



Debates

WEEKLY HANSARD

Legislative Assembly for the ACT

TENTH ASSEMBLY

25 NOVEMBER 2021

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Thursday, 25 November 2021

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Thursday, 25 November 2021

MADAM SPEAKER (Ms Burch) (10.01): Members:

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

Members, 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.

I ask that now we stand in silence and pray or reflect on our responsibilities to the people of the Australian Capital Territory.

Leave of absence

Motion (by **Mr Hanson**) agreed to:

That leave of absence be granted to Ms Lee for this sitting due to illness.

Remuneration Tribunal Amendment Bill 2021

Debate resumed from 11 November 2021, on motion by **Ms Burch**:

That this bill be agreed to in principle.

MR HANSON (Murrumbidgee) (10.02): The opposition will be supporting this bill today, colloquially known as the Braddock bill. In essence, the bill makes sure that if you have an appointment within this place, you are properly remunerated for it. In this case, the position of the cross-party or small party whip is a position that is not included and there is a view that it should be. I do not know what that amount would be. That is not up to us; that would be up to the tribunal. I think it is fair that that position be looked at by the tribunal to consider whether there is an amount that should be attached to it. The opposition will be supporting this legislation today.

MR RATTENBURY (Kurrajong) (10.03): The Greens will also be supporting this bill today. One of the Latimer House principles is fair remuneration for work undertaken within the parliament. The Remuneration Tribunal Amendment Bill is a small and simple amendment that seeks to implement this principle for the role of the whip who is not the government or opposition whip. It does not automatically grant a pay rise, as Mr Hanson has noted, but it does allow the Remuneration Tribunal, as the apolitical expert body, to carefully consider whether such a whip, who comes from a third or perhaps even fourth or fifth party that may be represented in this place with certain numbers, should be fairly remunerated. Because the role contributes to the smooth operation of our Assembly and performs the same function as our government

and opposition whips, we think it is appropriate that the Remuneration Tribunal consider this matter. We will be supporting the bill today.

MS BURCH (Brindabella) (10.04), in reply: I thank members for indicating their support for the bill. As mentioned, this is a simple amendment to the current Rem Tribunal Bill that allows for a whip who is not a member of government or opposition but is of a party of four or more members to be considered for equal payment as the other whips are. This will allow the Rem Tribunal to make that decision. It is not for us to make the decision. This just simply gives them the ability to do that. I thank the whips, through the admin and procedure committee, for the decision to put this bill forward.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Bill agreed to in principle.

Leave granted to dispense with the detail stage.

Bill agreed to.

Legislative Assembly—sitting pattern 2022

MR HANSON (Murrumbidgee) (10.06): I move:

That this Assembly:

(1) notes:

- (a) the 2022 sitting calendar for the Assembly is at an historic low for sitting days at twelve weeks of three days each;
- (b) this sitting pattern is low compared to previous Assemblies of the ACT, which have met for up to 15 weeks per year, plus additional budget estimates and annual reports hearings;
- (c) this sitting pattern is low compared to other parliaments, such as New South Wales or Tasmania, which also met for up to 15 weeks per year, plus additional budget estimates and annual reports hearings; and
- (d) other parliaments have local councils that deal with many matters that in the ACT must be dealt with by the Assembly; and

(2) calls on the ACT Government to:

- (a) increase the number of sittings for 2022 to include the following dates:

11 February

25 March

8 April

6 May

3 June

10 June

5 August

23 September

14 October

21 October

25 November

2 December; and

- (b) that the additional sitting days place emphasis on matters related to local issues such as those raised by Community Councils and Residents Associations as a matter of priority.

This is an important motion that we will be discussing today. It is not just about how often the Assembly sits but about what sort of Assembly we are, what our focus will be and what matters we view as vital services. As a city, we face challenges and opportunities not seen in other places. As a city-state, we deal with a range of responsibilities that few other single chamber parliaments will ever face. As an Assembly, under the current system, we have to do all of this with the lowest number of sitting days in history. Even in the history of the Assembly, the calendar for next year is a historic low. It is 12 weeks, which is a total of 35 days; 35 days to do all of the parliamentary business of our city-state.

