how we became the nation's capital, what that means and how important it is to us.

To be our national capital is a badge of honour for Canberrans. To seek to revise or dilute that with motions about brand image and identity is a real concern. Staff at the Hotel Kurrajong see themselves as proud custodians of its heritage. The Canberra Liberals and most Canberrans salute them and share their pride in our illustrious heritage. Our national capital status is at the heart of who we are, what we stand for and what we promote, as our magnificent bronze statue of those revered leaders Curtin and Chifley so movingly remind us.

**MS VASSAROTTI** (Kurrajong—Minister for the Environment, Minister for Heritage, Minister for Homelessness and Housing Services and Minister for Sustainable Building and Construction) (3.34): I welcome this motion from Dr Paterson and reiterate the Chief Minister's comment about the government's support.

What could be more appropriate for our bush capital than to explore becoming part of the new national park city movement? The National Park City Foundation states:

A National Park City recognises the value of urban life, habitats, landscapes, people and culture, and seeks to apply appropriate National Park principles to whole cities.

It is not just about a brand; it is about an identity and about who we are. The foundation has put forward this working vision:

A National Park City is a place, a vision and a community. It is a city that is cared for through both formal and informal means to enhance its living landscape. A defining feature is the widespread and significant commitment of residents, visitors and decision-makers to act so people, culture and natural processes provide a foundation for better life.

This statement could have been written to describe the Canberra community and the love of our city and its surrounds.

As I noted in a ministerial statement to the Assembly in May, nature is the foundation of our city's wellbeing and is integral to our city's design. We all celebrate our living infrastructure, from our expansive national parks and reserves to our urban parks and connected green spaces embedded within city areas. Canberrans emphatically declare their love of our natural areas by volunteering thousands of hours of their own time to help maintain our parks, to monitor wildlife and the health of our waterways and lakes, and to enhance the visibility and appreciation of our heritage.

During National Reconciliation Week, I want to particularly highlight the debt we owe to the traditional custodians and first people, the Ngunnawal people, and other First Nations people of this region who cared for this country for thousands of years before colonisation. Exploring whether to become a national park city can only enhance our efforts to more deeply engage with and celebrate Aboriginal cultures. It is another opportunity to acknowledge and reconcile the harms perpetrated on First Nations people and the country they manage that we now jointly live on and to learn from them to work in harmony with our natural environment and embed its benefits into our city.

I can only agree with Dr Paterson that Canberra is too often lazily defined and stereotyped as nothing more than the seat of federal parliament. I know that many of us are frustrated that a few hundred often badly behaved FIFO workers are wrongly seen as representing our community. Being the nation's capital is important, but it is not all of who we are.

I am delighted by Ms Castley's interest in our local heritage and look forward to seeing her at next year's Heritage Festival. This motion is not about ignoring our role as the nation's capital; it is about complementing this role and showing how much more we are. We all know that Canberra is much more than just the nation's capital. In many ways, we have been one of Australia's best kept secrets and, over time, we are increasingly putting ourselves on the map. Our longstanding status as one of the most livable cities is testament to that fact.

As our city continues to grow, we need to increase our focus on the conservation of our natural heritage to build our collective resilience as we face the ongoing threats of introduced plants and animals and the effects of a changing climate, such as more extreme weather events and, as we have recently seen, the very real risk of global pandemics.

Rather than showing that the government is out of touch, we know that nature is the foundation of much of our wellbeing. Access to green spaces and biodiversity is proven to reduce stress and mental illness, increase relaxation and increase the number of people exercising. Our low crime rate in Canberra most likely comes, in part, from our green surrounds. Studies have shown that daily access to nature does reduce crime.

The goal of the National Park City Foundation is that cities that embrace this status are fundamentally places that make life better for people and wildlife. That statement simply and powerfully reflects our goals for Canberra. I welcome the opportunity to explore the benefits of becoming a national park city.

**MR STEEL** (Murrumbidgee—Minister for Skills, Minister for Transport and City Services and Special Minister of State) (3.39): I thank Dr Paterson for her motion today. The national park cities universal charter highlights that park cities are those where people, places and nature are better connected. The charter provides a vision of such cities that closely aligns with the things that we know Canberrans value—cities that are rich with nature and where everyone benefits from exploring, playing and learning outdoors; cities where we all enjoy high quality public and green spaces, where the air is clean to breathe. As Minister Vassarotti mentioned, there could not be a better description of Canberra and what the vision of national park cities is seeking to achieve.

Canberra is well placed to become recognised as a national park city, highlighting the opportunities to ensure that we become an even more livable and sustainable city and be known for that.

Canberra is known as a planned city and as a garden city, and this has many positive aspects. Many positive legacies have been left with Canberra as a result of that planning work. However, it has not always had positive elements. I probably would not go as far as Jane Jacobs did in her book on the life and death of American cities when she famously derided garden city planners “popularizing the ideas of the super-block, the project neighborhood, the unchangeable plan, and grass, grass, grass”. But there is no doubt that the garden city template that we have inherited is a decentralised and spread-out city that historically has prioritised low density living in suburbs without a substantial mix of uses, leaving us with a city footprint that has been left to grow into our nature reserves. This has not always been a positive aspect of the garden city model, and it has also led to greater distances being travelled by people who want to get from place to place. It is often difficult to provide good and efficient public transport across a city footprint that is larger than New York City with just a fraction of the population.

However, our modern planning strategies have attempted to keep what is good about Canberra whilst growing our city in a better way as a compact, efficient, diverse, sustainable and livable city into the future. The Planning Strategy 2018 retained the vision of making sure that we keep the features of the city that people love and value, including keeping the city in a bush landscape setting with access to green space. This connection between people and nature is what the national park city is all about.

I want to touch on a few aspects of how our city has changed, as the Chief Minister mentioned; what I am doing across my portfolio; and some of the different charter values of national park cities.

The first charter value is lives, health and wellbeing. Clean air is a focus of a national park city. We in Canberra enjoy some of the cleanest air in the world. We have one of the highest standards of health and wellbeing and the highest life expectancy in Australia. However, we have challenges, like others, and this is an opportunity to promote what we are doing, as well as to try and tackle those challenges.

Smoke is the main air pollutant in Canberra but, as the Transport Strategy released last year highlighted, we can do other things to reduce the amount of PM2.5 particulate matter in our air by transitioning to zero-emissions vehicles. That is a focus for me as transport minister in transitioning our bus fleet under the Transport Canberra zero-emissions plan. Today we announced the tender for the replacement of 34 of our most polluting diesel buses. They will be replaced, hopefully, with new, modern, clean, accessible buses that will make getting around even easier for the Canberra community, so that in the future they do not have to breathe in the toxic black fumes that come out of some of the existing vehicles. We also have broad plans for the private vehicle fleet under the zero-emissions vehicle action plan.

Another focus of the charter for national park cities is wildlife, trees and flowers. Our government understands that Canberra’s tree-lined streets, local parks and surrounding bushland are some of the things that make Canberra such a great place to live.

Urban forest alone is one of the key ways that we can reduce the impact of a changing climate on the health and wellbeing of our city. That is why we are continuing to invest in our urban forests through one of the largest tree planting programs that has been undertaken. That is reflected in the living infrastructure plan in the Planning Strategy itself but also in the Urban Forest Strategy, to try to grow and maintain our tree canopy cover, going forward.

Importantly, part of the Urban Forest Strategy was engaging with the community. This is also a key part of the national park city charter and the charter values of decision-sharing, learning and working together, and relationships with nature and each other. We have been doing that in a variety of ways.

One is through the adopt a park program, where we funded 32 community groups across the city in a range of different ways. One was the microforest project, the transformation of a suburban park in Downer which started in September 2020. It was a partnership with the Climate Factory and local residents, who came together to connect to nature by planting canopy cover in our local parks for everyone, old and young, to enjoy.

The Fetherston Garden Friends group is another one in my electorate—and Dr Paterson's electorate—that has benefited from that program. Fetherston Gardens is a fantastic legacy of Canberra's history; it is something that we want to enhance, going forward, and make more people aware of. It is a real hidden gem in Canberra.

We have also embarked on a new program, the Street Forestry Program, which is designed to engage with residents around tree planting in their street to help protect our forest and ensure that our new trees can grow to mature trees that give us a real benefit.

Importantly, in the approach we have taken in the Planning Strategy, and also in our Urban Forest Strategy and living infrastructure plan, we have been committed to taking an ecological approach, supporting biodiversity in our city. We want to see local ecosystems protected and supported through a multistorey urban forest. A range of different actions are outlined in the plans.

The charter notes that trees and, particularly, flowering plants are important. We know how important flowering plants are—both trees and shrubs—in providing habitat and for pollinating insects. That is a key part of our plan.

Another key charter principle is time outdoors, culture, art, playing, walking, cycling and eating. In my portfolio, active travel has been a big focus of what our government has been doing and will form a big part of what we intend to do in the future.

Canberra has long been recognised as a great place to cycle, and we want to enhance that reputation, going forward. We see this as a key part of making our city a great place to live and making sure that we can reduce emissions, going forward.

Our government understands particularly the importance of active travel and active streets for livable neighbourhoods. As we undertake urban intensification, it is about making sure that we are not encroaching on the environment around Canberra, making sure that people can access our existing green spaces, and making sure that those green spaces are of even higher quality and are used more by the community because of that quality.

We will continue our work in enhancing our footpath and cyclepath network. Providing seating to allow people to stop and spend time in green spaces and on our streets, providing safe opportunities to cross roads and having a clear walking priority at intersections are some of the actions that have been identified under the Transport Strategy that we will be taking forward. Recognition as a national park city will help augment Canberra's extensive cycling network and opportunities for active travel, going forward.

In a ministerial statement, Minister Vassarotti has spoken in the Assembly about another important aspect of the national park cities charter: locally grown food. There is another element to that: responsible consumption. The government is currently running a campaign in the ACT—the Love Food, Hate Waste campaign—to educate all Canberrans about meaningful action that they can take to reduce their food waste.

There is a lot of work that the ACT government is doing, and that Canberra has historically been doing, that will make sure that we can be recognised as a national park city. We are looking forward to that. I have not been able to touch on many of the other things that are happening around Canberra that will contribute to the work and values under the charter. Stromlo Forest Park and the National Arboretum are two I have not mentioned that add value as well.

**MR PETTERSSON** (Yerrabi) (3.50): I rise today to speak in support of Dr Paterson's motion calling for Canberra to become a national park city.

Canberra is known throughout Australia and the world as the bush capital. The term was first coined in the early 1900s after the Constitution required the national capital to be at least 100 miles from Sydney. "Bush capital" was often seen as a derogatory and disrespectful phrase. However, it has now come to encompass more than just the location of our city; it is a major part of Canberra's culture and identity. It is a phrase that I am sure that all of us here can take pride in. Canberra is well-known for its large open green spaces and abundance of urban tree canopy. It is what makes our city unique, and we should strive to protect this.

Recently Canberra was named the world's most sustainable city, an accomplishment that is awarded based on a city's energy efficiency, pollution levels, air quality and percentage of green space. This achievement is testament to the hard work and vision of nearly 20 years of continuous Labor government. As the most sustainable city in the world, it makes sense for Canberra to become a national park city as well. Canberra possesses all the qualities to become a national park city. We have an energetic local community that is keen to see Canberra remain a green, healthy, sustainable city.

In my own electorate of Yerrabi, I am lucky enough to live near some incredible green spaces—Yerrabi Pond, Mulligans Flat nature reserve and more grasslands than you can poke a stick at. These reserves are home to many native species and are incredibly unique and rich ecosystems. Mulligans Flat in particular is home to many species that have been locally extinct for over 60 years. There are many incredible parklands like this dotted right across the territory, and they are some of the main tourist attractions Canberra has to offer.

What makes Canberra so special is that, throughout our city and our suburbs, you only have to walk a short distance before you find an exceptional parkland. Throughout the pandemic, I am sure that all of us have had the experience of staying home for often weeks on end. More than ever, we are starting to understand the importance of spending time outdoors and in nature.

Studies have shown that spending regular time in nature and green spaces is beneficial both for our physical and mental health. Having protected and well-maintained parklands is extremely beneficial to the health of Canberrans, and making Canberra a national park city will promote a culture of community involvement in our local green spaces.

London is currently the only national park city in the world. Since its creation in July 2019, the national park city organisation has worked towards building a community movement that makes London greener and healthier and encourages residents to use the great outdoors more. Throughout the year, the organisation runs talks, workshops and events where London residents can learn how to live a healthier lifestyle and be more involved with nature.

Adelaide has already begun the process of becoming a national park city. I would like to see Canberra begin this process too. Canberra is Australia's bush capital, and our city should be internationally recognised as a green, ecofriendly, sustainable destination.

**MR GENTLEMAN** (Brindabella—Manager of Government Business, Minister for Corrections, Minister for Industrial Relations and Workplace Safety, Minister for Planning and Land Management and Minister for Police and Emergency Services) (3.53): I am pleased to support the motion for Canberra to become a national park city. In doing so, I acknowledge the Ngunnawal people as the traditional custodians of the ACT and honour the cultural legacy of their ancestors and the ongoing responsibility they have in managing country today.

This region was a significant meeting place for neighbouring language and clan groups. They came for ceremonies, trade, seasonal resources and the exchange of knowledge, and to maintain spiritual, social and environmental connectivity between traditional caretakers.

For thousands of years, the Ngunnawal people have maintained a tangible and intangible cultural, social, environmental, spiritual and economic connection to these lands and waters. We pay our respects to elders past, present and emerging, and acknowledge their continued connection to country.

The national park city is a global concept that originated in England with a grassroots community-led initiative that, after six years, resulted in London becoming the world's first national park city, in July 2019. Over 35 cities worldwide have now made a commitment to become a national park city. Adelaide is one of these, and it is on track to becoming the world's second national park city, by the end of the year.

There are insights to be gained from Adelaide about how the national park city concept and associated principles might apply to the ACT. The national park city principles developed in Adelaide are now reflected in a universal charter for national park cities. The universal charter's vision is "to make cities where people, places and nature are better connected". It states:

A National Park City is a shared vision and journey for a better life. Everyone in a National Park City is able to benefit and contribute everyday.

It is a large-scale and long-term vision that is achievable through many actions.

The universal charter defines a national park city as follows:

It's a place, a vision and a city-wide community that is acting together to make life better for people, wildlife and nature. A defining feature is the widespread commitment to act so people, culture and nature work together to provide a better foundation for life.

The aims are to have people work together for better lives, health and wellbeing; relationships with nature and with each other; wildlife, trees and flowers; places, habitats, air, water and land; locally grown food and responsible consumption; decisions, sharing, learning and working together; and time outdoors, culture, art, playing, walking, cycling and eating. It is clear to me that the vision and aspirations behind a national park city reflect those of the people of Canberra, past and present.

The Ngunnawal people, traditional custodians of the Canberra region, view the region as a cultural landscape derived from thousands of years of Aboriginal land management and embedded with the spirits and stories of their ancestors. Today, working on country gives Aboriginal people a sense of personal pride and affirms their identity through cultural belonging and connection to land. The ACT government acknowledges this connection and that being actively engaged in land management maintains this identity and has direct benefits for community health and wellbeing.

Walter Burley Griffin and Marion Mahony Griffin's plan for Canberra was inspired by the natural landscape, with the hills surrounding the city kept free of development and revegetated with native forests. This inspirational legacy is enshrined in the national capital open space system of mountains, bushlands, hills, ridges and river corridors set aside from development as areas reserved for nature conservation and for the enjoyment of visitors. Over 70 per cent of the area of the ACT is reserved for nature conservation and water catchment, and parks and open spaces within the urban footprint for sport, recreation and community activities.

The vision of Canberra as a “city in the landscape” remains in the ACT Planning Strategy that guides the future urban growth of Canberra and reflects the importance that we place on the protection of our natural environment. The strategy’s vision is for Canberra to be a sustainable, competitive and equitable city that respects Canberra as a city in the landscape and the national capital, while being responsive to the future and resilient to change.

The strategy recognises the importance of protecting the many defining characteristics of our city that we value so much, such as our green space, diversity of landscape, lifestyle choices and the bushland setting, while supporting infill and intensification in selected locations to achieve a more sustainable and livable city.

The planning strategy also focuses on environmental and open space strategic directions and actions to protect biodiversity and enhance habitat connectivity to improve landscape resilience and to deliver recreation, open space—green space, if you like—and public spaces that support social interaction, physical and mental health and engagement in public life.

The ACT has a range of strategies that aim to improve the health of the natural environment and protect threatened ecosystems. These include the Nature Conservation Strategy, Native Grassland Conservation Strategy, Native Woodland Conservation Strategy and Aquatic and Riparian Conservation Strategy; and there are many action plans for threatened plant and animal species. All these strategies include actions to further the objectives and implement the strategies.

Canberra’s living infrastructure plan provides strategic direction to improve the ACT’s climate change resilience and combat urban heat gain through living infrastructure. This plan recognises that we also need to be proactive in sustaining the ACT’s existing natural assets. The plan sets out the target that by 2045 Canberra’s urban footprint will have the equivalent benefit of a 30 per cent tree canopy cover and 30 per cent permeable surfaces.

The Climate Change Strategy 2019-25 brings together emission reductions, resilience and adaptation measures as part of a holistic response to climate change.

Clean water is a key component of a resilient environment and healthy community. The ACT has a number of strategies and plans to protect this valuable resource. The ACT Water Strategy addresses new challenges for water resource management, including deteriorating water quality resulting from urban development, maintaining ageing stormwater infrastructure, and the need for enhanced stewardship of water resources and catchments.

The Urban Forest Strategy 2021-45 sets out the government’s vision for a resilient and sustainable urban forest that supports a livable city and the natural environment and contributes to the wellbeing of the community in a changing climate.

Collectively, these plans and strategies provide a clear direction for improving the quality and resilience of our environment for the wellbeing of the whole community,

an important component of what becoming a national park city would mean to Canberra. I commend the motion to the Assembly.

**DR PATERSON** (Murrumbidgee) (4.01), in reply: I thank the Chief Minister and colleagues for supporting this important motion. It is wonderful to hear such support in the Assembly.

I would like to address a couple of points that Ms Castley made. Ms Castley suggested in the last sittings that the Canberra Liberals want the ACT to be the most small business-friendly place in Australia. She said that the Canberra Liberals understand small business and that it is the engine room and backbone of the economy. If they truly supported small business, they would be standing here supporting this motion. Small business in this city has taken a significant hit in the last year because of COVID. We need to be proactive in creating new and inspiring opportunities to support our community and support businesses.

Even yesterday, Ms Castley said in the Assembly that the Canberra Liberals believe that nature must be protected and respected. We have seen another missed opportunity by the Canberra Liberals to demonstrate this.

I would like to refer to the Chief Minister's words when he said that Canberra is a high quality, authentic, world-class destination. I look forward to proactively campaigning for the ACT to become Australia's first and most appropriate national park city.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

## **Children and young people—out of home care education**

**MRS KIKKERT** (Ginninderra) (4.03): I move:

That this Assembly:

(1) notes that:

- (a) in general, children and young people in out-of-home care experience poorer educational outcomes in comparison to the general student population, including:
  - (i) lower levels of literacy and numeracy;
  - (ii) poorer school attendance and engagement; and
  - (iii) reduced rates of finishing school and completing year 12;
- (b) poor educational attainment is more pronounced amongst young people who exit residential care than those exiting home-based care;
- (c) lower educational outcomes contribute to the fact that 50 per cent of those exiting care end up either homeless, in jail, or as new parents within 12 months;
- (d) young people in custody likewise often have had poor experiences of education, including issues with poor school attendance and performance;

- (e) the ACT government's current out-of-home care strategy includes a joint education and training pathways initiative intended to improve education and training outcomes and identify and reduce barriers to participation in education; and
  - (f) this initiative includes encouraging attendance, addressing absenteeism in collaboration with child protection staff, and developing an individual learning plan for each child;
- (2) also notes that:
- (a) according to research, protective factors that support children and young people engaging well with education include having carers who support learning, are confident and able to act as mentors and tutors, and know how to establish environments conducive to learning;
  - (b) to succeed at providing these protective factors, carers in many cases benefit from training and instruction; and
  - (c) successful initiatives such as Anglicare Victoria's TEACHaR program provide services such as one-on-one tutoring as well as support for out-of-home care staff to strengthen and enrich the education culture in residential care environments; and
- (3) calls on the ACT government to:
- (a) ensure that staff in residential care homes and Bimberi Youth Justice Centre receive ongoing training and support specifically designed to increase their confidence and ability to mentor and tutor residents in literacy and numeracy and to contribute towards building rich learning environments;
  - (b) review Anglicare Victoria's TEACHaR program and explore ways that a similar service could be made available in the ACT; and
  - (c) update the Assembly on these efforts by the last sitting day of October 2021.