Members, in 1990, in the early days of this Assembly, the Assembly sat for 17 weeks. In 1991, it sat for 19 weeks. In 1992 it was 15, in 1993 it was 15, and in 1994 it was 15. When I joined the Assembly, in the first full year in 2009, we sat for 14 weeks. It is worth emphasising that these sittings were in addition to the rest of our workload. We had full loads of estimates and annual reports. Indeed, in 2009, when I first came to this place, as you will recall, Madam Speaker, we had two lots of annual reports because it was a year following an election. But we still sat for a full 14 weeks.

Our estimates committee was a formally established committee that focused entirely on the budget, in addition to the standing committees of the day. They were long days. We would regularly sit past the dinner break to get through the workload. We do not do that anymore. So not only are we sitting fewer days but also the days themselves are much shorter than the days that we used to sit. We regularly came back after dinner, as they do up on the hill.

This is a low point in the history of this Assembly, both in terms of the number of days and how long we sit on each of those days. It is not just low by our own standards; it is low compared to other jurisdictions. In New South Wales they sit for a total of 16 weeks—15 joint sitting weeks, plus an extra week for their Assembly. They do not deal with local council matters; they are just focused on state matters.

In Tasmania, with a similar population to the ACT, they sit for 15 weeks and, again, they are not having to deal with council matters. In Western Australia they sit for 19 weeks and, again, they have local councils for those issues that they are responsible for. I know that those states have larger populations, but if they are only focused on state matters, essentially, in terms of their jurisdiction, they only have half the responsibility.

That is an important point, because one of the most challenging aspects of our government is that this Assembly has to do the work that is taken up elsewhere by local town councils. Many other states and territories have upper houses to review important legislation and conduct scrutiny. All of them have some level of local government to take care of important municipal functions. In the ACT, we have to do all of that. We do it all in 35 days and we do not sit past dinner time, as we used to in this place.

Each of those functions is important—high level legislation, scrutiny of government and local government services. With the current system, we tend to focus on the first aspects. The state and national issues that impact us as a state tend to draw more focus and more attention in this place. The municipal issues tend to suffer; they tend to be neglected. We certainly do not focus half of this Assembly's time on important municipal matters, as it could be argued we should. That is perhaps because we are trying to do all this in 35 days a year and knock off by teatime.

Given that we have these historic lows in comparison with other parliaments, I would like to talk about why that is when we have an expanded Assembly. This Assembly, a couple of terms ago, went from 17 to 25 members. It was done so that this parliament could do more. The sense was that we did not have enough members. I agreed with that at the time. The Canberra Liberals supported the expansion of the Assembly with the expectation it would mean that we could do more; it meant that we could focus on all the matters that are important to us, the state jurisdictional matters and the local government matters.

That has not happened—in fact, the reverse. We sit fewer days, we do not have select committees for estimates and we all knock off by teatime. When you look back at the quotes from Katy Gallagher, Mr Rattenbury and Simon Corbell, who all spoke on that expansion at the time, all of them made the point that the expansion of the Assembly from 17 to 25 members would indeed allow this Assembly to be more effective and to do more work. Indeed, that expansion was supported by a large body of people who saw that this Assembly needed to be bigger to address all of the issues that come under its remit. The *Canberra Times*, in its editorial in 2014, said:

The Assembly's remit, a unique combination of state and local government activities, is far more complex than it was in 1989 and has expanded to take in the Council of Australian Governments and the provision of services to NSW residents in the wider region.

... ..

The current executive comprises just five ministers, with the chief minister and four others bearing portfolio loads that are far heavier than those of other state and territory ministers.

... ..

Expansion to 25 members will make the work of the Assembly more effective and efficient ...

Has that actually happened in terms of making us more effective and more efficient? I think it has reduced the workload for ministers and those in government. There is no doubt about that; they do not need to work as hard. It seems that with this desire to

double down on that, to work only 35 days next year and make sure that we do not work past dinner time and come back as we used to, after the expansion of the Assembly, we are not fulfilling the obligations that we had, the statements that were made and the intent of making sure that this Assembly can do more.

What I am saying is that we need to sit an extra day. A sitting week, as members would know, is three days. So when we say that we are sitting for 12 weeks, they are only three-day weeks. Why can we not sit for four? On those 12 sitting weeks, we would come back on the Friday, so we are talking about only 12 Fridays out of a year, and we would make sure that on those days—and I would be very happy for that to be incorporated into the standing orders—the Assembly focuses on the important municipal issues.

The Assembly would focus on the sorts of issues—and I was at the Weston Creek Community Council last night—that are discussed at community councils across this town and by residents associations that do an enormous amount of good work; but they are immensely frustrated. No matter whether you go to Gungahlin, Belconnen, Weston Creek or Woden—whichever community council or residents association you go to—they are often incredibly frustrated that the matters that are important to them, the local municipal issues, often are not paid the requisite attention by this place. In part, that is because we have other stuff to do; but in part, it is because we do not have enough time to deal with those matters because we have decided that we are only going to work in this place for 35 days a year.

Madam Speaker, I am a great fan of parliamentary sitting weeks. I think they are an important part of what we are elected to do. We are parliamentarians. As parliamentarians, our first responsibility, in my view, as local members, is to make sure that the needs of our community are met, that we are listening and that we are responding. By winding the sittings back to 35 days and saying that we will all knock off by dinner time means that we are not meeting those obligations.

The resolution that I am calling for would be an extension of the sitting days by 12. It is not a massive number of extra days to work when you are only working for 35 days in this place. On those days, we would deal with matters—and I would be very happy to work with admin and procedures to get it incorporated in the standing orders—like petitions and debates on petitions: important matters pertaining to the sorts of matters discussed at local community councils and residents associations.

I have presented this motion and discussed it with a number of community councils, and I am yet to talk to a community council that does not think it is a good idea. They are out there working as volunteers. They are raising these issues and they see us in this place. They want us to draw more attention to the matters that are important to them. Ms Lawder will be talking about mowing this afternoon. Indeed, at the community council last night, as members who were there will attest, that was a significant topic of conversation. They are the sorts of matters that our community councils, our residents associations and, indeed, the communities that they represent want to be addressed more substantively in this place. Members, let us bite the bullet; let us work an extra 12 days a year in this place which, at the end of the day, is our

No 1 core responsibility, to be parliamentarians, to be local members. I commend my motion to this Assembly.

MR GENTLEMAN (Brindabella—Manager of Government Business, Minister for Corrections, Minister for Industrial Relations and Workplace Safety, Minister for Planning and Land Management and Minister for Police and Emergency Services) (10.17): Let us be clear: this motion is nothing but a schoolboy antic from Mr Hanson. Like a naughty child heading on holidays, he is trying to muck up. This motion is a stunt, Madam Speaker. Mr Hanson is aware that the sitting calendar for next year has been agreed. It is broadly consistent with sitting calendars in recent years. The 2022 sitting calendar enables committees to undertake two sets of annual report hearings, estimates hearings and allows committees to do important work in conducting other hearings as well.

As Mr Hanson is aware, committees do not undertake inquiries while the Assembly is sitting. Let me quote from Mr Hanson's remarks on Tuesday:

The standing committees next year are going to be required to do two annual reports as it is. We want to see committees inquiring into bills that are tabled in this place and we want to see committees conducting inquiries into other matters.