I am proud to bring this motion before the Assembly today. I do so at the urging of some who have worked in residential care homes here in the ACT. These dedicated, passionate youth workers have sought to do all that they could to help the children and young people in their care, and they have great hopes for these kids. Their lived experiences have given them insights that we in this chamber should consider carefully and take seriously. Today I am honoured to bring those insights into this place.

Three weeks ago, I brought a motion before this Assembly calling on the government to commit to supporting the universal extension of out of home care services to age 21, including for those in residential care placements. I also asked for improved data collection on young people who have exited care. I am grateful that support for these recommendations was unanimous.

When speaking to my previous motion, I noted that, according to research, 50 per cent of care leavers in Australia end up homeless, in jail or as new parents within 12 months of exiting care. We understand that these difficulties are caused in part by an abrupt exit from care before a young person is ready to be independent. This can

also include not having a safe place to return to when or if things go wrong. Extending care services to age 21, including allowing care leavers to re-engage with the system, better replicates the natural process of becoming independent within a supportive family setting.

Another factor known to contribute to poor life outcomes for care leavers is poor educational attainment prior to exiting care and protection. The opposite is also true. Educational achievement and positive educational experiences whilst in care are protective factors that enhance life outcomes.

Unfortunately, although there are clearly exceptions, in general, children and young people in out of home care are less likely to attend school or be engaged with learning. Those who do attend are less likely to continue their education beyond the minimum school-leaver age, and they are more likely to leave school with poorer levels of academic achievement. In particular, figures from the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare reveal lower levels of both numeracy and literacy among students in care. This gap widens as students proceed from primary school to high school.

Data from the ACT indicate that some of these general trends occur here as well. For example, the 2019 evaluation of the government's out of home care strategy completed by KPMG found that, in the final year of the review, 20 per cent of kids in care did not meet the minimum standard for reading, and 13 per cent did not meet the minimum standard for numeracy. Both of these figures are three times greater for kids in the care and protection system than for their peers.

Research also reveals that poor educational attainment is more pronounced among young people in residential care placements than those in either foster or kinship care. Anecdotal evidence from youth workers in the ACT fully supports this finding. Those who have spoken with me have shared that many young people in residential care homes are disengaged from learning even when they attend school. School attendance is often very poor for others, and youth workers report that many older youth have entirely stopped attending.

Youth workers have shared with me two specific concerns: first, that so many kids in residential care are disengaged from, or struggling with, learning; second, and maybe more important, that they lack the confidence and capacity to help these kids re-engage or learn better. In short, they want to help. They know that it is an important part of their role as residential care workers, but they do not know what works best, what does not, or how exactly to go about it.

This is a valid concern, and one that needs to be taken very seriously. Youth workers are right that their role is an important one. Research out of Queensland, for example, found that factors contributing to poor educational outcomes for kids in residential care specifically include inadequate support and encouragement from carers, low academic expectations by carers and others, a lack of basic material support for education in a residential care setting, and inadequate training of residential care staff.

Academic literature repeatedly identifies the involvement of carers, including residential care staff, as a protective factor when it comes to the educational

achievement of kids in care. Researchers Ruth Knight and Sari Rossi, for example, found that kids in care do better with carers who are supportive of educational and extracurricular activities, especially when carers are able to consistently act as mentors or tutors to build the child's cognitive and social skills.

As researchers Marion Coddou and Joseph Borlagdan have found, one key to education success is access to support and encouragement from at least one significant adult who can give young people in care good advice, focus on the opportunities open to them and help them to develop a perception of themselves as competent learners. Confident, capable youth workers can perform this role and/or support others who do. They likewise play a central role in creating home environments that are supportive of learning. As the Australian Childhood Foundation has noted in relation to residential care:

Whenever children or young people are asked ... they say it is the staff who make the difference”.

Staff intuitively understand this fact, and those who have shared their experiences with me would be grateful to have additional support and training so that they can make a bigger difference.

I take this opportunity to note as well that research indicates that young people in the youth justice system have often experienced trouble at school, including issues with poor school attendance and performance. Like residential care youth workers, staff at Bimberi Youth Justice Centre also understand that they have an important role to play in supporting the educational attainment of the young people in their care. As a current online ad states:

Bimberi youth workers supervise every aspect of a young offender's life during their time in custody ... Bimberi youth workers are role models who encourage and motivate young people.

For these reasons, I have included youth justice workers in this motion. I also wish to note that the government's out of home care strategy acknowledges many of the issues that I have raised and therefore contains a joint education and training pathways initiative intended to improve education outcomes. As noted in the KPMG evaluation of the strategy, this initiative includes encouraging attendance, notifying child protection staff of absenteeism, and making sure that each child has an individual learning plan. These are all good things. Youth workers have told me, for example, that they do get notified when young people are absent from school. The question remains whether this is enough. Youth workers who have shared their concerns with me emphatically state that it is not.

I emphasise here that this is not a problem unique to the ACT. Research from across Australia shows that kids in residential care are at particular risk of poor educational outcomes. As they are aware of the importance of education to life outcomes, all states and territories acknowledge that more needs to be done. As I have listened to youth workers, two needs became clear. First, as I have mentioned, there needs to be additional support and training for carers so that they can better support the learning of the kids and help create environments that support learning. Second, there should

be access to assistance from experts who know how to work with kids to help them re-engage with school and learn better.

The next step was to see what might be happening in other states and territories to address these needs. This search took me to Anglicare Victoria's TEACHaR program, which this motion specifically recommends for review. This program provides exactly what youth workers have stated that they need. Educational professionals work extensively with children and young people living in out of home care, providing them with frequent and regular direct tutoring, one on one, particularly in regard to literacy- and numeracy-related tasks. These professionals also provide in-class support, collaborate with and provide specialised support to teachers and, importantly, work directly with carers to provide them with the confidence, resources and training that they need to encourage and extend what is happening at school and what is happening in individual tutoring sessions. In all cases, the goal is increased school attendance, better educational engagement and bridging the gap between a student's current educational level and age-appropriate benchmarks.

This program has also been rigorously evaluated, with significant results. For example, a snapshot report from 2016 provides data specifically on children and young people in residential care. Only 34 per cent of these kids were assessed as being always or usually engaged in learning at the point of entering the program. After six months, nearly 63 per cent were engaged. Just under 20 per cent were reaching average overall academic achievement upon service entry. Six months later, this figure had more than doubled.

In light of its success, the TEACHaR program has been awarded the Victorian Department of Health and Human Services Robin Clark Education Initiative Award. I understand that the Victorian government is in the process of replacing its own children in residential care educational support program with one whose guidelines are based on this Anglicare program. In preparation for this motion, I have spoken with the Director of Project Development and Innovation at Anglicare Victoria and she has assured me that they would be thrilled to have the ACT government review what they are doing to see whether a similar service could be made available here.

In Victoria, the current cost of providing this program to one child or young person for a school term is \$5,000. This means that every kid in residential care in Canberra could be supported across four school terms for an amount less than \$900,000. A decision to adopt or replicate a program such as this would need to go through the normal budgeting process, of course, but, in the meantime, it is important to keep in mind the known cost of educational disadvantage. As the Victorian Auditor-General has stated in relation to residential care services for children:

Studies have found the economic and social cost of not effectively supporting such children are ultimately borne directly by the criminal justice and health systems, and indirectly in the lost productivity associated with poor education levels and homelessness.

I conclude by thanking the territory's youth workers. They work in sometimes very difficult circumstances, but they do so with good hearts and a genuine commitment to

the children and young people in their care. I know that they make a difference in the lives of these kids and I love that they are eager to make an even bigger difference. I respect their initiative, which inspired this motion today. I also express my gratitude to the vibrant community services sector. As happens so often in the sector, Anglicare Victoria saw a need, innovated a solution, piloted it, refined it and, in the process, helped to improve the lives of hundreds of vulnerable kids in care. Their success highlights the essential role performed by community services providers here in Canberra and across Australia.

Finally, I want to publicly address the children and young people in the territory's residential care homes and youth detention centre. To these kids, I say: I believe in you, I value you and I have great hopes for your future.

**MS STEPHEN-SMITH** (Kurrajong—Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs, Minister for Families and Community Services and Minister for Health) (4.17): I start by thanking Mrs Kikkert for bringing this motion today, and I move the amendment circulated in my name:

Omit paragraph (3) (a) and substitute:

“(3) calls on the ACT Government to:

- (a) explore ways to improve the support available to staff in residential care homes and Bimberi Youth Justice Centre, including through training and development opportunities, to increase their confidence and ability to mentor and tutor residents in literacy and numeracy and to contribute towards building rich learning environments;”

This is a pretty minor amendment, and Mrs Kikkert will probably ask why I am moving this amendment, which is just a bit of a refinement on what the government is called on to do. The reason is around the different situations that children and young people in residential care in particular find themselves in and the very specific nature of the (3)(a) in Mrs Kikkert's motion that would require ensuring staff receive training specifically designed with a focus on ability to mentor and tutor students in residents in literacy and numeracy.

We do not have any issue with the fact that literacy and numeracy are important and training and supporting staff are also important, and that is reflected in the amendment. But we can foresee a series of questions being asked down the track on whether every single person has been trained in this particular thing for this particular purpose when, in fact, the role of youth workers is quite varied. The very important and critical role that they play will mean that some of them absolutely will need and should get this training and support—and some of them do through our community partners—but for others it will not necessarily be the most appropriate thing. Some individual children and young people need to be focusing on just engaging in a school environment or being able to engage in their education journey rather than on literacy and numeracy.

The amendment broadens the call on the government to explore ways to continue to improve support available to staff in residential care homes and in Bimberi, including through training and development options, to increase their confidence and ability to

mentor and tutor residents in literacy and numeracy and to contribute towards building a rich learning environment.

That is what the TEACHaR program actually does; it is not a formal training program and this is my concern. If we pass Mrs Kikkert's motion, the expectation will be that we will then be asked how many people have engaged in some kind of formal training program as opposed to being supported by community partners like Anglicare through the teacher program or like our other community partners who work with ACT Together and the Australian Childhood Foundation that support staff in residential care to work with young people with significant trauma backgrounds to develop a therapeutic response to those children and young people.

A therapeutic response for many of those children and young people is not about sitting down and counselling and going through multiple counselling sessions; a therapeutic response to children and young people is actually about creating a more normal life for those young people and helping them to engage in the everyday activities they enjoy and helping them to engage in an education journey. So it is not a formal training program those staff would go on.

The amendment is not intended in any way to diminish what Mrs Kikkert is asking for—we 100 per cent support the intention of her motion because it goes to the very important issue of how we best provide holistic support to children and young people in out of home care or in youth detention.

In supporting this motion, we acknowledge that, on the face of it, many of the statistics on educational outcomes for children and young people involved in the child protection and the youth justice systems do not paint a particularly positive picture. However, it is important to contextualise those statements around these outcomes.

The most important thing is to recognise—I am sure that Mrs Kikkert does—that the situations that cause children and young people to come into contact with child protection, out of home care or the youth justice system are very likely also to be the kind of factors that will impact on their educational outcomes. Children and young people involved in these systems are likely to have experienced significant trauma through abuse or neglect. We know the impact that trauma can have on a child or young person's development and the impact it can have on engagement in education.

When we listen to the stories of children and young people, for example, who have a domestic and family violence experience in their home—whether they are in out of home care or not—that can impact their capacity to engage in education. So it is not only children and young people in out of home care who have trauma experiences but also those who live at home who are vulnerable and have trauma experiences who also have their capacity to engage in education impacted.

As I have said in this place many times before, we are committed to building a child protection system that is trauma informed and that meets the diverse needs of every child and young person. In doing that, we recognise that this journey is different for every child and young person and that, in some cases, it can be a very long journey.

The decisions that bring children and young people into child protection are never taken lightly and they are decisions of last resort when children and young people are considered to be at risk if they remain at home with their families. So the statistics on education are likely, to a certain extent, to always reflect the complexity and the challenges that already exist in the lives of these children and young people upon entry to the system.

The statistics in the motion are generally national data on the outcomes experienced by children and young people in out of home care, and that is really important in informing our investigation of local issues. As Mrs Kikkert touched on, the KPMG interim evaluation of A Step Up for Our Kids also reflects those educational outcomes not being on a par with the broader community but, as I have said, multiple factors go into that.

It is not necessarily that a child that was on a trajectory to an equivalent educational outcome with the rest of the community goes into out of home care and then suddenly they are not on that trajectory. They probably were on that trajectory in the first place, but that gives us an opportunity when those children and young people come into out of home care—whatever form of care they are in—to support those children and young people to improve their educational trajectory. Of course, that is what we want to do.

I expect that my colleagues the Deputy Chief Minister and Minister Davidson will talk in greater detail about the fantastic work of the staff at our public schools, including Murrumbidgee Education and Training Centre at Bimberi and the staff at Bimberi, in supporting young people. From my own perspective, I assure the Assembly that Child and Youth Protection Services is committed to working with ACT Together and with public and non-government schools to establish the safeguards to ensure that no child in the care of the Director General is educationally disadvantaged because of living in out of home care. Indeed, we see an opportunity to improve the educational trajectory of children and young people.

As I am sure the Deputy Chief Minister will mention, it is the role of the education system to support the educational needs of all children and young people no matter what specific challenges they face. However, I recognise that all people who have a caring role in a child's life play a supporting role in that child's educational journey. I am really pleased that Mrs Kikkert has been talking to youth workers in this space, particularly those in residential care.

I caught up recently with the Australian Services Union, who represents those workers, and had a really positive conversation about the need to continue to improve the professionalism and skills of residential care staff. They play a vital role in the lives of the 30-odd children and young people in residential care who are not in a semi-independent living placement. That number for the ACT is quite a small number of children and young people in residential care who are not in semi-independent living in our community adolescent program.

For children and young people more broadly in out of home care, support networks include their families, their carers, their case managers, and others who make up the children's care team. Educational decisions take into consideration the views and wishes of the child as well within the decision-making in that care team. I am interested that Mrs Kikkert's motion does not go more broadly to children and young people in out of home care because the Anglicare TEACHaR program is a broader program targeting not only vulnerable children and young people in foster care but also those disengaging from education who are not necessarily in care now.

Children and young people in residential care are case managed in partnership between Child and Youth Protection Services and ACT Together, and case managers work closely with each child or young person's care team to ensure that services and professionals, including educators, are involved in supporting all elements of a child or young person's life.

Where a child or young person needs additional education support, Child and Youth Protection Services will explore tutoring options in their case planning and services will be engaged. That may include, for example, through the Barnardos tutoring program for vulnerable children and young people aged six to 16 years or the Migrant and Refugee Settlement Service, which delivers an after school study program for students aged eight to 25 years old who are from non-English-speaking backgrounds.

I also note the work already underway towards the design of the next iteration of the government's Step Up for Our Kids out of home care strategy. I have talked about this before. This work is looking at continuous improvements that we have made to the system under the first Step Up strategy and how we can build on those to further strengthen the system and improve the experiences of young people. Part of this work includes the exploration of how we can collaborate with our community partners, their staff, and the unions that represent them, to continue to support the development of the workforce that supports some of the most vulnerable and at-risk children and young people in Canberra.

I look forward to coming back to the Assembly later this year to report back on how these matters raised in the motion can inform this ongoing work. I look forward to providing initial reflections on Anglicare's TEACHaR program and how it compares with those that already exist in the ACT and it can potentially be incorporated into the future out of home care system.

In that context, I note Mrs Kikkert's tendency to constantly go to services that are available in other jurisdictions and pick them out and say we should be doing this and we should be doing this and we should be doing this and very rarely talking about the good services that exist in the ACT that are sometimes unique to the ACT and where we, in fact, lead the nation.

The TEACHaR program has an evidence base. It clearly has made a difference in the lives of children and young people in Victoria. Again, I thank Mrs Kikkert for bringing this motion to the Assembly. It is important to recognise, again going to the amendment I have moved, that this is a broad program of support. It is not just about

increasing children and young people's literacy and numeracy outcomes; it is really about providing advocacy, liaison and case management to help those children and young people who are disengaging from education to engage in education. I am sure that the Deputy Chief Minister will talk about how our ACT education also does that. It also works collaboratively with the education authorities in Victoria to achieve those goals.

As one of the core practices indicates, interventions in this program are highly flexible, with strategies, responses and resources tailored to the interests, needs and strengths of individual students. The interventions are delivered within classrooms and school settings, as well as in a care home environment. So it is important to be clear about how broad those interventions are.

I was struck in this 2018 evaluation by Charlie's story. Charlie is a 13-year-old boy currently living in residential care in Melbourne. Charlie had a very disrupted childhood with multiple moves of placements and had not been enrolled in school. His care team was concerned that he was not ready for the school transition and they got a teacher educator working with Charlie.

I have chosen Charlie's story because he was in residential care. The interesting thing about Charlie's story was that when the teacher educator completed some literacy and numeracy assessments for Charlie, they found significant gaps in literacy but that Charlie was performing three years above peers in numeracy. So an educator tailored a program working with Charlie that spoke to Charlie's strengths as well as his gaps.

The gap for Charlie was primarily engaging appropriately with students of his own age to ensure that he could engage in appropriate conversations and behaviours with adults—that is, the really important development of a behavioural support and safety plan through this process. It is about much more than literacy and numeracy, which I am sure that Mrs Kikkert understands. But that really speaks to the fact that children and young people in out of home care are not one thing—they have strengths.

I will finish on the same note as Mrs Kikkert: we absolutely believe in these children and young people. We absolutely want to engage them in their educational journey and to support the trajectory of that educational journey, and we know that they can do it.

**MS DAVIDSON** (Murrumbidgee—Assistant Minister for Seniors, Veterans, Families and Community Services, Minister for Disability, Minister for Justice Health and Minister for Mental Health) (4.33): I thank Mrs Kikkert for her motion, and I will provide some information about the current work of the education staff at Bimberi Youth Justice Centre as I speak in support of Minister Stephen-Smith's amendment. Education is an important part of ensuring that children and young people can go on to further study, employment and remain connected with their peers. All young people at Bimberi have the right to be engaged in education programs.

Unfortunately, by the time a young person has entered Bimberi it is likely that their educational experiences have already been disrupted or are difficult. The social determinants that contribute to a young person coming into contact with the justice

system—such as homeless and poverty, mental health, domestic and family violence, disability, drug and alcohol issues and trauma, not just for the young person but within their family—are the same things that can contribute to a young person having difficulty engaging in education, as the minister was just speaking about. This is why it is so essential that Bimberi maintains that all young people, including those over school leaving age, attend Murrumbidgee school, which is administered by the ACT Education Directorate.

Young people in Bimberi say that attending education and participating in Murrumbidgee school is one of their most valued activities. Having visited Bimberi and spoken to some of the young people and school staff, I can attest to the value of the Murrumbidgee school as an education provider. On my recent visit to Bimberi, the teachers said that the connections they are able to build with schools and colleges in the community is a key element to ensuring that children and young people transition well back into the community.

Where appropriate, the connections that Murrumbidgee school can maintain with the young person's school in the community is a great way to reduce return visits to Bimberi. I note that many young people who enter Bimberi are there for short periods while on remand, and that makes those connections to community schools all the more important. Murrumbidgee school programs are supplemented by other activities and programs delivered by external organisations. The school has an Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders transition officer who facilitates the transition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people into appropriate training, education or employment options.

This education work is well supported by the youth workers at Bimberi who supervise young people during education programs and offer support and assistance as required by the young person and guided by the teacher. Bimberi's youth workers are required to participate in a seven-week comprehensive induction program prior to commencing at Bimberi. This induction program includes trauma-informed practice, cultural awareness, emergency operating procedures and responding to critical situations, and it incorporates a human rights e-learning component.

In addition to the comprehensive induction program, Bimberi supports youth workers to complete a certificate IV in youth work that enables them to support young people to create opportunities in their lives. For the benefit of children and young people, it is important that educators and youth workers have separate but collaborative and complementary roles. This ensures that children and young people receive education to the standard of the community and allows youth workers to focus on delivering other essential social and wellbeing supports.

Finally, as the minister responsible for youth justice, I want to restate my commitment to ensuring that children and young people are diverted away from the youth justice system through supports that keep them in the community. I have spoken in this place more than once about radical love and I am going to keep doing it because it applies to our young people, especially those who are in contact with the justice system. Justice cannot be achieved without love, which is why every decision we take in this place in relation to youth justice must be done from a place of seeking to provide the

support and care that young people and their families need even when their behaviour is challenging.