If that was Mr Hanson's intention on Tuesday, then he should not be supporting this motion today. Madam Speaker, you would also know that it is a stunt because Mr Hanson is aware of the longstanding practice of making changes to Assembly procedure through the admin and procedure committee, and he talked about it just now in his speech. He is a member of A&P. If Mr Hanson were serious, he would have put this forward to admin and procedure so that the committee could then make a recommendation to the Assembly. That is the process. We know that Mr Hanson is not serious because he is being lazy. His motion does not alter standing order 74, which sets out how business in this place runs each day. After 20 years of opposition, the Canberra Liberals are too lazy to learn how this place works.

The government engages extensively with community groups throughout the year. Committees also do this. The petition process is another avenue for issues to be raised in this chamber. We will not be supporting this pretence from Mr Hanson. I have been thinking about some of his remarks during the sitting week calendar debate about having two months off. This is not a luxury the government enjoys. The government remains on duty and works hard over the December and January period, including being on duty to respond to bushfires and storms. The work of government never stops.

However, it is clear that the top hats of opposition down their quills when parliament is not sitting. It is when Mr Hanson and his mates head off to their holiday estates and raise their champagne flutes. It is no wonder that the Canberra Liberals enjoy opposition so much. The opposition we see here is all show and no substance.

MR BRADDOCK (Yerrabi) (10.20): I note Mr Hanson's comments. I feel like we have dealt with a lot of these comments in the last sitting week, and I do not believe that there is any point in rehashing the arguments that were made then. The Greens

will not be supporting this motion. I wish to comment on some of the innuendo in Mr Hanson's comments about the sitting week in terms of breaking off at teatime or not sitting during school holidays. These are important elements to enable members to spend time with their families, which they all too rarely get an opportunity to do due to the demands of this place. Mr Hanson commented that we knock off by teatime. I can tell Mr Hanson that regularly when I knock off here, I go and attend a Gungahlin Community Council meeting. I will not see my family until I get home at, say, 9.30 or 10 o'clock at night. The time that we spend in this chamber is not the entirety of the time that we spend working for the people of Canberra. We will not be supporting this motion.

MS ORR (Yerrabi) (10.22): This is a bit impromptu because I noticed that we had three men and no women talking about the family-friendly hours we have in this place. I think that it is important to recognise—and I am sure Mr Hanson does too—that we need to create workplaces that are inclusive of all people. It is important to our representation. When I was thinking about running for the first time, one of the most formative parts of that journey was hearing Senator Katy Gallagher, the former Chief Minister, talk about how, when she got the numbers in this place, she changed the hours to be family-friendly so that she could go home to her young daughter. It makes a difference what we do.

This is not about cutting back on how we represent our community. We all work really hard. This is about creating a space where everybody has the opportunity to participate, where a young mother, a single mother—we have members in this place who are single mothers—can come forward and participate. It is about creating a space where they can do what they want to do to represent their communities, who have put their faith in them. For Mr Hanson to stand here and say, "This is a ruse; we don't want to govern; we don't want to do this; we don't want to do that", is misleading everything. It is silly and it is not needed.

MR HANSON (Murrumbidgee) (10.23), in reply: I must say that I am disappointed with the government. I thought that they would want to work a bit harder. I will take this opportunity to respond to a number of the points. With regard to not working past teatime, I supported that; I agreed with it. I think that was a good move.

Ms Cheyne: Why are you criticising it?

MR HANSON: If Ms Cheyne would listen, I can explain to her why I think that it was a good move. I agree with Ms Orr. I think that we do have other things to do in our community. I was at the Weston Creek Community Council last night and I did not get home till a bit later on. It is a good thing that we can do those things at night. But the problem is that, when we decided we were not going to be sitting in the evenings anymore, we did not then say, "Let's recognise that there are many hours of a sitting week that we won't be sitting. Let's do that during the daytime on a Friday or have another sitting week to compensate for that." We just abandoned it.