For success in education and in achieving a healthy life with strong social relationships and community engagement, keeping kids out of prison and well supported in the community is one of my highest priorities.

**MS BERRY** (Ginninderra—Deputy Chief Minister, Minister for Early Childhood Development, Minister for Education and Youth Affairs, Minister for Housing and Suburban Development, Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence, Minister for Sport and Recreation and Minister for Women) (4.37): I thank Mrs Kikkert for bringing on this motion today. I will be focusing my comments today on the Murrumbidgee Education and Training Centre, as well as our flexible education offerings for children who are enrolled in our public schools in the ACT.

For all of the young people in Bimberi who access educational training through the Murrumbidgee Education and Training Centre, and from my visits out there, it has always been something that they look forward to and a very positive experience. The well-qualified teaching workforce out there works very closely with the youth workers to make sure that they can put together a really personalised educational offering for the young people at Bimberi. They make sure that they all have individual learning plans, developed together with the students, that have the detail, scaffolding and supports that they need to make sure that they continue to be engaged in their education in a way that works for them.

The Murrumbidgee school provides schooling based on the Australian curriculum, of course, and has all of the recognised training courses. The significant focus on supporting young people to successfully transition back to their school outside of Bimberi so that they stay engaged is really important and something that the ACT Education Directorate puts particular emphasis on and care into.

When I have had the chance to visit the Murrumbidgee school and have a chat with some of the students, I have been able to hear and learn from them about the projects that they have been developing in their classes and the pride in their work that they have achieved. It has been very clear to me that they have an aspiration and a plan for their educational journey. The Murrumbidgee centre at Bimberi provides them with the opportunities to go on that journey to pursue their passion and to support them in doing that, alongside the youth workers at the Bimberi centre as well.

Our future of education strategy seeks to ensure that students, regardless of their background, where they come from or whatever is going on in their lives, feel welcomed and are respected, supported and valued in their school communities—whatever that community looks like—and that the supports and programs are in place to address individual student need, including personalised education and social and psychological wellbeing, should those needs arise.

There are a range of supports in place to ensure that students have access to a great education. We have a school psychology service. All ACT public schools have access to a school psychologist. School psychologists are part of the directorate's

multidisciplinary approach to supporting student inclusion, engagement and wellbeing. School psychologists can provide direct support or interventions to students, consult with teachers and families or work alongside other members of the student services team to help students thrive in their school environment. That includes social workers, youth workers and living support assistants working alongside the executive team on school-wide practices and procedures, as well as collaborating with community providers who may be coordinating services for students as well.

The ACT government has also established the flexible education offerings to make sure that there is a personalised educational approach to students who, for whatever reason, at that particular point of time in their lives cannot access education at their enrolled school. The flexible education model promotes inclusivity and individualised learning by connecting students to a multidisciplinary team. This is a group of qualified educators and other experts, including allied health and others. This team develops education and wellbeing plans that might intersect with community agencies who are working with these young people to address the needs of students and families outside of the school gates, should they be unable to attend.

I, like everybody else, want to give a shout-out to the Bimberi youth work team and particularly the Murrumbidgee school staff for their continued advocacy and support for these young people in their education; and, of course, to the great work that the flexible education team does in the Education Directorate to make sure that these children, who cannot access school physically for some particular reason, are supported with their learning needs outside.

The network student engagement teams are also an important part of these services to support student engagement in learning. The NSET teams help families, students and schools through a whole range of different approaches towards moving different kinds of barriers that might prevent students from engaging in their learning. That could be a range of lots of complex matters that are going on and complicating a child's life.

The teams consist of educational leaders, psychologists, social workers, disability education partners, speech pathologists, occupational therapists and engagement officers. They all work really closely together to make sure that every child or student in our public schools—whether they are attending our public schools or the Murrumbidgee centre or a flexible education offering—gets the supports that they need and the individual learning plans that support them to remain engaged in their education, and that they feel that they are supported to chase down their passions and have the same aspirations of a great life as the rest of us when they leave school.

**MRS KIKKERT** (Ginninderra) (4.43): In closing, this is an important motion. As I said, it was inspired by conversations with those who have worked in the territory's residential care homes. It embodies what they have shared with me regarding their lived experiences. They have made it clear that there is a need for ongoing training and support in the specific area of helping children and young people with their learning. This motion, as originally drafted, called on the ACT government to ensure that staff receive this training and support. I am satisfied that the Labor and Greens members opposite have decided to support most of this motion, including reviewing

Anglicare's ground-breaking TEACHaR program and updating the Assembly by the last sitting day in October.

I am not satisfied, however, with the minister's amendment to paragraph (3)(a). The minister has called it a minor amendment, but to me it is not. Instead of ensuring that residential care and youth justice staff receive the ongoing training and support that they have asked for, the government is now promising only to explore ways to improve the support available. To be blunt, exploring something is far different from ensuring that it happens. As many Canberrans have come to understand for themselves, talk from this Labor-Greens coalition government is cheap. Action is dear.

Here is one example from many. Just over four years ago, I brought a motion before this Assembly calling on the government to "recognise the importance of ensuring that decisions regarding a child's placement and care plans be subject to external review". There is that important word again: "ensure". When the minister amended my motion in 2017, Minister Stephen-Smith removed the word "ensure" then too. This government has an aversion to ensuring that anything happens, it seems.

What has happened in the intervening four years? My call for an external review of child protection decisions now has the support of literally every stakeholder in the ACT. All four members of the territory's Human Rights Commission penned an open letter declaring that, without this change, the ACT government is in violation of its own human rights legislation.

But do we have an external review process yet? Heck, no. It is, I have been told, still in the process. Meanwhile, kids' families are struggling to fight for their rights. Based on such experiences, Minister Stephen-Smith's amendment raises valid concerns. Will anything meaningful actually happen? Will kids in care continue to not receive support in their learning because this government is vomiting out words of declarations and not words of commitment? Will carers continue to watch helplessly as they are not given appropriate training as a matter of urgency?

This matter is urgent. Imagine a school with students in two classrooms who are partially or fully disengaged from school. The principal will not explore but will ensure as a matter of urgency how to provide these kids the support that they need. But in a silent pandemic of disengaged kids in our residential care, this government is taking its time to give them support. Shame on it for its laziness and stubbornness. The minister talks about making it broad with her amendment. Victoria's TEACHaR program was expanded to kids in out of home care last year for the first time. It took them years to get to where they are at currently. I know how this government works. It would not do a broad TEACHaR program across Canberra immediately. It is too hard for it.

That is why I gave them a spoonful of the pie, because we know that research has shown that, across Australia, kids in residential care are at particular risk of poor educational outcomes. So giving them a spoonful or a bite of the pie will work better for the government because that is all that they can do. But I will be happy if the government can actually take the whole pie—a broad TEACHaR program across Canberra—and prove me wrong. I would love to see commitment from this

government rather than words, a vomit of words of declarations; they are decorating the ACT government's care protection with nothing but words and no commitment and no action.

Amendment agreed to.

Original question, as amended, resolved in the affirmative.

## **Adjournment**

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

That the Assembly do now adjourn.

### **Murrumbidgee electorate—Weston Creek**

**MRS JONES** (Murrumbidgee) (4.49): Weston Creek is a great community living in a native bush setting of gum trees, native birds and bushland hilltops, which the community enjoy and explore every day. It is a great place to live and raise a family, as I have for the last 12 years in that setting. There are many original residents of the region and many of my constituents were the first to move into their streets in the 1960s and '70s. There are also newer and younger people moving in and revitalising homes and gardens. The population has grown to well over 28,000 across eight suburbs: Stirling, Weston, Waramanga, Holder, Fisher, Rivett, Chapman and Duffy.

Chapman is named for Sir Austin Chapman, the first member of Eden-Monaro, a liberal nationalist. He was an enthusiastic champion of federating Australia and pushed for the introduction of the old age pension. He was whip in Sir Edmund Barton's government and known for having a very keen interest in all the local needs of his electorate.

Duffy was named for Sir Charles Gavan Duffy, another member of our first federal parliament, fighting for emancipation as a young lawyer in Ireland for the Catholic population. Ever the justice warrior, when he came to the parliament, the first thing that he did was move legislation to eliminate the need to be a landholder to be eligible to stand for the Australian federal parliament.

Fisher was named for Andrew Fisher, three times Prime Minister of Australia, who came from humble beginnings to establish the Labor Party of Australia.

Holder was named after Sir Frederick William Holder, another member of the first federal government, representing South Australia. A warm federalist, he had a particular interest in land tax. His wife was a lay preacher. He served as a Speaker and was aloof from party politics as an independent. He collapsed on the floor of the parliament and died the same day in 1909. He is described by Sir William Snowden as one of the smartest administrators ever known in Australian politics.

Rivett is named for the Tasmanian born Sir David Rivett, a Rhodes scholar and science graduate who lectured in Chemistry at the University of Melbourne. He was

married to Sir Alfred Deakin's daughter, Stella Deakin, who was herself a research chemist. He was deputy chairman and chief executive of the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research from 1927 to 1946, renamed later the CSIRO.

Stirling was named after Sir James Stirling. He was a Scottish born naval commander and a colonial administrator in Western Australia, the first governor in Western Australia, having joined the navy at the age of 12, sadly, leading the 1834 Pinjarra massacre.

Waramanga is named for the Warumungu people, Indigenous Australians of the Northern Territory from the region of Tenant Creek in Alice Springs. In the early 1800s they were a thriving nation and after much displacement in 1993 were returned a proportion of their claimed land in a native title decision.

Weston was named after Captain George Edward Nicholas Weston, who was a former officer of the East India Company, arriving in Australia in 1825, and was granted land in the Weston Creek area in 1831.

The street names of each suburb have a theme, such as rivers or dams or creeks of Australia, and native flowers.

I thank the many people involved in the community organisations, from our many sporting clubs to school communities. I give special thanks to the very dedicated business owners and church operators and those providing services and local employment in our village-like suburbs—our cafes, restaurants, hairdressers, dentists, doctors and sporting clubs.

Despite its natural beauty and the very many great people in our area, delaying a shopping centre for the Molonglo Valley has been putting considerable strain on the community and the shopping centre of Cooleman Court. But the people of Weston Creek are very patient.

The prevalence of antisocial behaviour, which has increased greatly over the past couple of years, has left people very aware that law and order issues are at the top of the list for what has been a very peaceful place to live in the past.

I am fortunate to call Weston Creek my home. I thank the residents of the area for returning me to represent them now for the third term. I will continue to do all that I can to resolve your concerns and to see our area continue to flourish into the future.

### **Arts—Stronger Than Fiction film festival**

**MS CLAY** (Ginninderra) (4.54): I rise today to talk about the local film festival, Stronger Than Fiction. We are lucky here in Canberra to have access to some of the best films from around the world.

A locally curated and run film festival, Stronger Than Fiction have been showing an incredible range of global documentaries since 2013, when they received Canberra centenary funding. In 2018 they showed the film *What Walaa Wants*, about a spirited

young woman who wants to be a police officer for the Palestinian authority. In 2019 they screened *Advocate*, a gritty story of Jewish human rights lawyer Lea Tsemel, who regularly represents Palestinian political prisoners in Israeli courts.

Last Friday they screened *Mayor*. This is a darkly funny portrait following a public servant doing his best in an impossible situation, that of trying to govern a city without a country. The curator said, “We love *Mayor* because it depicts Palestine in a way that we haven’t seen on screen before”.

The film follows Mayor Musa Hadid through the ins and outs of local government work in Ramallah, full of small, funny frustrations that call to mind the best plots from parks and recreation. However, local governance in Palestine comes with a set of international challenges that most Canberra public servants do not come up against. While Mayor Hadid has control over selecting park benches, door handles and the hotly contested city slogan, he has trouble with major works like a desperately needed sewage plant, because these require Israeli approval, which is repeatedly denied. This film opens a window to understanding a situation that, for many of us, feels overwhelming and complex. It is the power of the arts and the undeniable importance of freedom of artistic expression.

The screening of *Mayor* at Dendy Cinemas has been meticulously planned for months. But when the curators, Deborah Kingsland and Hannah de Feyter, attempted to promote the film through Facebook, as they have done for every screening, they hit a snag they had never encountered before. Facebook disabled the events advertising account because its promotion of the film was deemed political advertising. As the curators mentioned, the film is not even close to the most political documentary they have screened. One of their other works was a Philippines-based film called *The Cleaners*, which was about the appalling working conditions of people who moderate what the rest of us see on social media, including Facebook itself. So the ban on this film was surprising.

Despite the ban on advertising, people power and word of mouth meant that the Stronger Than Fiction film festival had one of the biggest audiences in the festival to date for the screening of *Mayor* last Friday. But I find this intrusion of big tech into our local film festival scene disturbing.

It is hard to understand the disabling of the ad account as anything but censorship because of the recent conflict in the Middle East. The 11-day conflict killed at least 248 in Gaza, including 66 children and 39 women. In Israel, 12 people also died, including two children, before both sides agreed to a ceasefire.

The international legal position is clear. The Palestinian people are entitled to self-determination and statehood, but they have been living under Israel’s occupation since 1967. The Greens recognise the ongoing injustice that has been done to the Palestinian people and aim to rectify that injustice in a way that will allow both Palestinians and Israelis to live in peace.

I would like to commend the film curators of Stronger Than Fiction for bringing this important story of the struggles of Palestinians to our local audiences here in Canberra.

I would also like to recommend that you catch the next Stronger Than Fiction film, *Set*. It is a really great series and a really great show.

### **COVID-19—racism and abuse against Asian Australians**

**MS LEE** (Kurrajong—Leader of the Opposition) (4.58): When the pandemic hit, Australians pulled together in a way we have probably never done before. In between the overreactions in filling houses with toilet paper, we saw the kindness of strangers in giving our fellow Aussies a helping hand during a time we were engulfed in a darkness of uncertainty and fear. What was quietly bubbling away, however, was an ugly side of our society that came to the surface out of fear and uncertainty from an invisible enemy which seemingly provided an excuse for some to lash out.

I have heard too many stories from Asian Australians about how quickly they were looked at with suspicion at the height of the virus. Thankfully the instances in Canberra have been far and few between, but when you are on the receiving end of the abuse, the suspicion, the discrimination and the hate, it does not matter if it is not a common occurrence. It shatters your entire world. It brings into question your belief in humanity. And it hurts deeply—so deeply—to know that you are in some ways thoroughly rejected by your fellow human beings.

I have empathised, been outraged and cried with fellow Asian Australians who have shared their hurt with me. As usually is the case, we dust it off and we move on. We reassure ourselves that it is the minority, and it is, and that it does not matter. But it does matter, because we matter.

Just months ago, I read with dismay about racist abuse hurled at an Asian Dickson cafe owner. Just recently, I read with dismay about racist comments made about an Asian man, mocking physical stereotypes, designed for maximum humiliation, and using fake Asian accents.

Just today, I read with dismay an article written by Alice Amsel, a Korean Australian musician, artist and writer, about being spat on at a pharmacy and her recollections of racist abuse she has faced all her life. As Alice says herself, she cannot speak for the experience of every Asian Australian, but this article spoke to me strongly, and I know that it spoke strongly to many other Asian Australians: we who, as schoolchildren, refused to eat in front of our classmates, hiding our tears behind a forced smile while other children would pretend to vomit or tell us to sit far away because whatever was packed in our lunchboxes smelled gross; we who, as schoolchildren, had to accompany our parents to parent-teacher nights, the bank, the insurance company and utilities companies to interpret, shrinking with embarrassment because we could clearly see others smirking or becoming visibly frustrated at our parents' broken English; we who, as university students, were constantly mistaken for international students and asked whether we knew how to speak English; we who, as young professionals breaking into the workforce, were assumed to be there only to fill a diversity quota; we who, even when we thought we had managed to make a successful life for ourselves in our chosen field, faced micro-aggressions of racism and discrimination when the world was thrown into a global pandemic that brought out a sentiment of hate that I, perhaps naively, thought we had long left behind.

It is a sad but unsurprising reality that in every single election campaign—and I have had a few—when my face is so publicly visible, my supporters and I have been confronted with comments that make it clear that I am seen as an Asian first and Elizabeth Lee the candidate second. “Where is your name from?” “Where were you born?” “Your English is really good.” “Where did you get your shoes? They must be from China.” Even recently, one of my team members received the comment “You guys are doing some good things, but your leader—she is Chinese, right?”, while screwing up their face as though they had tasted something bad.

I do not tell these stories often, but when I do, they are usually met with disgust, shock and outrage. Sadly, perhaps, because for so many of us these are occurrences we have faced all our lives, we have in many ways become immune to the shock. But what does remain, what always remains, is the sad resignation that perhaps deep down—no matter how many vegemite sandwiches we eat, no matter how many pairs of thongs we own—we will never be fully accepted by the privileged white Australians in our adopted country.

I close with a quote from Alice Amsel’s article because it sums up very well my hope and her hope for growth and learning:

It’s from diverse voices we all learn and grow—to have solidarity and empowerment when our paths overlap, wonder and empathy in parts where we differ. Stereotypes and assumptions fade into the background. We all have a seat at the table.

### **National Reconciliation Week—events**

**MR RATTENBURY** (Kurrajong) (5.04): I take this opportunity as we get towards the end of Reconciliation Week just to reflect on a few of the experiences here in the ACT that I have seen and, I guess, the theme of Reconciliation Week.

On Monday we had the terrific event at the arboretum. Aside from the excellent program, I think many of us who were there were inspired to see how many Canberrans turned out. It has been reported to me that more than 8,000 people have gone through the doors at the arboretum to celebrate Reconciliation Week and that event, to share culture, to share stories and to share knowledge.

I think that that is an excellent use of having declared Reconciliation Day a public holiday. To see Canberrans taking advantage of it to participate in the true intent of that day was very inspiring and, I think, sets a strong foundation for continued learning and continued reconciliation in our city.

Of course, it is not just a public holiday. It is a day when we should reflect on, I guess, past positive actions towards Indigenous equality and justice, such as the 1967 referendum and the 1992 High Court Mabo decision, but also to remind ourselves about how far we have to go. There are many pointers to that, and some of them came through on that day in some of the panels, in some of the personal discussions that people had. But it is the true purpose of that day.

This year's Reconciliation Week theme has been "More than a Word: Reconciliation Takes Action". I hope that we are about to enter a new period of action, thanks to the push that is going on and some of the significant discussions, for example, at the moment around the importance of treaty, voice and truth telling, about how these processes mesh and about whether there is a clear order and time frame for each of them. These are important and challenging discussions and we must ensure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices are at the forefront of those discussions.

On Monday night I went to an event at Canberra Grammar School where they launched their reconciliation action plan and celebrated the young Indigenous students who are now being supported in the school through a dedicated scholarship program. It was a very interesting event because the school was very open about, in their minds, their poor track record at supporting Indigenous students and the challenge they are facing in bringing Indigenous students into the school and ensuring they are able to feel part of the school and supported.

It was also very inspiring to hear some of the young students who have succeeded speak, including a young woman who was one of the first to graduate from year 12 through the scholarship program and now is to become the first in her family to attend university.

I acknowledge the effort that is being made by the school to incorporate and give opportunity to young Indigenous students but also to particularly celebrate those young students who told their stories very openly and very honestly about how difficult it has been to come into an environment like that but also to celebrate the opportunity it has given them.

Last night I attended a fundraising event for BIG Sing, which is about sharing culture and song. It is about connection and bringing Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people together through a shared joy of singing and music. They screened a documentary called *Teach a Man to Fish*, a sort of biopic film by a Biripi man, Grant Saunders, who seeks to reconcile his heritage with the life that his parents have sought to put together for him and his exploration of the family's tradition of fishing on the Manning River in Taree. If you have not seen the film, it is one worth watching to understand the challenges that some Indigenous people in modern Australia are facing.

Just finally, for those who have not seen it, I would encourage you to go on YouTube and watch the collaboration between Paul Kelly and a young Aboriginal artist called Ziggy Ramo and their rendition of *From Big Things, Little Things Grow*. It is a complete rewrite of the song. But again, it is, I guess, an insight into some of the challenges that Australia faces and the frustrations, the aspirations, the anger of Indigenous Australians about the plight they find themselves in in this country.

It is a powerful song. It is a powerful rendition of a well-known song. If you have not had the chance, I think it is something to do during Reconciliation Week as we all continue to learn more and seek to progress along the path of true reconciliation for this country.

### **Waste—green waste**

**MR CAIN** (Ginninderra) (5.09): I rise to speak briefly about the impending closure of the free green waste facility provided by Canberra Sand and Gravel on Parkwood Road. It seems to me that the Labor-Greens government, despite the minister's nonchalant attitude during question time today, is not concerned about the wishes of the residents of Belconnen. I have received more calls and emails from locals on this than for any other issue. They not only feel the Labor-Greens government's decision to close the Parkwood Road facility unacceptable but believe they have been left in the dark about a suitable local alternative. We know the Mitchell green waste facility is at 90 per cent capacity and so it will not be able to take any significant additional green waste. All the while, the government is reviewing options.

This Labor-Greens government claims to be a zero emissions government. The EPSD directorate website says the government is committed to leading by example to showcase best practice sustainability in government operations and to pursue rapid emission reduction targets. The irony is that due to the lack of a plan for a green waste capacity in Ginninderra this closure will most likely lead to an increase in emissions caused by greater distances travelled by residents and businesses to dispose of their green waste at Mitchell or Mugga Lane. I am not sure if the minister understands that the Mugga Lane trip is a round trip of an hour and a half from some parts of Belconnen.

I know the operators of this West Belconnen green waste facility want to continue offering this service and have proposed several options and alternatives to the minister. I have also sponsored their petition asking the government to keep the facility operating. I encourage anyone interested in maintaining this green waste facility in Belconnen to get online and sign the petition or visit the Parkwood Road facility to sign in person.

Unfortunately, this kind of disdain for Canberrans is now par for the course. This Labor-Greens government's inability to provide solutions to real community issues is not a rare occurrence; it seems it is a standard practice. I call on the Labor-Greens government to stop ignoring the community's wishes, to keep the green waste facility open, and to work with the operators to provide a suitable long-term solution in Belconnen.

### **Yerrabi electorate—community engagement**

**MR BRADDOCK** (Yerrabi) (5.12): I want to talk to a few issues close to my heart in Yerrabi, firstly, community gardens. Whilst Yerrabi has community gardens in Mitchell and Crace and one is planned for Throsby, more are required to meet the needs of the large and increasing population of Gungahlin. My office has been liaising with the Canberra Organic Growers Society, and I look forward to visiting their gardens in the near future.

But what is also important is providing a garden that is accessible for those who do not have a vehicle. This has been raised with me by multiple constituents, so I have

been working to see if it is possible to create a community garden that is readily accessible by public transport.

I also thank the residents at Gurrang Avenue, Ngunnawal. When one resident contacted me with concern about the speed on a suburban street, my office staff and I went out doorknocking along Gurrang Avenue, where we found the residents to be welcoming and eager to talk about the issue. A near total majority agreed that the speed limit should be reduced. I plan to take this issue up with the Minister for Transport and City Services and look forward to providing an update on this issue down the track.

I thank the Gungahlin Mosque and the Canberra Muslim community for their warm hospitality and the deep and respectful theological debates I enjoyed immensely. Through deep understanding of the different groups and faith that make up our community, it is my hope that we can build the bonds and connections that bring humankind together and make a community. I look forward to more debates going forward.

Finally, I draw attention to the Canberra Hindu Mandir temple ground-breaking ceremony this Saturday, 5 June in Moncrieff. A ground-breaking ceremony for a new Hindu is a once-in-a-generation event. This is the culmination of much community effort and fundraising. I, for one, look forward to watching the temple being built, as the designs are truly breathtaking. The community is to be congratulated.

### **World Elder Abuse Awareness Day**

**MS DAVIDSON** (Murrumbidgee) (5.14): I rise to talk about World Elder Abuse Awareness Day, which is commemorated each year on 15 June. There have been a number of events focusing on this issue, including a panel discussion in a Legal Aid Law Week event last month, and there will be a World Elder Abuse Awareness Day expo on 21 June at Weston Creek Community Centre. During the expo, a panel of experts, including ACT Policing, the ACT Human Rights Commission, ADACAS, Relationships Australia, Legal Aid and the Public Trustee and Guardian, will come together to discuss the range of issues and suite of remedies available in the ACT. This is most welcome because in 2020 no World Elder Abuse Awareness Day events were organised due to the impact of COVID-19 and social distancing requirements at the time.

I also take this moment to point out that even though the United Nations uses the term “elder abuse”, in the ACT we are moving away from that language and instead using the term “abuse against older people or an older person” so as not to confuse the interpretation of the word elder with its application in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

Abuse against older people can take many forms, including, of course, the more obvious forms of physical violence, but it also includes sexual abuse, emotional abuse, social abuse, coercion and control, and financial abuse, which is the most common. Financial abuse is defined as using someone else’s money, property or other assets

illegally or improperly, including threatening or coercing a person to hand over an asset, stealing, and misuse and abuse of a power of attorney.

In many cases, it is the person responsible for caring for that older person who is also doing the abusing and that is why it is such a difficult issue to address. No-one wants to report their son or daughter because they rely on them and because they love them. Very few want to report a carer when their quality of life depends on their support, however lacking it may be.

Research shows that up to 14 per cent of older people may be experiencing elder abuse. However, the real number may be higher because many people feel that they cannot speak up. As with domestic and family violence, the issue is gendered, with older women being two to three times more likely to experience abuse than older men, particularly sexual abuse. A contributing factor, of course, could also be that women tend to live longer than men, with 63 per cent of people over 85 being female.

We know that the older population will continue to increase over time, and that is why we must ensure adequate, appropriate and accessible avenues for remedy. My electorate of Murrumbidgee has a relatively older demographic. Weston Creek has 20 per cent and Woden Valley has 19 per cent of the population over 65 years of age compared to 11 per cent in north Canberra. That is why I am especially pleased that the upcoming expo is at Weston Creek.

As advocates such as COTA have said, there is still a taboo and stigma attached to the abuse of older people and we must continue to address that in order to protect those who are at risk of bullying, harassment and exploitation as a result of age and frailty, perceived or otherwise.

This expo aims to increase knowledge about the issue and help identify services that can help to spread awareness in the broader community. I hope many of you will make the effort to attend the expo between 10 am and 3 pm or attend the expert panel discussion between 10.30 am and noon. I thank Communities@Work for organising the event.

### **Brindabella electorate—community engagement**

**MR DAVIS** (Brindabella) (5.18): This Assembly has spent a fair bit of time in the last few sitting weeks discussing issues pertinent to the people of Gungahlin, and I think that is very important. There are a number of pressing and time-sensitive planning decisions happening in Gungahlin, and through their Greens' voice, my colleague Mr Braddock, those views have been represented in this place. But I would like to take you south for a little bit to Tuggeranong.

Yesterday, I presented a petition to this Assembly representing my constituents of Gordon concerned about a number of ongoing traffic management issues.

What I was surprised to learn in the hours after that petition was presented was just how many of our shared constituency across the suburbs of Gordon, Banks and Conder have a number of pressing city services and traffic management issues that

have been concerning them for some time. So there is clearly a lot of work ahead of me as a local member to represent those constituents and see what we can do to improve the roadways in Lanyon.

But I wanted to talk you through the process that led us to getting to the point of a petition. I was contacted by a group of constituents on Harry Hopman Circuit to discuss an issue of traffic management in their area. Not surprising. Popped out on a Sunday to have a chat.

What did surprise me, however, was just how many times these constituents had felt that their concerns had fallen on deaf ears, be it a number of representations to Access Canberra, ACT Policing, and even members of this Assembly, both those that serve currently and those who have come before us.

That is an issue that I found particularly concerning. We know in our shared constituency that there is a sense in Tuggeranong of feeling left behind or feeling abandoned and feeling under-represented. And we do those perceptions no credit when we are not proactive and agile and responsive to our constituents' concerns in real time.

I am really delighted about the level of cooperation that we have so far seen in this Assembly across the members of Brindabella to achieve outcomes for our constituency. When I was first elected, in my inaugural speech, I said, and I quote, and it does feel really strange to quote myself eight months in, but I will try.

I said, "I would like to encourage all of you, being the members of Brindabella, to join me for an informal Brindabella caucus in this 10th Assembly, a non-partisan effort that sees the five of us work together, meeting regularly to discuss issues of concern for our constituents."

And the chamber erupted in laughter. That is because, Madam Speaker, it is not the way that things have historically happened in this place. It is not the way things have historically happened in places just like this all over the country.

**MADAM SPEAKER:** Order. The time allotted for the debate has expired.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

**The Assembly adjourned at 5.21 pm until Tuesday, 22 June 2021, at 10 am.**

## Answers to questions

### ACT Policing—staffing (Question No 180)

**Mr Hanson** asked the Minister for Police and Emergency Services, upon notice, on 23 April 2021:

- (1) What was the number of (a) filled and (b) unfilled overtime shifts by sworn ACT Policing members on a quarterly basis for three years up to 31 March 2021.
- (2) What was the number of vacant full-time equivalent positions of sworn ACT Policing members on a quarterly basis for three years up to 31 March 2021.
- (3) What was the total number of sick days required by sworn ACT Policing members on a quarterly basis for three years up to 31 March 2021.
- (4) What was the total number of mental health leave days required by sworn ACT Policing members on a quarterly basis for three years up to 31 March 2021.
- (5) What was the total number of Comcare days required by sworn ACT Policing members on a quarterly basis for three years up to 31 March 2021.
- (6) What was the total number of sworn ACT Policing members who retired or resigned on a quarterly basis for three years up to 31 March 2021.

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

1.

#### (a) Filled overtime shifts

ACT Policing cannot accurately provide data on overtime by 'shifts'. ACT Policing's HR Information Management System (IMS) and reporting tools only report on total hours undertaken. These hours are provided below.

Number of Overtime Hours Undertaken Quarterly by Sworn Members					
F/Year	Q1 <i>1 July – 30 Sept</i>	Q2 <i>1 Oct – 31 Dec</i>	Q3 <i>1 Jan – 31 March</i>	Q4 <i>1 Apr – 30 June</i>	Grand Total
<b>2017-18</b>	10,889.35	12,588.18	13,925.92	14,549.03	<b>51,952.48</b>
<b>2018-19</b>	13,470.9	12,782.4	13,071.5	12,010.07	<b>51,334.87</b>
<b>2019-20</b>	10,020.42	11,150.26	11,411.49	7,515.67	<b>40,097.84</b>
<b>2020-21</b>	11,272.2	9,186.11	11,202.58		<b>31,660.89</b>

#### (b) Unfilled overtime shifts

This data cannot be produced to an accurate level without significant manual effort across ACT Policing.

2.

ACT Policing does not report on FTE vacancy positions across a quarterly period. ACT Policing uses a budget approach to workforce planning reporting on Average FTE against Affordable FTE rather than positions. ACT Policing manages the overall quantum of the workforce budget such that personnel can be deployed on a priority basis.

<b>Tracking Average FTE YTD as at the end of each quarter compared to the budgeted FTE</b>					
<b>F/Year</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>September</b>	<b>December</b>	<b>March</b>	<b>June</b>
<b>2017-18</b>	Average FTE	831.47	826.94	824.51	823.27
	Affordable FTE	854	854	854	854
	<b>Difference</b>	<b>-22.53</b>	<b>-27.06</b>	<b>-29.49</b>	<b>-30.73</b>
<b>2018-19</b>	Average FTE	853.73	863.03	867.49	871.03
	Affordable FTE	863	863	863	863
	<b>Difference</b>	<b>-9.27</b>	<b>0.03</b>	<b>4.49</b>	<b>8.03</b>
<b>2019-20</b>	Average FTE	881.51	867.95	857.69	863.62
	Affordable FTE	870	870	870	870
	<b>Difference</b>	<b>11.51</b>	<b>-2.05</b>	<b>-12.31</b>	<b>-6.38</b>
<b>2020-21</b>	Average FTE	881.59	884.82	896.14	
	Affordable FTE	894	894	911	
	<b>Difference</b>	<b>-12.41</b>	<b>-9.18</b>	<b>-14.86</b>	

3.

The below table references paid personal leave types for when a member is unwell. It does not include any form of carer's leave or unpaid leave for personal reasons.

<b>Sworn ACT Policing Member's Personal Leave days per quarter</b>					
<b>F/Year</b>	<b>Q1</b>	<b>Q2</b>	<b>Q3</b>	<b>Q4</b>	<b>Grand Total</b>
	<i>1 July – 30 Sept</i>	<i>1 Oct – 31 Dec</i>	<i>1 Jan – 31 March</i>	<i>1 Apr – 30 June</i>	
<b>2017-18</b>	1,001.62	885.12	691.49	866.88	<b>3,445.11</b>
<b>2018-19</b>	882.93	919.67	868.2	1,091.99	<b>3,762.79</b>
<b>2019-20</b>	1,034.99	924.1	985.65	958.3	<b>3,903.04</b>
<b>2020-21</b>	1,181.33	1,425.1	1,078.63		<b>3,685.06</b>

4.

ACT Policing cannot provide data on mental health leave as AFP time recording or leave management systems do not have a specific leave code, nor are members required to advise when personal leave is used for mental health related reasons. These leave days are taken under "Personal leave" along with all other types of sick leave captured in question 3.

5.

<b>ACT Policing Compensation Leave days per quarter</b>					
<b>F/Year</b>	<b>Q1</b> <i>1 July – 30 Sept</i>	<b>Q2</b> <i>1 Oct – 31 Dec</i>	<b>Q3</b> <i>1 Jan – 31 March</i>	<b>Q4</b> <i>1 Apr – 30 June</i>	<b>Grand Total</b>
<b>2017-18</b>	54	136	182.75	236	<b>608.75</b>
<b>2018-19</b>	142	323.01	177	224.8	<b>866.81</b>
<b>2019-20</b>	194.11	642.7	393.35	398.8	<b>1628.96</b>
<b>2020-21</b>	517	513.16	166		<b>1196.16</b>

*Table does not include any pending compensation leave – as this is not categorised into graduated return to work (GRTW) or workers compensation until approved by Comcare. Part-day leave for members undertaking a GRTW is also not included.*

6.

ACT Policing databases do not distinguish between reasons for separation. ‘Separation’ is used to describe a number of reasons for leaving the organisation, including dismissal, end of contract, redundancy, invalidity, resignation, retirement and death.

<b>ACT Policing Sworn Separations per quarter</b>					
<b>F/Year</b>	<b>Q1</b> <i>1 July – 30 Sept</i>	<b>Q2</b> <i>1 Oct – 31 Dec</i>	<b>Q3</b> <i>1 Jan – 31 March</i>	<b>Q4</b> <i>1 Apr – 30 June</i>	<b>Grand Total</b>
<b>2017-18</b>	9	5	5	6	<b>25</b>
<b>2018-19</b>	10	7	3	7	<b>27</b>
<b>2019-20</b>	11	8	13	5	<b>37</b>
<b>2020-21</b>	4	4	7		<b>15</b>

### **Parks and reserves—budget (Question No 184)**

**Ms Lawder** asked the Minister for Transport and City Services, upon notice, on 23 April 2021:

- (1) What is the Government’s current budget for maintaining parks and reserves for 2020-2021.
- (2) What are the estimated forward budgets for the years (a) 2021-2022 and (b) 2022-2023.
- (3) What changes have been made in the past 12 months to improve the maintenance of parks and reserves and are there any plans in the near future for further improvements.

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

- (1) Urban parks and open space maintenance is delivered by City Presentation within Transport Canberra and City Services (TCCS). City Presentation is responsible for the

delivery of a range of asset maintenance, horticultural, cleaning, litter removal, tree management, sportsgrounds and supporting regulatory and management activities. The 2020-21 management budget for City Presentation, excluding depreciation, is \$65m. While maintenance of parks is not specifically identified in the budget, it forms part of the wider maintenance activities referenced above. Reserves are managed by the Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate (EPSDD) and the total operating budget, including initiatives for ACT Parks and Conservation Service in 2020-21 is \$45.639m.

- (2) **Parks** – (a) The City Presentation budget for 2021-22 is currently under development and is subject to decisions by Government.  
 (b) The forward estimates for 2022-23 are subject to future budget considerations.  
**Reserves** - The total operating budget, including initiatives, for ACT Parks and Conservation Service in 2020-21 is \$45.639 million. (a) The budget for 2021-2022 is currently under development and is subject to decisions by government.  
 (b) The forward estimates for 2022-23 are subject to future budget consideration.
- (3) TCCS has a dedicated park maintenance and improvement program team. This team is tasked with high level horticultural maintenance and improvement programs throughout Canberra's Town and District Parks. Regular audits of these parks are conducted to assess horticultural and asset conditions which determines upcoming work programs specifically targeted to improving the look and feel of these parks and ensuring high standards expected from the community are met.

Current and future improvements to the maintenance of Canberra's urban parks include the removal of dead trees and shrubs, the planting and replanting of garden beds, the application of mulch, a comprehensive weed control and nutrition program, upgrades to irrigation pumps at Lake Ginninderra, Lake Tuggeranong and Nursery Park to improve safety and efficiency, an ongoing and comprehensive turf renovation program, upgrades Eddison Park and Belconnen skateparks and upgrades and replacement of park assets such as furniture and structures as required.

The Parks and Conservation Service, within EPSDD has a comprehensive and strategic threat-based management approach that underpins our maintenance of reserves. This program of works is comprised of the annual bushfire operations program to manage the threat of fire and to utilise fire for ecological and cultural purposes, Invasive species management including pest plant and animal and overabundant native species.

The programs are complemented by specific conservation improvement actions through reserve and offset commitments, community recreation initiatives in both reserves and plantations and design and implementation of new reserves.

## **Sport—grounds maintenance (Question No 189)**

**Ms Castley** asked the Minister for Transport and City Services, upon notice, on 23 April 2021 (*redirected to the Minister for Sport and Recreation*):

- (1) How is the ACT Government maintaining Moncrieff and Amaroo cricket grounds and nets so they are safe and at a standard the community expects.

- (2) Is the Government aware the nets are worn and have holes, on the side and the roof, the size of cricket balls.
- (3) Will the Government replace the nets; if so, when; if not, why not.
- (4) Will the Government repaint the markings on the floor of the nets given the markings on the ground have worn off.

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

- (1) Transport Canberra and City Services (TCCS) Sport and Recreation facilities conduct bi-monthly inspection of all ACT Sportsground assets under their management. Officers consider the safety and utility of sportsgrounds assets and conduct, or program repairs and maintenance as required.
- (2) TCCS is in the process of redesigning the way that cricket nets are constructed to mitigate issues that may occur during normal use. Following the completion of this work, cricket assets which require maintenance or repair will be prioritised for attention.
- (3) Priority and timing of repairs or replacement works will be determined after the above-mentioned redesign process is completed and in light of seasonal sporting demand.
- (4) TCCS will assess the requirements for line markings at the Amaroo and Moncrieff cricket nets and take appropriate action prior to the commencement of the 2021/22 cricket season.

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### **Trees—urban canopy (Question No 190)**

**Ms Castley** asked the Minister for the Environment, upon notice, on 23 April 2021 (*redirected to the Minister for Transport and City Services*):

- (1) What was the tree canopy of the ACT in (a) 2008, (b) 2012, (c) 2016 and (d) 2020.
- (2) What was the vegetation coverage of the ACT in (a) 2008, (b) 2012, (c) 2016 and (d) 2020.
- (3) How many mature trees has the ACT lost per year through urban and other development in the last 10 years.
- (4) What ACT data and systems does the Government have and use to monitor tree and vegetation loss and how are these made publicly available.
- (5) What other data measures is the ACT Government aware of or using to monitor vegetation or trees in the ACT.
- (6) How many trees will need to be planted to meet the ACT Government's 30 percent tree canopy target by 2045.
- (7) How many replacement trees will the ACT Government plant over the same period.

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

- (1) Tree canopy coverage was first recorded for Canberra's urban areas based on 2015 remote sensing (LiDAR) data, with initial analysis indicating an urban tree canopy cover of approximately 19% at this time. The ACT Government acquired updated LiDAR data in 2020 and expect to release updated urban tree canopy cover results in 2021.
  - (2) The ACT Government does not report on vegetation cover.
  - (3) Data on tree loss through urban and other development is not available.
  - (4) The ACT Government acquired LiDAR data in 2015 and 2020 to monitor urban tree canopy cover. This LiDAR data is available as open data under CC BY 4.0 licence. The ACT Government expects to release the 2020 (and reprocessed 2015) canopy cover spatial in 2021.
  - (5) Transport Canberra and City Services (TCCS) manage a spatial asset register of all public realm urban trees using ESRI ArcGIS technology. In addition to including a record of trees planted or removed by TCCS, this register also includes urban trees planted by developers and 'gifted' to TCCS to manage.
  - (6) Modelling undertaken by CSIRO in 2019 and referenced in the Urban Forest Strategy, estimates that approximately 450,000 trees will need to be planted *on public land* by 2045 to achieve the 30% canopy cover target.
  - (7) The figure in (6) includes trees that need to be planted *on public land* to replace those that are expected to reach the end of their life in that time.
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### **Roads—pedestrian crossings (Question No 192)**

**Ms Lee** asked the Minister for Transport and City Services, upon notice, on 23 April 2021:

- (1) What is the status of the preliminary sketch plan on the City Services website in relation to the Pialligo pedestrian improvements on Beltana and Kallaroo Road.
- (2) Has detailed design work been completed; if not, when will detailed design work be completed; if so, has a tender for the works been made public.
- (3) If a tender for the works has not been made public, when will a tender be publicised and when will it close.
- (4) If a tender for the works has been made public, what is the scope of the tender.
- (5) When does the Directorate expect these works to (a) begin construction and (b) be complete.

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

- (1) The preliminary sketch plan for pedestrian and traffic improvements on Beltana and Kallaroo Roads in Pialligo was completed and made public in 2020.
  - (2) Detailed design commenced in March 2021 and is forecast to be complete in June 2021.
  - (3) The design consultant was procured via a select tender process.
  - (4) The scope of the work to be completed by the design consultant is to progress the preliminary sketch plan to detailed design.
  - (5) Construction timing is not confirmed.
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**Housing ACT—maintenance  
(Question No 194)**

**Mr Parton** asked the Minister for Housing and Suburban Development, upon notice, on 23 April 2021:

- (1) In relation to the contract for Total Facilities Management (TFM) for repair and upkeep of public housing in the ACT, how much was, or is, allocated to public housing repairs for each financial year over the life of the contract.
- (2) How much was spent on the TFM contract for repair of public housing in (a) 2018-19, (b) 2019-20 and (c) 2020-21 to date.
- (3) In relation to part (2), what was the variation in each year between the amounts allocated and the amounts expended and what were the reasons for these variations.
- (4) Which agency prepared the budget allocation limits for each financial year covered by the TFM contract.
- (5) What factors were taken into account for determining the amounts set in the TFM contract for public housing repair and maintenance.
- (6) For each financial year or part financial year covered by the TFM contract, what (a) are the number of Housing ACT residential dwellings that were, or are, planned to be covered by the repair allocations made in the TFM contract, (b) were the number of residential dwellings for which repair obligations were (or are) planned not to be covered by the TFM contract allocations and (c) are the reasons for non-coverage, for example, due for demolition or sale and the like.
- (7) Is the budget for public housing repairs allocated as a lump sum for the term of the TFM contract or is it developed and allocated on an annual basis.
- (8) What evaluation process is used to ensure the adequacy of the housing repair allocation in terms of residents' health and safety.
- (9) If the repair allocation is found to be inadequate, what does Housing ACT do about this.

- (10) In relation to the reported over-spend of \$7.55 million on the 2019-20 budget for work performed under the TFM contract, how did the fires, smoke and COVID specifically generate the need for additional repair and maintenance work on public housing.
- (11) What specific types of work were required under each of the categories referred to in part (10).
- (12) How many work orders were associated with each of the categories referred to in part (10).
- (13) What caused the increase in maintenance complaints mentioned in evidence to the Standing Committee on Health and Community Wellbeing hearing on 3 March.
- (14) What were the number of work orders completed in 2018-19 compared to the 77,000 mentioned in the committee hearings for 2019-20 and what is the expected number of work orders for 2020-21.
- (15) How are tenant repair requests (a) validated and (b) prioritised and who decides what repairs will be undertaken and what will not.
- (16) What benchmarks are used to process and complete tenant requests for repairs.
- (17) In relation to public housing tenant requests for repairs (a) what is Programmed Facility Management (PFM) obliged to do, (b) is PFM obliged under contract to resolve all tenant requests, (c) if PFM is not obliged to resolve all tenant requests, what are the categories of repairs they can decline to undertake, (d) does PFM follow up on unresolved requirements, (e) what timeframes must PFM comply with on follow up actions with tenants and (f) what advice is given to the tenant if PFM cannot meet all the repair requirements sought by them.
- (18) How many outstanding repair requests were there at the end of (a) 2018-19, (b) 2019-20 and (c) end of March 2021 and what was the age profile for these.
- (19) What information technology system does Housing ACT have in place to manage tenancies, vacancies, the housing stock, requests for repairs and tenants' complaints.
- (20) How is it that tenant requests for repairs can go unanswered for several months or years and often presenting serious health or safety risks to residents.
- (21) What plan of action does the Government have to eliminate the backlog of repair requests from public housing tenants that present health or safety risks.
- (22) How many complaints have been received from public housing tenants on repair issues for each financial year and year to date, since implementation of the new TFM contract in October 2018.
- (23) What steps does Housing ACT take to resolve tenant complaints.
- (24) What process does Housing ACT have in place to consult with public housing tenants and receive their feedback and what does Housing ACT do with this information.

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

- (1) As a Public Trading Enterprise, Housing ACT's budgets are based on the amount of revenue expected to be received, with the main source of this being rent received from tenants. Housing ACT apportions this budget across all operations, including public housing maintenance.

The TFM Contract contains confidential text which includes the overall tender value; therefore, the specific amount cannot be disclosed.

- (2)

- (a) 2018-19: \$41,477,000.

- (b) 2019-20: \$51,923,000.

- (c) 2020-21 as of 28 April 2021: \$35,191,456.

- (3) Housing ACT reports on expenses for repairs and maintenance under the Supplies and Services component of the financial reports which is compared to the previous financial years. This information can be found in the Annual reports and budget papers of the relevant financial years.

As per the Auditor General's report, there was a \$7.55 million variance in the form of additional spending for the 2019-2020 financial year. The additional spending on Repairs and Maintenance in 2019-20 was due in part to responses to significant natural events in early 2020, including implementation of preventative measures to avoid severe property damage in response to the bushfire danger such as fuel load reduction, as well as responding to the subsequent hailstorm damage in January 2020.

In addition, tenants spending more time at home during the COVID-19 pandemic took the opportunity to call in a high volume of maintenance items which resulted in additional outgoings. Another contributing factor was the higher than budgeted number of vacant properties during the first nine months of 2019-20, with properties being repaired while empty, which may have otherwise been scheduled in 2020-21 if they were tenanted.

- (4) The budget for each financial year is set by Housing ACT.

- (5) As a Public Trading Enterprise, Housing ACT's budgets are based on the amount of revenue expected to be received, with the main source of this being rent received from tenants. Housing ACT apportions this budget across all operations, including public housing maintenance.

Repairs and maintenance are a key housing cost. Housing ACT is currently assessing its maintenance budget to ensure that it is sufficient to cover the increasing and changing cost drivers being experienced.

Tenant responsible maintenance which is damage or misuse of a property is also provided upfront by the TFM and it is expected that tenants pay for this service within a reasonable time.

(6)

(a) The number of Housing ACT residential dwellings that are covered by the repair allocations made in the TFM Contract are captured in the table below.

As of 30 June 2019	As of 30 June 2020	As of 29 April 2021
11,582	11,704	11,640

(b) The TFM is still required to undertake repairs and maintenance to properties that are identified for sale or redevelopment. The types of works to be undertaken are limited to things to be able to sell the property, or in the case of redevelopment properties, things like temporary fencing, mowing of lawns and other general upkeep items.

(c) As per answer (b), all properties are covered under the TFM Contract.

(7) The budget for public housing repairs is allocated each financial year.

(8) The Total Facility Management contract obligates Programmed to manage repairs and upgrades across the whole portfolio on a need's basis. Programmed use data collected through Property Condition Assessments and maintenance requests from tenants to determine the priority of works.

(9) Programmed use data collected through Property Condition Assessments and maintenance requests from tenants to determine the priority of works. There is a planned component to works and reactive component to ensure that the contract is agile enough to react to tenants needs.

(10) The additional spending on Repairs and Maintenance in 2019-20 was due in part, to responses to significant natural events in early 2020, including the implementation of preventative measures to avoid severe property damage in response to the bushfire danger; this included fuel load reduction, as well as responding to the subsequent hailstorm damage in January 2020. In addition, with tenants spending more time at home during the COVID-19 pandemic, there was a higher volume of maintenance items received, which resulted in additional outgoings.

(11) Works undertaken in relation to bushfire preparedness were things like gutter cleaning, cutting of trees and shrubs and removing leaf and plant litter. Works undertaken after the hailstorm were mainly roofing repairs and the removing of fallen trees and plants. A lot of these works related to initial 'make safe repairs' as it is not safe for contractors to be on the roof when it is wet.

When a property is vacated, a complete assessment is carried out by the Total Facility Manager to assess what routine works and major upgrades are required to return the property ready for re-allocating. When a property requires more substantial work, such as a new kitchen, bathroom, painting, or floor covering, this additional work invariably impacts on the time frame and cost of the works.

(12) Currently the system does not allow for the granular breakdown of work orders as requested. In 2018-2019 Programmed completed approximately 35,000 works orders and received approximately 63,000 calls; in 2019-2020, Programmed completed approximately 77,000 works orders and received approximately 87,000 calls. This shows that the volume of works orders completed, increased from an average of 4,375 per month to 6,416 per month from 2018-19 to 2019-2020.

- (13) Housing ACT and Programmed use complaints as a valuable form of feedback and whilst acknowledging that there was an increase from 2018-19 to 2019-2020, this was expected. 2019-2020 was the first full financial year of the TFM Contract and processes and procedures were still being embedded, built upon, and continuously improved.
- (14) Approximately 35,000 works orders were completed in 2018-19 and approximately 62,000 works orders have been completed in this financial year so far.
- (15) Programmed are contracted to provide a Total Facility Management service. This includes management and triaging of maintenance and upgrades. The Programmed Contact Centre staff are trained in questions to ask of tenants requesting maintenance, to ensure that all information is provided, and the right works order can be raised to address the issue.

Programmed also use data collected through Property Condition Assessments to determine the priority of works.

Programmed are required to deliver repairs and maintenance in a way that meets Housing ACT's obligations under the *Residential Tenancies Act 1997*, particularly with respect to the timely provision of these repairs or maintenance.

Housing ACT tenants, like all other residential tenants, are encouraged to undertake their own repairs should the damage have been caused by themselves, their children, or visitors.

Under the *Growing and Renewing Public Housing* program strategy, Housing ACT will make decisions to retain or dispose of a property using a multi-criteria analysis, whilst being mindful of the financial resources of Housing ACT. Should Housing ACT decide that it is no longer economical to undertake major upgrade works to any property, Programmed will be instructed not to undertake these works but will continue to make repairs relating to health and safety.

- (16) The *Residential Tenancies Act 1997* outlines where a lessor is to make repairs and what constitutes an urgent repair. Like any landlord, Housing ACT works within this legislation.

As a social landlord, Housing ACT undertakes works to properties that are over and above what a landlord in the private market would. These works include things like domestic and family violence security upgrades to ensure that our tenant feel safe in their homes, disabled modifications to ensure that our tenants have full use of their homes and can remain as independent as possible, and tenant responsible maintenance which is damage to or misuse of a property

(17)

(a) The TFM Contract outlines the Commissioner for Housing's key objective, which is that the amenity, safety, security, and condition of housing dwellings are preserved and improved, for the benefit of current and future tenants, at the best possible value for money.

(b) The TFM Contract does not detail that Programmed are to resolve all tenant requests.

(c) Housing ACT has set property standards, that properties will be maintained to. This goes into detail of materials and appliances used. Programmed are not required to install or undertake repairs to non-standard items. Non-standard item are things like dishwashers, pergolas, or other items that previous tenants have installed in properties that Housing ACT does not maintain.

(d) Both Programmed and Housing ACT have numerous avenues for tenants and users of the contract, to provide feedback. Where feedback requires follow up, this is done. The Programmed contact centre provide immediate feedback to tenants on the priority given to the works order raised, or if the works will be not be raised.

(e) Programmed are required to address any first level complaints within 16 working days.

(f) Tenants are encouraged to find contractors on the open market to undertake any non-standard repairs.

(18)

(a) Approximately 35,000 works orders were raised in the 2018-2019 financial year, and of these 6,852 works orders were raised and considered, 'not yet completed' at the end of 2018-19. Keeping in mind that this was the first end of financial year for this contract, many of these works orders were duplicates and the works had already been undertaken on another works order.

(b) Approximately 77,000 works orders were raised in the 2019-2020 financial year, and of these 4,286 works orders were raised and considered, 'not yet completed' at the end of 2019-2020. 3,234 of these works orders were raised in the last month and were rolled over to the next financial year to be completed. The remaining 1052 works orders which were over a month old were also rolled over to the new financial year. It is important to note that none of these works orders were overdue.

(c) 3,478 works order were raised and considered, 'not yet completed' as of 29 April 2021. 3,043 of these works orders were raised within the last 2 months and are still in progress. The remaining 435 works orders were raised over 2 months ago and relate to items like non-routine vacant properties and cyclical works at complexes.

(19) Housing ACT utilises a commercial off-the-shelf product that has been developed and distributed by Northgate Public Services as the primary management tool. Known as Homenet by Housing ACT, it manages the day-to-day management of a range of housing products, including the Social Housing Register, collection of rents, maintenance, the overall management of properties as well as supporting roles of complaints, and client service visits.

(20) Programmed and Housing ACT work closely with tenants to ensure that their homes are kept in good repair. The TFM Contract is regularly scrutinised, and Housing ACT sets the bar very high for the performance of the Total Facility Manager. Tenants are also obliged to provide reasonable access to their homes to ensure that repairs or upgrades can be undertaken. Programmed and Housing ACT remain as flexible as possible to tenants needs to try and achieve this.

(21) When Programmed is notified of a repair that needs to be done, the works are assigned a priority category which is an appropriate time frame for works to be

carried out. Depending on the nature of the issue, this could be in as little as 4 hours, or as long as 20 calendar days. If the repair is more complex, an inspection will be arranged to scope the required works prior to them being undertaken. Programmed works closely with tenant to ensure appointments are as convenient as possible and the repairs are undertaken as soon as possible.

- (22) The new Total Facilities Management Contract began on 1 November 2018. In 2018-19, 388 complaints were received by both Total Facilities Management providers regarding maintenance and 167 complaints were received by Housing ACT regarding maintenance. In 2019-20, 666 complaints were received by Programmed regarding maintenance and 104 complaints were received by Housing ACT regarding maintenance. 553 complaints have been received by Programmed in the 2020-2021 so far and 62 second level maintenance related complaints have been received by Housing ACT this year so far.

- (23) Housing ACT seeks to resolve all tenant complaints in accordance with the Community Service Directorate's Complaints Handling and Management Policy (CHaMP). Complaints may be made by telephone, email, in person or in writing.

All complaints, other than anonymous complaints, are acknowledged in writing within 24 hours advising the complainant of the registered number of their complaint and the officer responsible for handling the complaint.

Complaints relating to Housing ACT or staff matters are raised for investigation by the relevant Housing ACT business units.

Maintenance complaints made by tenants are forwarded to Programmed Facilities Management, Housing ACT's total facilities manager, for necessary action. If tenants are not satisfied with the response provided by Programmed the complaint can be escalated to Housing ACT's Contracts and Business Operations Team for further investigation as a second level complaint.

Housing ACT provides a written response to all complaints advising the outcome of the investigation and any action taken. This response also provides information about escalation pathways available to the complainant if they are dissatisfied with the response.

Housing ACT seeks to provide complainants with a response to all complaints within 14 – 28 days, consistent with CSD CHaMP.

- (24) The Tenants' Consultative Group (TCG) is Housing ACT's primary mechanism for consulting with public housing tenants. The TCG is made up of public housing tenants and Housing ACT staff. It meets regularly to discuss Housing ACT policies and solutions that lead to improved services. When tenants provide feedback on Housing ACT's service delivery, this information is provided to the relevant business unit for consideration. TCG members receive updates on changes that have been implemented following their feedback. Members are encouraged to provide feedback directly to their Housing Managers for matters that relate to specific tenancies.

**Racing—policy responsibilities  
(Question No 195)**

**Mr Parton** asked the Special Minister of State, upon notice, on 23 April 2021:

- (1) What amount has been allocated in the 2020-21 budget and associated forward estimates to enable the Special Minister of State to discharge his responsibility of racing policy.
- (2) What full-time equivalent is allocated to the Minister for this function in 2020-21 budget and associated forward estimates.
- (3) What directorate is this budget and full-time equivalent allocated to and managed by.
- (4) If there is no budget or full-time equivalent, how does the Minister exercise his responsibility in this area.
- (5) What initiatives, reviews or programs are planned to be undertaken in 2020-21 and associated forward estimates for this policy responsibility.

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

- (1) The Special Minister of State is supported by the Liquor, Racing and Gaming Policy team, Civil and Regulatory Law Branch of the Legislation, Policy and Programs Division (LPP) in the Justice and Community Safety Directorate (JACS) to meet his responsibilities with respect to racing policy. Recurrent funding is appropriated to JACS to support a range of Ministers to meet their ministerial responsibilities, including with respect to racing policy.
- (2) As highlighted in the response to question 1, racing policy work is carried out by staff of the Liquor, Racing and Gaming Policy team in LPP. Resources within LPP are used flexibly to support a number of Ministers to discharge their portfolio responsibilities.
- (3) See response to question 2 above.
- (4) See response to questions 1 and 2 above.
- (5) In July 2017 the Government entered a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Canberra Racing Club (CRC) and Canberra Harness Racing Club (CHRC) (the Racing Clubs). This MoU expires on 30 June 2022. The Government will work closely with the Racing Clubs on the renewal of this MoU to ensure the economic and social benefits that arise from a well-managed, sustainable, and well-regulated horse racing industry continue.

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**Housing—Justice Housing Program  
(Question No 198)**

**Mrs Kikkert** asked the Attorney-General, upon notice, on 23 April 2021 (*redirected to the Minister for Corrections*):

- (1) Is funding being cut from the Justice Housing Program for the next two year; if so, why.
- (2) How much funding will remain for this program for the next two years.
- (3) How will these funding cuts functionally affect the Justice Housing Program.
- (4) How many properties are being managed by the Justice Housing Program.
- (5) What is the total capacity of these properties.
- (6) In what suburbs are these properties located in.
- (7) Are members of different families accommodated together in the same property.
- (8) How many individuals did the Justice Housing Program service during (a) 2018-2019, (b) 2019-20 and (c) 2020-2021 to date.

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

1. Funding is not being cut from the Justice Housing Program (JHP). Funding has been committed to the JHP through to the 2022-23 financial year.
2. The total funding for the next two years related to the Justice Housing Program is \$5.997m.
3. Funding is not being cut from the JHP.
4. The JHP manages 10 properties.
5. Each property has three bedrooms, meaning the JHP can accommodate a maximum of 30 occupants at any one time.
6. The JHP manages 10 properties across eight Canberra suburbs: Downer, Watson, Latham, Richardson, Evatt, Rivett, Page and Torrens.
7. Yes, members of different families are accommodated within the same property.
8. The JHP has housed a total of 43 residents, during (a) 2018-2019, (b) 2019-20 and (c) 2020-2021 to date as follows:

Year	No. of residents	Notes
2018—19	0	JHP commenced on 28 January 2020.
2019—20	4	While the JHP commenced in January 2020, housing came online in May 2020.
2020—21	39	All ten properties were established by March 2021.
<b>Total</b>	<b>43</b>	

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**Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders—Yarrabi Bamirr program  
(Question No 199)**

**Mrs Kikkert** asked the Attorney-General, upon notice, on 23 April 2021:

- (1) In relation to the Justice Housing Program, does the ACT Government partner with any community organisation to deliver the Yarrabi Bamirr program; if so, which one/s.
- (2) Is the Yarrabi Bamirr program being funded this financial year; if so, how much funding will this program be receiving.
- (3) Is there any funding for this program for the next three financial years.
- (4) What changes will be made to the program following the Australian National University evaluation.
- (5) If the Yarrabi Bamirr program is not being funded, why is this program not receiving any funding.
- (6) Were the results of the trial not positive enough to keep on funding this program.
- (7) Was there consultation with Winnunga, Tjillari Justice or Yedding Mura ahead of the budget about this program; if so, what was the result of that consultation.

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

1. Since the 2019-20 Yarrabi Bamirr grant round the Justice and Community Safety Directorate (JACS) partnered with three key local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled organisations to deliver the Yarrabi Bamirr program to 20 families: Winnunga Nimmityjah Aboriginal Health and Community Services (Winnunga Nimmityjah) to provide the program to 14 families; Yedding Mura to provide the program to 3 families; and Tjillari Justice to provide the program to 3 families.
2. Yes, \$1.045 million is allocated for Yarrabi Bamirr for the 2020-21 financial year.
3. Current funding arrangements for Yarrabi Bamirr continues through to the end of the 2021-2022 financial year when further funding arrangements will be considered:

Year	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	Total
Amount (SOGC)	78k	158k	162k	166k	564k
Amount (YB program)	420k	861k	883k	905k	3,069k
					3.633m

4. The Directorate will seek to implement the key findings of the 2019 ANU evaluation of the Yarrabi Bamirr trial as part of future contract negotiations. The evaluation recommended that JACS provide extra funding for service delivery after-hours and on holidays. JACS recently funded services over the 2020-21 Christmas period as a trial of this recommendation to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people leaving the Alexander Maconochie Centre over that period.
5. Yarrabi Bamirr has funding allocated through to the end of the 2021-22 financial year.
6. The results of the Winnunga Nimmityjah Yarrabi Bamirr trial evaluation were very positive and provided the basis for the current funding and expansion of the program to 20 families.

7. The original Yarrabi Bamirr budget bid was informed by ongoing engagement and consultation with the trial lead Winnunga Nimmityjah, local community-controlled organisations and the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community. Any future budget bids will be informed by consultation with the current providers.

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### **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders—legal services (Question No 200)**

**Mrs Kikkert** asked the Attorney-General, upon notice, on 23 April 2021:

- (1) In relation to the Justice Housing Program, is the Warrumbul Sentencing Court still being funded; if so, how much funding is the Warrumbul Sentencing Court going to receive this financial year and for the next three financial years and under what line item is the court being funded.
- (2) Is there any substantial difference in the funding for the court going forward two financial years compared to the last two financial years; if not, why is the Warrumbul Sentencing Court not being funded.
- (3) Where is the funding for this going.
- (4) Were any Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander groups consulted about this; if so, which ones; if not, why not.
- (5) Why was funding cut from this program.

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

1. The Warrumbul Circle Sentencing Court (Warrumbul) is still funded. The funding for Warrumbul is now appropriated to the Justice and Community Safety Directorate (JACS) under Output 3.1 in the Budget Papers for ACT Courts and Tribunal. Appropriation for the current and forward financial years is indexed and budgeted in the forward estimates is:
  - \$179,000 for 2020-21;
  - \$183,000 for 2021-22; and
  - \$186,000 for 2022-23.
2. Initially, for financial year 2019-20, Warrumbul was funded out of the *Confiscated Assets Trust Fund*, a statutory trust. The instrument provided for \$174,000 in 2019-20. The increases in funding amounts for the last two financial years compared to the forward two financial years primarily reflects indexation.
3. Warrumbul funding provides for employee costs, supplies and services, including a Registry Support Officer, payment of the part-time members (Elders), conferencing (where required), training for members and overheads.
4. Initially, the Galambany Circle Sentencing Court dealt with defendants from both the Magistrates and Children's Court. During the Galambany Circle Sentencing Evaluation in 2017, the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community recommended the establishment of an independent Children's Circle Sentencing Court. During the establishment of Warrumbul, several Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders were consulted, including:

- the United Ngunnawal Elders Council;
- the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body member for justice;
- Winnunga Nimmityjah Aboriginal Health Service;
- Gugan Gulwan;
- Tjillari Justice Aboriginal Corporation; and
- the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Justice Caucus.

Stakeholders were also invited to view and participate in mock courts to assist in understanding the process of Circle Sentencing.

5. Funding has not been cut from this program.

### **Municipal services—resident parking permits (Question No 202)**

**Mrs Kikkert** asked the Minister for Transport and City Services, upon notice, on 23 April 2021:

- (1) When did the ACT Government make the decision to phase out resident parking permits, and what were the reasons for this decision.
- (2) What was the annual revenue the Government received from the issuance of these permits before the phasing out of such permits began.
- (3) How much estimated revenue has the ACT Government received from parking fees and parking fines by phasing out resident parking permits.
- (4) For which areas are resident parking permits still offered, and why are these areas considered exceptional.

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

- (1) The ACT Government ceased issuing new residential parking permits in 2005. Since then, existing permits have been progressively phased out when redevelopment occurs. The ACT Government re-examined this position in 2015 and concluded that residential parking permit systems were still an inequitable means of rationing the limited kerbside space and are a countermeasure in encouraging sustainable travel.
- (2) An accurate answer to this question is not readily available.
- (3) An accurate answer to this question is not readily available.
- (4) Resident parking permits are still offered for Argyle Square in Reid and Havelock House in Turner. These areas were included as part of the original resident parking permits scheme and have not yet been phased out in line with the processes outlined in (1).

### **Parking—licence plate recognition technology (Question No 205)**

**Mrs Kikkert** asked the Minister for Transport and City Services, upon notice, on 23 April 2021 (*redirected to the Minister for Business and Better Regulation*):

- (1) When was new licence plate recognition (LPR) technology introduced for parking enforcement.
- (2) Has illegal parking increased or decreased since the introduction of LPR and can the Minister provide the data.
- (3) By how much has LPR increased revenue from parking fines and can the Minister provide the data.

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

- (1) Licence Plate Recognition (LPR) was introduced in September 2017.
- (2) Data collected by Access Canberra relates only to the numbers of infringements issued. The number of infringements issued since the introduction of LPR is below:

	<b>Type of Infringement</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Value</b>
<b>Sept 2017 – June 2018</b>	LPR Infringement	12,127	\$1,727,061.00
	Parking Infringement	64,413	\$8,867,302.97
	Mail Out	221	\$47,609.00
<b>July 2018 – June 2019</b>	LPR Infringement	29,920	\$4,152,457.00
	Parking Infringement	82,301	\$11,615,423.99
	Mail Out	334	\$78,546.00
<b>July 2019 – June 2020</b>	LPR Infringement	24,470	\$3,595,031.00
	Parking Infringement	67,759	\$9,667,554.87
	Mail Out	1,432	\$272,040.00

- (3) The use of LPR parking patrols is one of several methods utilised by Access Canberra as part of its overall parking compliance activities. Use of LPR depends on the nature of the compliance activity and associated risks. The numbers of infringements issued by LPR can increase or decrease based on a range of factors including the location and volume of enforcement activities.

The number of LPR issued infringements are provided in the below table:

	<b>Type of Infringement</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Value</b>
<b>Sept 2017 – June 2018</b>	LPR Infringements	12,127	\$1,727,061.00
<b>July 2018 – June 2019</b>	LPR Infringements	29,920	\$4,152,457.00
<b>July 2019 – June 2020</b>	LPR Infringements	24,470	\$3,595,031.00

**Active travel—Lawson  
(Question No 207)**

**Mrs Kikkert** asked the Minister for Transport and City Services, upon notice, on 23 April 2021:

- (1) Given in Question Time on 31 March 2021, the Minister stated that there are a range of bus stops available [for Lawson residents], both across the road in the University of Canberra (UC) and on adjacent streets ... We're also currently looking at further work around footpath connections between Lawson and public transport stops as well and despite repeated requests both by residents and by myself, there is still no direct developed footpath between western Lawson and the bus stops located across Ginninderra Drive on the University of Canberra campus (Thirriwirri Street), is this one of the footpath connections that the Minister referred to in his answer.
- (2) What exactly is the further work that the Minister referred to in his answer.
- (3) When will this further work be completed.
- (4) When can residents of western Lawson expect to be able to safely and conveniently walk on a reasonably direct footpath between their homes and the bus stops on the UC campus.

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

- (1) The reference in Question Time on 31 March 2021 was to the work the ACT Government is doing in response to the request to construct a path to connect west Lawson to the bus stops located at the University of Canberra Hospital.
- (2) TCCS are progressing the design of this path in 2021, with construction to follow.
- (3) See (2).
- (4) See (2).

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**Transport—flexible bus service  
(Question No 208)**

**Mrs Kikkert** asked the Minister for Transport and City Services, upon notice, on 23 April 2021:

Can the Minister please explain what happened to the 2018 commitment to provide all residents in the suburb of Lawson access to a demand-responsive bus service until the local road network is able to be completed, given that in a media release dated 18 June 2018, the ACT Government announced that the new transport network would include 'demand responsive services to provide flexible public transport connections ... for the new suburb of Lawson' and when asked about the commitment to provide this service for Lawson, the Minister said, 'We do have a flexible bus service that is currently available for those who have mobility issues and maybe can't walk down to the bus stop because it's too far away, so that is already available, Madam Speaker, for all residents across the ACT to use'.

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

The Government is committed to providing new suburbs with public transport. As outlined in the response to previous Questions on Notice from the Member, this will be enabled by the development of further road links connecting Aikman Drive and Stockton Avenue.

The Flexible Bus Service is currently available for all members of the community who qualify for the service including residents of Lawson.

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**Development—Hawker  
(Question No 210)**

**Mrs Kikkert** asked the Minister for Planning and Land Management, upon notice, on 23 April 2021:

- (1) In relation to section 3, blocks 9 and 12, Hawker, can the Minister confirm whether the following blocks 9 and 12 of section 3 in Hawker are owned by the ACT Government or privately owned.
- (2) What is the current status of the childcare centre development anticipated for block 12 (near block 9), and when is construction expected to be completed.
- (3) Will the childcare centre development encompass block 9 as well; if so, are there plans to demolish the Hawker tennis courts.
- (4) Can the Minister provide any further details concerning this development.

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

- (1) Block 9, Section 3 Hawker is privately leased. Block 12, Section 3 Hawker is unleased Territory Land, under the custodianship of Transport Canberra and City Services.
- (2) The planning and land authority provided conditional approval for DA201834626 on 4 August 2020. The approval is for demolition of the existing buildings and tennis courts, construction of a new single storey childcare centre and a lease variation to permit community use limited to childcare. The approval is for Block 9, Section 3 Hawker, although plans submitted for this application indicated overflow staff parking may be located on the adjacent Block 12, which is currently used for overflow parking for sporting events.

Conditions for this decision related to requirements imposed by the Environment Protection Authority limiting any work being undertaken to demolition and decontamination, until those conditions are satisfied. Stamped plans permitting the demolition of the buildings and tennis courts were issued on 1 September 2020. It is understood demolition of these items has been completed. Other conditions of approval are required to be satisfied prior to further work on this development being undertaken.

- (3) The development approval only relates to work on the privately leased Block 9 and includes the demolition of the Hawker tennis courts.

- (4) The remaining conditions of approval are required to be satisfied prior to further work on the substantial development being undertaken. The decision provides three years for construction to be finalised after development commenced, however this may be extended by the planning and land authority if required.
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**Alexander Maconochie Centre—remandees  
(Question No 212)**

**Mrs Kikkert** asked the Minister for Corrections, upon notice, on 23 April 2021:

- (1) How many recorded incidents involving threats/coercion/blackmail to remandees from sentenced detainees were there at the Alexander Maconochie Centre (AMC) in the years (a) 2018, (b) 2019, (c) 2020 and (d) 2021 year to date.
- (2) How many recorded incidents of sentenced detainees perpetrating acts of violence ending in injury against remandees were there at the AMC in years (a) 2018, (b) 2019, (c) 2020 and (d) 2021 year to date.
- (3) How many recorded incidents of sentenced detainees perpetrating acts of violence ending in hospitalisation against remandees were there at the AMC in years (a) 2018, (b) 2019, (c) 2020 and (d) 2021 year to date.
- (4) Are there any differences in programs and services offered to remandees in contrast to those offered to sentenced detainees; if so, what are these.

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

- (1) To determine how many recorded incidents involved threats, coercion or blackmail to remanded detainees from sentenced detainees would require a considerable administrative undertaking to view each incident report individually and therefore cannot be provided.
  - (2) To determine how many recorded acts of violence perpetrated by sentenced detainees ending in injury to remanded detainees would require a considerable administrative undertaking to view each incident report individually and therefore cannot be provided.
  - (3) To determine how many recorded acts of violence perpetrated by sentenced detainees ending in hospitalisation to remanded detainees would require a considerable administrative undertaking to view each incident report individually and therefore cannot be provided.
  - (4) Remanded detainees have access to the same general programs and wellbeing programs as sentenced detainees. They are not able to access criminogenic programs (i.e. offence specific programs) which target an offender's criminogenic risk factors, as they have not yet been convicted of an offence.
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**Child and youth protection services—government response  
(Question No 213)**

**Mrs Kikkert** asked the Minister for Families and Community Services, upon notice, on 23 April 2021:

Given that Part 1 of the Standing Committee on Health, Ageing and Community Services' (Ninth Assembly) Final Report on Child and Youth Protection Services included six recommendations, and Part 2 of the report includes 44 recommendations, can the Minister provide an update on the ACT Government's responses to the recommendations, including which have been actioned and which are in process of being actioned, including a brief summary of what has been done.

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

The Government is currently working to deliver agreed recommendations from a number of reviews, inquiries and reports. In addition to Part 1 and Part 2 of the *Standing Committee on Health, Ageing and Community Services (Ninth Assembly) Final Report on Child and Youth Protection Services*, these include the *Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse*, the *Glanfield Inquiry* and the *Our Booris, Our Way* review.

The Community Services Directorate (CSD) is taking a coordinated approach to respond to the recommendations of these reports.

Many of the recommendations will require amendment to the *Children and Young People Act 2008*. Given the complexity of the current Act, a key piece of work for CSD is planning a redraft of the Act to address these recommendations, with a focus on building a Child and Youth Protection Services system that is restorative, contemporary, underpinned by good decision making, and that puts into practice a holistic understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, families and communities.

To provide an update individually against each of the 50 recommendations identified in the question would be a significant task, requiring a considerable diversion of resources.

However, an example of how this work is progressing is the project to establish a mechanism for the external review of child protection decisions (see QON 214) and to improve internal review processes. This project will address multiple recommendations made by the Standing Committee on Health, Ageing and Community Services, as well as recommendations from other reports mentioned above.

Other related projects include the work towards establishing a Charter of Rights for Parents and Families and the establishment of a Child Safe Standards Scheme.

Updates on the status of responses to Legislative Assembly inquiries are summarised in the Directorate's Annual Report each year and I will continue to provide regular updates to the Assembly and the community on the significant reform agenda.

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**Child and youth protection services—review  
(Question No 214)**

**Mrs Kikkert** asked the Minister for Families and Community Services, upon notice, on 23 April 2021:

- (1) In relation to the external merits review for child protection decisions and given that in a hearing on 26 February 2021, I was told that the tender process for a consultant to design an ACT-specific model for external merits review would commence soon, within the next month, can the Minister please provide a detailed update on this process, including expected next steps, successful tender, etc.
- (2) Given that at the same hearing, I was told that the Directorate expects the results of this project to be delivered within this calendar year, can the Minister please provide an update on the expected completion deadline for this project.

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

- (1) Requests for project proposals were sent to consultants on 3 May 2021. Consultants have been invited to submit a proposal due to their expertise and experience. Submissions will be received until 28 May 2021. The successful consultant is expected to commence work on the project in late June or early July 2021.
- (2) It is expected that the project will be completed before the end of the 2021 calendar year.

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**Office for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs—staffing  
(Question No 215)**

**Mrs Kikkert** asked the Minister for Families and Community Services, upon notice, on 23 April 2021:

- (1) How many staff work for the Office for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs, and what is the staffing level in full-time equivalent.
- (2) Can the Minister provide a description of each position and its accompanying responsibilities.
- (3) How does the office coordinate a whole-of-government approach to issues affecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in the ACT, especially considering that it is headquartered in the Community Services Directorate (CSD).
- (4) Does the office provide anything like an Indigenous Liaison Officer service to any other directorate.
- (5) Do office staff review legislation or policies from the CSD or other directorates to provide advice or speak to impacts on the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.

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

- (1) As at 23 April 2021, the Office has 9 Full Time Employees.
- (2)
  - Executive Branch Manager (1)** - provides leadership and direction to the Office and liaises more broadly across government and with stakeholders
  - Executive Assistant (1)**– Provides administrative support to the Executive Branch Manager
  - Directors (2)** – Supports the Executive Branch Manager to achieve outcomes, reviews legislation and policy, provides strategic policy advice across government
  - Senior Policy and Projects Officer (2)**– Prepares policy advice, undertakes projects
  - Policy and project officer (1)**– Assists in the preparation of policy advice and provides project support
  - Elected Body Secretariat Assistant Director and ASO 5 (2)** – Secretariat duties including induction of new members, arranging meetings, events and consultations, and coordinating annual Elected Body hearing processes.
- (3) The Office for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs (OATSIA) is well positioned in the Community Services Directorate (CSD) to lead and drive the work to inform policy reform across government to enable self-determination. This is demonstrated in the outcomes achieved by the Office coordinating and engaging across directorates and working in partnership with the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body to establish the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Agreement 2019-2028 and the National Agreement on Closing the Gap.
 

The Office provides leadership and manages strategic governance groups; the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Inter-Directorate Committee bringing together senior executive officials from across all directorates, and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Strategic Board Committee where all Directors-General are committed to providing strategic leadership and oversight across the ACT Public Service in driving policy, program and service delivery reform.
- (4) The Office provides advice to directorates and will work collaboratively with directorates to inform policy, program and service delivery as required. It is not part of OATSIA's core business to provide an Indigenous Liaison Officer type service to any other directorate.
- (5) Yes, the Office does review legislation and policies for CSD and other directorates to provide advice and collaborates broadly across government to achieve outcomes under the ACT and National Agreement.

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### **Children and young people—pregnancy during residential care (Question No 216)**

**Mrs Kikkert** asked the Minister for Families and Community Services, upon notice, on 23 April 2021:

- (1) How many young people in out-of-home care became pregnant whilst living in a residential care home, in each of the past five financial years.

- (2) How many young people entered a residential care home whilst pregnant.
- (3) What resources are provided to young people in residential care to either discourage or prevent unwanted pregnancies.
- (4) What specific supports or services are provided to a young person in residential care who becomes pregnant, including mental health and emotional support.
- (5) What extra supports or services, if any, are provided to help young people to progress through pregnancy and prepare for motherhood, assuming that pregnant young people are able to live in residential care.
- (6) What arrangements are made for a young person in residential care who gives birth to a child.
- (7) What extra supports or services, if any, are provided to a young person in out-of-home care who gives birth to a child and can the Minister include those designed to benefit both the mother as well as the child, including mental health and emotional support.

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

- 1) Over the past five years, five clients in ACT Together's Community Adolescent Program (CAP) have given birth since turning 18 years of age. Of these clients, four became pregnant post 18 years of age and one became pregnant at 17 years of age.
- 2) None that ACT Together are aware of.
- 3) Young people who appear to be becoming sexually active and/or at risk of pregnancy, are encouraged and supported by ACT Together to engage with medical professionals to help educate and promote safe sex practices and contraception. Many young people access services through the Junction Youth Health Service (the Junction). Therapeutic Specialists from the ACT Together's Therapeutic Services team work closely with residential carers and young people to support therapeutic care, which may include support around issues that could lead to the risk of a pregnancy (e.g. risky sexual behaviour).  
  
Child and Youth Protection Services (CYPS) become involved when parental consent is needed for any invasive procedures for the purpose of birth control (e.g. Implanon).
- 4) Referrals to appropriate community services such as Maternal and Child Health (MACH) nurses, the Junction, Winnunga Nimmityjah's Centre Australian Nurse Family Partnership Program, Uniting Newpin Program, Child and Family Centres, Barnardos Intensive Intervention Services Family Support Program and General Practitioners. Young people in CAP transitional housing are also provided the opportunity to live semi-independently in a transitional property with case management and youth worker support. Where appropriate referrals to Headspace and or Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) occur with the young person's consent. Child and Youth Protection Services (CYPS) also provides young people with prenatal case management support.
- 5) Referrals to appropriate community services would be considered, such as
  - Circle of Security, program to enhance attachment and security between parents and children

- Child and Family Centres, which can provide case management, parenting groups/guidance and access to MACH nurses.
  - CCCares, which provides education for young parents including in house day care facilities
  - Roundabout Canberra, which provide free baby goods (not a direct referral but rather accessed through social workers/case managers.)
  - Karinya House, which provides transitional housing for young mothers and outreach to young mothers.
- 6) In the event that a young person gives birth while living in residential care, CYPS would work in partnership with ACT Together to ensure the safety of the newborn baby. The assessed level of risk would determine what further CYPS support is needed. CYPS can refer young mothers to the services and programs identified in the response to question 4 and 5.

Planning would occur to support the mother to provide care in a more appropriate setting such as a kinship placement, foster care placement, or semi-independent living placement or referral to Karinya House, depending on the age, capacity and responsivity of the young person involved.

- 7) All services referred to above benefit both the mother and baby.

### **Youth—pregnancy and maternal health services (Question No 217)**

**Mrs Kikkert** asked the Minister for Families and Community Services, upon notice, on 23 April 2021 (*redirected to the Minister for Health*):

- (1) How many ACT residents below the age of 18 gave birth, in each of the past five financial years.
- (2) What supports or services are provided to a young person under the age of 18 who becomes pregnant, including mental health and emotional support.
- (3) What supports or services are provided to a young person under the age of 18 who gives birth to a child and can the Minister include those designed to benefit both the mother as well as the child, including mental health and emotional support.
- (4) What is the process for making sure that a young person under the age of 18 is connected to appropriate services during pregnancy and after childbirth.

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

- (1) Number of ACT Residents below the age of 18 who gave birth between 2016-17 and 2020-21 to 30 April 2021.

<b>Financial Year</b>	<b>Total Episodes</b>
2016-17	13
2017-18	13
2018-19	17
2019-20	12
2020-21 (to 30/4/2021)	<5

*Notes:**-ACT residents under the age of 18 who gave birth**-Childbirth episodes with DRGs: O01A, O01B, O01C, O02A, O02B, O60A, O60B, O60C*

- (2) The Centenary Hospital for Women and Children (CHWC) delivers the Step Ahead Program (the Program). This Program runs an antenatal clinic (the Step Ahead Clinic) as part of Maternity and Gynaecology Outpatients at CHWC which provides continuity of antenatal care for women under the age of 21 years.

The Canberra College Cares (CC Cares) program provides education and health services for pregnant and parenting women and their partners who are under the age of 26 years and who have not completed a Year 12 education. Health services are provided through this program as an in-reach service and include maternal and child health nurses two days a week for parenting enquiries, developmental checks and child immunisations, dental care once a month, sexual health once a month, and midwifery care as needed.

The Perinatal and Infant Mental Health Consultation Service for mental health assessment and referral is available for all women in the ACT including those under the age of 18, during pregnancy and following the birth of a baby up to 12 months of age.

- (3) In addition to the above services, the Parenting Enhancement Program (PEP) and the IMPACT program are multidisciplinary services providing continuity of care by maternal and child health nurses for families experiencing vulnerability, from birth until approximately 12 months.

The Early Parenting Support Service provides a counselling service available for all women following the birth of their child.

The Women's Health Service for trauma informed counselling, postnatal support including contraception and other medical supports is available for all women experiencing vulnerability in the ACT.

- (4) Women are referred by their General Practitioner to the Canberra Maternity Options Service where a midwife will triage the referral and offer antenatal support through the Step Ahead Clinic at CHWC. Midwives through the Step Ahead Clinic will make referrals to appropriate services as necessary including social workers, drug and alcohol counselling, and mental health support through the Perinatal and Infant Mental Health Consultation Service or the Early Parenting Support service.

Meetings are held fortnightly to discuss women birthing through these programs. This ensures services are aware of young women who are birthing and who potentially need extra antenatal and postnatal support.

A referral is sent to the PEP where a specialist maternal and child health nurse is allocated to a client to provide continuity of care until the child is between 12 months and two years. These nurses also work at CC Cares to provide support for parents around development needs for children, parenting advice and immunisations. PEP nurses refer and liaise with other supports in the community as needed.

**Children and young people—adoptions  
(Question No 218)**

**Mrs Kikkert** asked the Minister for Families and Community Services, upon notice, on 23 April 2021:

- (1) Given that in a hearing held on 26 February 2021, I was told that five pending adoptions had been paused awaiting the outcome of a test case in the court, can the Minister provide an update on what has happened regarding the test case between the date of the hearing and the present time.
- (2) If the test case has already concluded, can the Minister provide an update on the five pending adoptions that were put on hold.
- (3) What is the estimated date by which the test case in question will be settled, if it hasn't already concluded.
- (4) Does the Community Services Directorate have an estimated date by which processing of pending adoptions may again resume.

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

- (1) All documents have been submitted to the Court to allow the first matter to proceed. This matter is listed for June 2021 based on the Court's current listing schedule.
- (2) The first matter has not been determined by the Court.
- (3) Refer to number 1 above.
- (4) No estimated date has been determined until the first matter has been heard by the Court.

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**Domestic and family violence—Family Safety Hub  
(Question No 219)**

**Mrs Kikkert** asked the Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence, upon notice, on 23 April 2021:

- (1) What initiatives and innovations currently being considered by the Family Safety Hub are in the research stage of development.
- (2) How many staff are employed in the Family Safety Hub in the category of (a) full-time equivalent, (b) full-time, (c) part-time, (d) casual and (e) other by description.
- (3) For each staff member in the Family Safety Hub, can the Minister provide their (a) their employment classification, (b) job title and (c) roles and responsibilities.
- (4) Are Family Safety Hub staff salaries paid out from the Safer Families Levy.

- (5) Given that the 2020–2021 Budget Outlook notes a line item titled, Safer Families – Safer Families Team (p 288), does this budget allocation pay for Family Safe Hub staff salaries; if not what is the complete breakdown of costs for this line item.
- (6) Given that the 2020–2021 Budget Outlook reveals that \$1,333,000 was allocated for More support for families and inclusion – delivering the Family Safety Hub (p 288), can the Minister provide a complete breakdown of costs.

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

- (1) What initiatives and innovations currently being considered by the Family Safety Hub are in the research stage of development.**

The Family Safety Hub, as part of the Office of the Coordinator-General for Family Safety, is undertaking research in the following areas:

- Research and analysis in to domestic and international evidenced-based models for whole-of-system integrated domestic and family violence responses, where the focus is on perpetrator intervention and moving beyond a crisis-driven response.
- Researching, co-designing and testing a program to train and build capability in the youth sector to recognise and respond to young people experiencing domestic and family violence.
- Scoping and testing of ideas to respond to the research undertaken on children and young people’s experience of domestic and family violence.
- Researching domestic and international developments in perpetrator and behaviour change programs.

- (2) How many staff are employed in the Family Safety Hub in the category of (a) full-time equivalent, (b) full-time, (c) part-time, (d) casual and (e) other by description. (3) For each staff member in the Family Safety Hub, can the Minister provide their (a) their employment classification, (b) job title and (c) roles and responsibilities.**

As at May 2021, staff employed by the Family Safety Hub included:

<b>Employment term</b>	<b>ACTPS Classification</b>	<b>Job title</b>	<b>Role</b>
Full-time, ongoing	Senior Office Grade A	Senior Director	Family Safety Hub lead
Full-time, ongoing	Senior Office Grade C	Assistant Director	Project lead and co-ordinator
Full-time, ongoing	Senior Office Grade C	Assistant Director	Project lead
Full-time, 12 month contract	Administrative Services Officer Class 6	Service Designer	Service design
Full-time, 6 month contract	Administrative Services Officer Class 5	Project Officer	Project support

- (4) Are Family Safety Hub staff salaries paid out from the Safer Families Levy.**

The Safer Families Levy supports the activity of the Family Safety Hub, including salaries and operational funding.

- (5) Given that the 2020–2021 Budget Outlook notes a line item titled, Safer Families – Safer Families Team (p 288), does this budget allocation pay for Family Safe Hub staff salaries; if not what is the complete breakdown of costs for this line item.

The Safer Families Team budget line-item funds:

- Coordinator-General for Family Safety
- 1 x Senior Office Grade B
- 1 x Administrative Services Officer Class 6
- 1 x Administrative Services Officer Class 4

These positions support the Office of the Coordinator-General for Family Safety to lead and improve an informed, capable, connected response to address domestic and family violence.

- (6) **Given that the 2020–2021 Budget Outlook reveals that \$1,333,000 was allocated for More support for families and inclusion – delivering the Family Safety Hub (p 288), can the Minister provide a complete breakdown of costs.**

Funding for the Family Safety Hub includes staffing costs (\$646,000) and operational costs (\$687,000).

Operational funds are used to support research, design and test new ideas and support the roll-out of pilot services and programs. Funding is also used for the collection of data and evaluation of these pilots.

The Family Safety Hub operational budget also funds the ACT’s contribution to national research and evidence-based best practice resources through Australia’s National Research Organisation for Women’s Safety (ANROWS) and OurWatch.

## **Domestic and family violence—safer families levy (Question No 220)**

**Mrs Kikkert** asked the Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence, upon notice, on 23 April 2021:

- (1) In relation to the Family Safety Level, for each financial year since 1 July 2016 (when the Family Safety Levy was first established) to the date this question on notice was published, can the Minister provide a complete breakdown of expenditures for the total revenue received by the Family Safety Levy.
- (2) If any funding derived from the Family Safety Levy has been allocated to community services, can the Minister detail (a) what community organisations have been allocated funding, (b) how much funding has been given to each community organisation, and (c) the breakdown of funding for each community organisation.

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

The Table below reflects the published figures for each of the initiatives funded under the Levy since inception and whether the initiatives include funding to community organisations.

For question (1) the table totals all expenses for each initiative since 2016 -17 financial year with the projected budgeted expenses for 2020-21 financial year. Total at the bottom of each year is the sum of the total expenses. The Safer Family Levy Offset is revenue used to partially fund these initiatives with the remaining funding coming from Controlled Recurrent Payments to the respective ACT Government Directorate with responsibility for the different initiatives.

Question (2) is answered by the second and third columns where community organisations receiving safer families levy funds are identified against each initiative. Further breakdown of government contract amounts is publicly available at [Contracts Register - Procurement](#).

<b>Safer Families Initiatives</b>							
<b>Initiatives</b>	<b>Funding recipient by service type</b>	<b>Organisation</b>	<b>2016-17</b>	<b>2017-18</b>	<b>2018-19</b>	<b>2019-20</b>	<b>2020-21</b>
			<b>Actuals \$'000</b>	<b>Actuals \$'000</b>	<b>Actuals \$'000</b>	<b>Actuals \$'000</b>	<b>Budget \$'000</b>
More support families and inclusion - Delivering the Family Safety Hub (CSD)	Government	Office of Co-ordinator General of Family Safety.	0	455	1,469	1,534	1333
Additional resources for the Canberra Rape Crisis Centre	Community	Canberra Rape Crisis Centre.	100	103	105	108	111
Additional resources for the Domestic Violence Crisis Service	Community	Domestic Violence Crisis Service	200	205	210	215	220
More support for families and inclusion - Extending the Family Safety Hub Legal Services Pilot (CSD)	Government (CSD) Community	Women's Legal Centre. Legal Aid. Office of Co-ordinator General of Family Safety	0	0	0	300	739
Contribution to the Tara Costigan Foundation for a caseworker service that supports victims as they rebuild their lives and break the cycle of violence	Community	Tara Costigan Foundation.	40	0	0	0	0
Early assistance for families at risk of violence (Room for Change)	Community	Domestic Violence Crisis Service.	228	351	385	456	1209
Enhanced child protection case management and coordination (CSD)	Government (CSD)	Independent case analysis team.	863	642	481	360	0

Enhancing access to justice for non-English speakers	Government (JaCS). Plus payment to Commonwealth for services delivered by community organisations for frontline client support	Translating and Interpreter Service (TIS National) accessed by community service providers					
Implementation of the Joint Australian Law Reform Commission and NSW Law Reform Commission Report on Family Violence	Government (JaCS)	ACT Courts and Tribunals.	383	358	358	242	0
Improved access to Legal Aid	Community	Legal Aid.	313	296	300	305	0
Stronger criminal justice responses	Government (JaCS)	Director of Public Prosecutions.	355	366	318	235	0
Stronger police support for family violence victims (JACS)	Government (JaCS) - frontline services	ACT Policing.	281	295	300	304	0
Improving information sharing for government and service delivery agencies	Government (CSD)	Office of the coordinator-General for Family Safety.	15	0	0	0	0
Risk Assessment Tool	Government (CSD)	Office of the Coordinator-General for Family Safety.	50	0	0	0	0
Integrated case management (CSD)	Government (CSD)	Office of the Coordinator-General for Family Safety.	74	0	0	0	0
Reportable conduct scheme for employees (CMTEDD)	Government – frontline services	C/w Ombudsman (ACT)	473	897	288	293	0
Safer Families Team	Government (JaCS and then CSD)	Office of the Coordinator-General for Family Safety.	873	1030	909	746	765
Reducing the risk of deaths from family violence	Government (CSD)	Office of the Coordinator-General for Family Safety.	0	0	0	87	236
Delivering family-centred responses for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families impacted by family violence	Government (CSD)	Office of the Coordinator-General for Family Safety.	0	0	0	100	358

Support and referral through specialist drug and alcohol treatment services	Community service providers. Consultant.	ATODA 360Edge Karralika Programs Inc Directions Toora Women Inc	292	208	154	142	0
Support for women and children to leave violence (CSD)	Government (CSD) - client support	ACT Housing	30	85	100	100	103
Domestic and family violence training for violence for ACTPS (CSD)	Government (CSD). Community service providers.	YWCA, Women's Legal Service, DVCS, Office of the Coordinator-General for Family Safety, Canberra Health Service					
Trauma Understanding and Sensitive Teaching (TRUST) Project (Education)	Community.	ANU Australian Child and Adolescent Trauma, Loss and Grief Network	60	80	0	0	0
Integrated Family Safety Information Sharing and Risk Assessment	Community. Government (CSD) for client support	Domestic Violence Crisis Service. Victims of Crime.	0	0	0	0	180
Data System to support Death Review - CAPITAL	Government (CSD)	Office of the Coordinator-General for Family Safety.	0	0	0	0	200
<b>Total</b>			<b>4,669</b>	<b>5,456</b>	<b>5,886</b>	<b>6,324</b>	<b>6,554</b>
<b>Safer Families Levy offset</b>			<b>-4,700</b>	<b>-4,700</b>	<b>-4,800</b>	<b>-4,900</b>	<b>-5,000</b>
Reference Source			17-18 Budget Outlook	18-19 Budget Outlook	19-20 Budget Outlook	20-21 Budget Outlook	20-21 Budget Outlook

### **Alexander Maconochie Centre—staff mental health services (Question No 223)**

**Mrs Kikkert** asked the Minister for Justice Health, upon notice, on 23 April 2021:

- (1) Can the Minister detail the role and qualification of each mental health clinician, given that the Minister related in an answer to question on notice, No 82, dated 4 December 2020, that there were 'approximately...15 mental health clinicians' employed by Justice Health Services.
- (2) How many of these mental health clinicians are registered psychologists.
- (3) How many staff are employed by Justice Health Services to provide mental health training to staff employed at the Alexander Maconochie Centre (AMC).

- (4) How many of these staff are registered psychologists.
- (5) How often is mental health training conducted to AMC staff.
- (6) How many staff are employed by Justice Health Services to provide mental health support to AMC staff.
- (7) How many of these staff are registered psychologists.
- (8) How do AMC staff access mental health support.

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

- (1) Custodial Mental Health (CMH) provide crisis and psychiatry services to detainees within the Alexander Maconochie Centre (AMC) in line with services provided by Mental Health, Justice Health and Alcohol and Drug Services (MHJHADS) community mental health teams.

All nursing and psychology staff must be registered annually by the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) and all social work staff must have a degree in social work as well as be eligible for membership of the Australian Association of Social Workers (AASW). All Allied Health staff are credentialled at the time of employment and each year following by the Office of the Director of Allied Health.

There is a total of 16 FTE budgeted for the CMH team. Current staffing levels sit at 11.4 FTE with recruitment underway. The CMH team is made up of:

**Senior Clinicians:**

- 1 x Registered Nurse Level 4.1 / Health Professional Officer Level 4 – Team Manager
- 1 x Registered Nurse Level 3.2 – Clinical Nurse Consultant

**Assertive Response Team:**

- 3 x Registered Nurse Level 3.1
- 3 x Registered Nurse Level 2

**Clinical Management:**

- 1 x Registered Nurse Level 3.1
- 1 x Registered Nurse Level 2
- 1 x Social Worker Level 3
- 1 x Social Worker Level 2
- 1 x Forensic Psychology Registrar
- 1 x Clinical Psychology Registrar
- 1 x Psychology Intern
- 1 x Health Professional Officer Level 2 Psychologist

- (2) There are four psychology positions within CMH, however two positions are currently vacant. Three psychology positions are for Registered Psychologists and one position is for a Provisionally Registered Psychologist (intern role).
- (3) There is no dedicated staff member specifically employed by Justice Health Services (JHS) for this purpose. Mental health education in addition to suicide and self-harm awareness training is provided to all new ACT Corrective Services (ACTCS) officers by CMH staff. These sessions focus on the care and management of detainees presenting with moderate to severe mental illness as well as those at-risk of self-harm and suicide. CMH staff also provide impromptu education to ACTCS and JHS staff as required.

CMH have provided the following training to ACTCS within the last 12 months:

- Suicide and Self-Harm (SASH) Training (ACTCS Recruit Training) – 20 October 2020; and
- SASH (ACTCS Recruit Training) – 21 October 2020; and
- Health Training (Custodial Recruit Training) – 7 December 2020; and
- SASH (for casual ACTCS Officers) – 17 February 2021.

- (4) Please see response to question 2.
- (5) CMH staff provide mental health training when new ACTCS officers commence employment as well as impromptu education as required.
- (6) There is no dedicated staff member employed by JHS for this purpose.
- (7) Not applicable.
- (8) JHS staff have access to the Employee Assistance Program (EAP).

### **Health justice partnerships—funding (Question No 224)**

**Mrs Kikkert** asked the Minister for Justice Health, upon notice, on 23 April 2021 (*redirected to the Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence*):

- (1) What organisations are funded by the ACT Government to provide the Health Justice Partnerships, and how long have each of them been providing this service.
- (2) What is the complete breakdown of funding to each organisation.
- (3) How many clients were assisted by the Health Justice Partnership in the last financial year.
- (4) How many clients received by the Health Justice Partnership progressed their discussions to formal legal proceedings against their abuser in the past financial year.

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

1. Women's Legal Centre and Legal Aid receive funding to deliver legal support through the Health Justice Partnerships and have been providing the service since January 2019.
2. For the 2020-21 financial year, Legal Aid received \$364,000 (excl. GST) and Women's Legal Centre received \$352,000 (excl. GST).
3. Between January 2019 and December 2020, more than 450 people have been assisted through the partnerships. 237 people were assisted during the 19/20 financial year.
4. The services provided by the health justice partnership lawyers include advice, referrals, drafting documents and letters, and representation in legal proceedings.

Partnership lawyers represent clients in a variety of legal proceedings a client can take against their abuser. This includes Family Violence Order applications, applications to the Family Court, representation in care and protection conferences, family dispute resolutions, employment and discrimination proceedings and tenancy proceedings.

The variety and complexity of cases makes reporting on the data requested difficult and inaccurate. The data collection and management system used by Legal Aid cannot report on the requested data.

Between July 2019 and June 2020 Women's Legal Centre report 75 clients who received assistance from the partnership lawyer progressed to formal legal proceedings with the Women's Legal Centre.

The type of assistance provided to these clients includes assistance at mediation and engaging in negotiations on behalf of the client. This number only represents women who progressed their matter with the Women's Legal Centre and does not accurately represent the number of women in total who would have progressed to formal legal proceedings.

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### **Alexander Maconochie Centre—detainee searches (Question No 225)**

**Mrs Kikkert** asked the Minister for Corrections, upon notice, on 23 April 2021:

- (1) Are searches conducted on detainees at the Alexander Maconochie Centre (a) before attending a visit and (b) after attending a visit.
- (2) If yes to one or both occasions referred to in part (1), what kind of searches are conducted on each occasion i.e. what areas of a detainee's body and clothing is searched and in what manner.

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

- 1) Detainees are not currently searched before a visit; this is practice in the COVID 19 context to reduce the amount of person-to-person contact.

Detainees may be strip searched after a visit if custodial officers observe or reasonably suspect passing or concealing of contraband.

- 2) Strip searches are only conducted where there are reasonable grounds to suspect that a detainee is concealing contraband.

A strip search is a search of a detainee's body, clothing, and any articles in their possession. Strip searches must be conducted by two corrections officers of the same gender as the detainee being searched.

### **Domestic and family violence—online training (Question No 226)**

**Mrs Kikkert** asked the Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence, upon notice, on 23 April 2021:

- (1) Who are the online training service providers for the delivery of the ACT Governments tier one and tier two domestic violence training.
- (2) If the online service provider is a private organisation, what was the cost of the development of the training program.
- (3) Are there any ongoing costs borne by the ACT Government to the service provider for the continued delivery of the online training; if so, can the Minister provide a complete breakdown of these costs.
- (4) Is the online training hosted on ACT Government-owned servers or on servers hosted by a private organisation and if by a private organisation, whose server hosts the training.

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

- (1) The domestic and family violence Tier 1 and Tier 2 training is not delivered online. Both are delivered as face-to-face sessions.
- (2) Not applicable.
- (3) ACT Government has not engaged an online provider to deliver online content. There are no ongoing costs for online training borne by the ACT Government to a service provider.
- (4) Online training is hosted on ACT Government-owned servers and is available to all ACT public servants.

### **Access Canberra—numberplates (Question No 230)**

**Mr Cain** asked the Minister for Business and Better Regulation, upon notice, on 14 May 2021:

Can the Minister list, for each separate registration class, the number of customers of Access Canberra that ordered new number plates and received their plates after the date their registration took effect, during the (a) 2019-20 and (b) 2020-21 financial years.

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

I refer the Member to answer (2) for Question No 129. Due to the way this data is stored, sorting this data into vehicle registration classes would require an unreasonable diversion of resources.

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### **Animals—dogs (Question No 231)**

**Ms Lawder** asked the Minister for Transport and City Services, upon notice, on 14 May 2021:

- (1) How many dogs in the ACT were registered as show dogs in 2020.
- (2) What evidence is there, if any, to suggest that the sexually entire animal permits effect the overall number of unwanted dogs in the ACT.
- (3) What is to stop dog owners from registering their dogs in Queanbeyan to avoid de-sexing them or paying for sexually entire animal permit which in 2020 cost \$424.

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

- (1) Domestic Animal Services (DAS) does not keep statistics on dogs that are registered as show dogs in the ACT. This information may be held by Australian National Kennel Council or its affiliate Dogs ACT.
  - (2) The sexually entire permit system was introduced as part of the original Domestic Animals Act in 2000 and as such DAS does not have comparative data on the effects of the permit system on the number of unwanted dogs in the ACT. The sexually entire permit system is a key component in supporting high animal welfare standards and best-practice domestic animal management in the ACT by encouraging responsible dog breeding and incentivising de-sexing.
  - (3) Dogs registered in Queanbeyan are registered in NSW and are not covered by ACT Legislation. Any dog that has resided in the ACT for 28 days or more must be registered in the ACT.
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### **Symphony Park complex—complaints (Question No 235)**

**Ms Castley** asked the Minister for Planning and Land Management, upon notice, on 14 May 2021 (*redirected to the Minister for Business and Better Regulation*):

- (1) In relation to residents' complaints dating several years about noise and structural issues at the Symphony Park complex in Harrison and the ACT Civil and Administrative Tribunal (ACAT) ruling on March 19 (ref UT 1/2020), has the body

corporate complied with ACAT orders about balcony repair and noise investigation and has Access Canberra been involved.

- (2) Has Access Canberra done any investigation about the conduct of the executive committee of the body corporate.
- (3) Has ACAT taken disciplinary action against the executive committee and Strata manager; if not, why not.
- (4) What has been Access Canberra's involvement in residents' complaints dating several years about Symphony Park in Harrison including noise, balcony, basement cracks and leakage issues.
- (5) Has Access Canberra taken any legal action against PBS Building, Independent Strata Management and Sellick Consultants; if not, why not.
- (6) What action, if any, has the Minister taken about Symphony Park.
- (7) Has Access Canberra issued any rectification orders on the builder.

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

- (1) Complaints regarding noise and structural issues at Symphony Park in Harrison are currently being investigated by Access Canberra. Accordingly, it would be inappropriate for me to provide further comment so as not to prejudice the investigation or its outcomes.
- (2) Please see response to Question 1.
- (3) Please see response to Question 1.
- (4) Access Canberra has been aware of the complaints associated with Symphony Park since 2019, and continues to investigate these matters.
- (5) Please see response to Question 1.
- (6) Compliance and enforcement in accordance with construction and building legislation in the ACT is the responsibility of the independent statutory officer, namely, the ACT Construction Occupations Registrar ('the Registrar'). It is not appropriate for me, as Minister, to intervene in the Registrar's exercise of his statutory functions. I can confirm, however, that both myself and the former Minister, Mr Gordon Ramsay, have received correspondence from residents of Symphony Park in relation to complaints regarding noise and structural issues.
- (7) Please see response to Question 1.

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### **Environment—water projects (Question No 240)**

**Ms Lawder** asked the Minister for Water, Energy and Emissions Reduction, upon notice, on 14 May 2021 (*redirected to the Minister for Planning and Land Management*):

Have the projects of (a) EP2200976 Sullivans Creek Floodplain Management Plan (SCFMP) – Best Practice Advisor, (b) SL2200781 Water Quality Peer Reviewer and (c) 0185-2020 Molonglo Critical Infrastructure Project – Deep Creek Water Quality Control Pond Detailed Design, been completed; if not, can the Minister provide an estimated completion date; if so, can the Minister provide copies of reports on these projects.

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

- (a) The Sullivans Creek Floodplain Management Plan (SCFMP) – Best Practice Advisor (EP2200976) project is for 'expert' advice on the approach to assessing flood risk in Sullivans Creek. There are no reports available from this work to date. Advice is expected to be sought throughout the project and will be dependent on the progress of the related flood study that is yet to be tendered. The completion date will be confirmed when the successful tenderer for the detailed flood study is appointed. Completion of the SCFMP is expected by the end of the 2021/22 financial year.
- (b) The Water Quality Peer Reviewer Consultancy (SL2200781) is expected to be completed in late 2022, subject to completion of the Lower Deep Creek Pond (Deep Creek Corridor Regional Water Quality Pond) detailed design and Environmental Impact Assessment process. No reports are publicly available.
- (c) The Deep Creek Water Quality Control Pond Detailed Design Consultancy (0185-2020) is scheduled for completion in the latter half of 2024. The consultancy includes construction phase services to be undertaken during construction phase of the Lower Deep Creek Pond (Deep Creek Corridor Regional Water Quality Pond). Currently no reports are publicly available.

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### **Municipal services—playgrounds (Question No 241)**

**Ms Lawder** asked the Minister for Transport and City Services, upon notice, on 14 May 2021:

- (1) How many playgrounds are currently fenced in (a) Canberra and (b) Tuggeranong.
- (2) How many playgrounds are earmarked for fencing in future across (a) Canberra and (b) Tuggeranong.

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

- (1)
  - a) There are currently 79 fenced playgrounds in Canberra which includes 14 fully fenced playgrounds and 65 partially fenced playgrounds.
  - b) Of the 79 playgrounds, there are 13 fenced playgrounds in Tuggeranong which includes 2 fully fenced playgrounds and 11 partially fenced playgrounds.
- (2)
  - a) There are currently 6 playgrounds being investigated for future fencing across Canberra.

- b) Of the six playgrounds currently being investigated for fencing, two of these are in Tuggeranong.
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**Municipal services—neonicotinoid use  
(Question No 245)**

**Ms Clay** asked the Minister for Transport and City Services, upon notice, on 14 May 2021:

- (1) Does Transport Canberra and City Services (TCCS) have a register that itemises its neonicotinoid use in its operations.
- (2) In relations to the use of neonicotinoids, (a) where does TCCS use it, (b) how often, (c) in what amounts and (d) what is TCCS' plan to phase out the use of neonicotinoids in the ACT.

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

- (1) Yes.
- (2)
  - (a) Neonicotinoid use is limited to insect pest control where alternative viable control methods are unavailable, for example in controlling Elm leaf beetle in significant trees.
  - (b) The frequency of neonicotinoid use varies and is dependent on several factors including the type of insect pest, the plant species affected, the location and intensity of the incursion and availability of alternative control methods.
  - (c) Use of neonicotinoids has reduced significantly over the past 20 years and has been reduced from 1100 litres per annum to around 40 litres per annum.
  - (d) Neonicotinoids were introduced in the early 1990s to replace a range of harmful pesticide chemicals, including organophosphates and carbamates. Over time, annual usage levels have reduced significantly. This reduction has occurred through changing practices to control pests while protecting pollinators and continuing to search for and then applying viable alternate treatment methods. Neonicotinoids are used only when there is no evident and viable replacement to control pests, such as the Elm leaf beetle which is capable of defoliating elm trees in urban areas.

TCCS will continue to research alternative control methods in all aspects of pest control in Canberra.

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**Waste—green waste service relocation  
(Question No 250)**

**Mrs Kikkert** asked the Minister for Transport and City Services, upon notice, on 14 May 2021:

- (1) Further to the answer to question on notice No 167 in which the Minister indicated there was a longer-term solution for green waste services for Belconnen and North Canberra being investigated as part of an analysis of Territory-wide waste infrastructure needs, what are the details of this longer-term solution for green waste services for Belconnen and North Canberra.
- (2) Have any alternative sites within (a) Belconnen and (b) North Canberra been identified.
- (3) Has this analysis identified any areas outside of Belconnen where a green waste service can be developed; if so, is the Government applying any weighting/criteria/priority scores to any of these areas to help them determine where a future green waste service can be developed; if so, what factors inform these scores.
- (4) What are the scores that have been applied to each area where a potential green waste site has been identified.
- (5) When will this analysis of Territory-wide waste infrastructure be complete and when did this analysis commence.
- (6) Is there a fixed government subsidy for Canberra Sand and Gravel to provide green waste services; if so, what is the value of that subsidy for (a) 2018-2019, (b) 2019-2020, and (c) 2020-2021 year to date.

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

- (1) An investigation into possible sites to establish essential waste infrastructure and services for the north Canberra community commenced in 2020. This investigation includes the identification and assessment of alternative, viable locations that may be considered suitable for an additional waste site and/or upgrade to the existing Mitchell Resource Management Centre.
- (2) Yes, a shortlist of possible alternate locations within the vicinity of Belconnen and the Gungahlin area is currently under review.
- (3) Strategic waste infrastructure requirements for the north of Canberra are currently in an investigatory stage, where a broad assessment of potential sites are being reviewed. A range of criteria is being used to evaluate sites, such as:
  - a. proximity to population catchments with consideration of population growth;
  - b. buffer zones from sensitive receptors;
  - c. visible amenity considerations;
  - d. traffic and accessibility;
  - e. environmental and physical constraints; and
  - f. establishment cost estimates and availability of utilities and services.
- (4) The criteria in the response above was applied to each site to establish a shortlist. The next stage will be to undertake further investigations to prioritise or 'score' the sites in order of suitability.
- (5) The current investigations commenced in November 2020 and will be undertaken in two stages.

- a. Stage 1 will identify 2-3 sites with potential for waste infrastructure and services. This is expected to be completed in Q3 2021.
  - b. Stage 2 will be detailed feasibility and business cases for consideration by Government.
- (6) The ACT Government pays approximately \$270,000 per year (excluding GST) for the acceptance and processing of green waste by Canberra Sand and Gravel. The payments for the requested years are as follows:
- a. 2018-19 - \$260,000.
  - b. 2019-20 - \$383,000 (including partial relocation subsidy).
  - c. 2020-21 - \$376,000 (including partial relocation subsidy).

### **Municipal services—play spaces (Question No 251)**

**Mrs Kikkert** asked the Minister for Transport and City Services, upon notice, on 14 May 2021:

- (1) When will the Government begin public consultation on the play space strategy referenced by the Minister in his answer to a question without notice about a playground in Melba on 20 April 2021.
- (2) For how long will public consultation be open.

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

- (1) The Play Spaces Strategy is currently in its final drafting phase. When completed, the Strategy and the proposed timing and nature of public consultation will be considered by Government.
- (2) The period of public consultation is yet to be determined; however, it is likely to be consistent with the six to eight week timeframe provided for other similar consultation processes.

### **Waste—green waste services (Question No 254)**

**Mrs Kikkert** asked the Minister for Transport and City Services, upon notice, on 14 May 2021:

Does the ACT Government in any way subsidise the green waste drop-off facility provided by Canberra Sand and Gravel; if so, what is the exact nature of the subsidy/value of the subsidy.

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

Canberra Sand and Gravel's (CSG) licence with the ACT Government was signed in 2011 and expires on 30 June 2021. In accordance with its licence with the ACT Government, CSG have been required to accept green waste from members of the public free of charge.

Currently the ACT Government is paying approximately \$270,000 per year (excluding GST) for the acceptance and processing of this green waste.

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**Alexander Maconochie Centre—methadone use  
(Question No 275)**

**Mrs Kikkert** asked the Minister for Justice Health, upon notice, on 14 May 2021:

Does ACT Health prescribe methadone to inmates with chronic pain conditions; if so, how does ACT Corrective Services confirm an inmate genuinely has chronic pain conditions before allowing them access to methadone.

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

ACT Corrective Services has no role in confirming any clinical presentation or health matters and/or decision relating to the treatment of any health condition.

Canberra Health Services through Justice Health Services prescribes methadone as part of the Opioid Replacement Therapy which is available at the Hume Health Centre. Methadone may be used for pain relief however this is a clinical decision made by the prescriber based on clinical assessment and investigation.

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**Questions without notice taken on notice**

**Planning—vacant shops**

**Mr Gentleman** (*in reply to supplementary questions by Mr Davis and Ms Clay on Wednesday, 21 April 2021*):

The ACT Government can obligate owners to maintain their spaces to comply with relevant health, safety, licensing and similar requirements.

The ACT Government is currently reviewing the ACT's 93 Local Centres (CZ4 zone) to identify trends and issues in local centres in both greenfields and established suburbs. This includes reviewing planning and non-planning levers that could be used to address issues in particular centres.

However, decisions about where and whether to open a business and rent retail space are a matter for individual business owners and not for the ACT Government to mandate.

The McKellar shops site, like all CZ4 – Local Centre shops, is privately owned and any plans for future development are the responsibility of the owner. The ACT Government has unsuccessfully attempted to contact the owners on several occasions to establish their intention for the site.

**Roads—traffic management**

**Mr Steel** (*in reply to a supplementary question by Mr Davis on Wednesday, 12 May 2021*):

Transport Canberra and City Services (TCCS) and WorkSafe ACT have attended the development site to check compliance with the approved temporary traffic management plan. On multiple occasions, signage was not in place in accordance with the approved plan. However, temporary traffic management was compliant when subsequent site monitoring was carried out.

Parking enforcement is also occurring, and fines have been issued – including fines for parking on the verge. TCCS has agreed to corflute signage being erected to remind construction workers not to park on the verge and the developer is reminding construction workers to park legally at all-day pay parking areas.

### **Municipal services—tree removal**

**Mr Steel** (*in reply to a supplementary question by Mr Cain on Wednesday, 12 May 2021*):

Information about applying to damage or remove a tree on private land can be found at:

[https://www.cityservices.act.gov.au/trees-and-nature/trees/trees-on-leased-land/tree\\_activity\\_application\\_forms](https://www.cityservices.act.gov.au/trees-and-nature/trees/trees-on-leased-land/tree_activity_application_forms)

Information about submitting a claim for damages caused by a tree on public land can be found at: <https://www.cityservices.act.gov.au/trees-and-nature/trees/trees-on-public-land/tree-damage-claims>

TCCS does not have provisions to reimburse a claimant for damage incurred to a property by a tree located on private (leased) land. Costs involved in the maintenance of all trees located on leased land rests with the lessee.

If a member of the public wishes to request an inspection of a tree on public land they can contact Access Canberra on 13 22 81 or visit [www.act.gov.au/fixmystreet](http://www.act.gov.au/fixmystreet)

### **Municipal services—tree removal**

**Mr Steel** (*in reply to a supplementary question by Mrs Kikkert on Wednesday, 12 May 2021*):

Information about applying to damage or remove a tree on private land can be found at:

[https://www.cityservices.act.gov.au/trees-and-nature/trees/trees-on-leased-land/tree\\_activity\\_application\\_forms](https://www.cityservices.act.gov.au/trees-and-nature/trees/trees-on-leased-land/tree_activity_application_forms)

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### **Municipal services—glyphosates use**

**Mr Steel** (*in reply to a supplementary question by Ms Lawder on Thursday, 13 May 2021*):

The majority of plants purchased by the ACT Government are purchased from the Yarralumla Nursery, which follows the Greenlife Industry Australia's (formerly the Nursery and Garden Industry Australia) Best Practice Guidelines for Nursery Pesticide Application. The Nursery adopts Integrated Pest Management practices when managing pests and weeds; and in situations where pesticides are required, the least harmful pesticide is selected and applied using the least harmful method at the right time of day when foraging pollinators, including bees, are not active. The herbicide glyphosate is not used on any containerised plants.

The Yarralumla Nursery does not check if plants purchased-in from interstate nurseries have been treated with pesticides toxic to bees. Plants purchased-in are usually propagation material, including tree seedlings for potting up, which generally do not require any pesticide treatment.

### **Environment—Climate Change Action Plan**

**Mr Rattenbury** (*in reply to a supplementary question by Mr Cain on Thursday, 13 May 2021*):

Now that the ACT's electricity is 100% renewably sourced, emissions from the gas and transport sectors make up around 20% and 60% of the ACT's total greenhouse gas emissions, respectively. Any policy that is targeted at getting households, businesses, and industry off gas, or reducing emissions from transport therefore will have the largest emissions reduction potential.

The *ACT Climate Change Strategy 2019-25* (the Strategy) committed to legislate the 100% renewable electricity target to continue in perpetuity (action 4.1) to ensure there are no emissions associated with electricity use into the future. This commitment opens up new opportunities for emissions reduction. For example, electric vehicles in the ACT are now zero emissions, as is the light rail system. This is not true in other jurisdictions.

Our 100% renewable electricity supply also means all-electric buildings are zero-emissions buildings. The government has recently constructed all-electric schools and an all-electric office building, and is committed to an all-electric hospital extension. These projects relate to Strategy actions including 5.10, 5.12 and 5.13, and also demonstrate the viability of all-electric buildings in the ACT climate.

The Zero Emissions Government Framework will see emissions from Government operations decrease by 33% by 2025, and to net zero by 2040. ACT Government is the largest single energy user in the ACT and Government accounts for 5% of ACT

emissions. The Strategy identifies priorities for ACT Government leadership, such as transitioning to a zero-emissions bus fleet (action 5.9) and a zero-emissions government passenger vehicle fleet (action 5.15).

In September 2020, Transport Canberra released its Zero Emissions transition plan for Transport Canberra (the Plan) which sets out the priority to achieve a zero-emissions bus fleet by 2040. The Plan will result in emissions reductions from Transport Canberra and will promote additional emissions reduction by providing better buses and better services for Canberrans, with the goal to increase public transport use. The government's transition to zero-emissions vehicles (action 3.21) has been recognised as a leading role model through an Australasian Fleet Management Association award, which will help drive ZEV uptake more broadly.

The Strategy has also committed to developing a plan for achieving zero emissions from gas use by 2045 (action 4.5). This is a complex and wide-ranging task, but the effective phase out of fossil-fuel gas use in the ACT will make a major contribution to a zero-emissions future.

Helping households to invest in energy and emissions savings practices and technologies continues to be a key part of the Strategy. The action in the Strategy to expand the Energy Efficiency Improvement Scheme (EEIS; action 4.19) delivers emissions savings through activities that encourage the shift from gas to high efficiency electric appliances. Since the EEIS commenced in January 2013, over 78,000 households and businesses have participated in the Scheme, including more than 20,500 priority low-income households. Over 1.35 million energy saving items have been installed, delivering more than 7 million gigajoules (GJ) of lifetime energy savings, over \$445 million of lifetime energy bill savings, and lifetime greenhouse gas emission reductions of around 580 kilo tonnes (kt CO<sub>2</sub>-e). Further, the Strategy action to introduce minimum energy performance requirements for rental properties (action 4.7) is expected to deliver emissions reductions across the energy sector as well as ensure more liveable conditions for all Canberrans.

The ACT has met its 2020 emissions reduction target. The Strategy recognises that achieving future targets “will require continual learning and improvement as well as the active participation of the whole community”. Key measures announced in the Parliamentary and Governing Agreement (PAGA) are part of this process of learning and improvement. The \$150 million Sustainable Household Scheme of no-interest loans, the \$100 million Big Battery Program promoting energy innovation in the ACT, and the \$50 million Vulnerable Household Scheme to ensure vulnerable households are not left behind, are the largest examples. We will continue to monitor new technologies and opportunities and seek new and effective ways to meet our ambitious targets.