We reduced the un-family-friendly hours of this place, which I think was a good thing, but we did not replace them with anything. We did not then say, "We've got rid of seven or eight hours of un-family-friendly work"—or the work that constrains us

going to community councils or whatever it might be—“so let’s have another sitting week to compensate for that or let’s sit on Fridays.” That is what I am saying. On the one hand, you are reducing hours—and that is fine—but you are not then balancing that out on the other side. You have not done that at all. All you have done is reduce the hours in this place to make it more family-friendly without increasing the hours to allow us to do the important work that we used to do.

Mr Gentleman’s speech—I did not quite know what to make of that one, to be honest, but it was entertaining. When you do not have something substantive to say in response, you go for the smear, the attack and the personal diatribe. That is what Mr Gentleman did. He did not have any substantive defence to it, so he just went on the personal attack. I am disappointed by that. It is a bit unedifying for the Manager of Government Business to do that, but it is not surprising. He did not have any substantive argument so he thought that it would be useful just to smear and say it was a stunt.

The problem is that this is not just me advocating for this; this is community councils. What are the community councils and residents associations that are tuned into this debate—and a number of them are—going to make of that? Do they feel happy that Mr Gentleman has called this a stunt, that this is all schoolboy antics? Or do they think, “This is something that we support. This is something that we advocate for. If Mr Gentleman has a substantive response that deals with the issues, then let’s hear it”? But just to smear and attack on a personal basis is a direct attack on those hardworking community councils and hardworking residents associations. They will have every right to be disappointed and, again, will try and call on Mr Gentleman to go to a community council. I know that there was a lot of debate and the community councils were saying, “Please come and talk to us”, and he did not do so.

What this Assembly has done progressively over the time that I have been in here is reduce its hours. It has reduced its hours in terms of how long we sit each day, and it has reduced its hours in terms of the number of weeks that we sit. But what we have also done, in balance, is increase the number of politicians by eight, on the promise that we would all get more done, we could all work harder and we could all do more. Mr Gentleman used to be on seven committees. There is work that we can do. We can all work hard. We can all make sure that we get that work done and have those extra sittings. We used to do it. Our forebears, the people who set up this Assembly, used to do it. They used to be able to do it. Why can we not do it?

Madam Speaker, I am disappointed that this motion will not get up. We will continue to advocate in our community our core responsibility as parliamentarians; we should uphold that. We as an opposition see this place as vital for a whole range of reasons. Good government comes from good opposition and good and effective scrutiny. This government should not shy away from scrutiny. It should not shy away from coming into this place, answering questions, dealing with motions and dealing with the parliamentary business that we have. At the end of the day, if it does that and responds, it actually makes a better government, which I think we should all support. This continued winding down of scrutiny, be it through the committee process or through the parliament, I think, does no service to this government; it does no service to the parliament. Whilst we are trying to argue for states rights, I do not think it is

helpful for that triparty cause. It certainly is a disservice, in my view, to the communities that we represent.

Question put:

That the motion be agreed to.

The Assembly voted—

Ayes 7

Noes 14

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

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

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

Question resolved in the negative.

Estimates 2021-2022—Select Committee Proposed establishment

MR HANSON (Murrumbidgee) (10.33): Pursuant to standing order 152, I move:

That the order of the day be discharged from the *Notice Paper*.

I will not speak for long on this, other than to say that this is something that we need to have a serious discussion about. The fact is that this matter was adjourned to avoid debate and then we were to bring it back on to be discharged once we had gone through the estimates process. A comment was made earlier that we need to take things through admin and procedures before we bring them into this place and have a debate. The problem is that if admin and procedures disagrees with the Liberal Party, which it often does, given the numbers on admin and procedures, I really have no choice but to bring these matters here anyway. Admin and procedures is not always the appropriate vehicle for these matters. And that is fine. We have differences of opinion. Not every difference of opinion can be resolved by the committee. Sometimes it has to be debated in here.

I would ask members to reflect on the select committee process as against the standing committee process, noting that we have two annual reports periods next year when standing committees will be inquiring into the annual reports that are going to be tabled, I think, next week. So there will be a period in February and a period later in the year to look at the issues in the annual reports and consider whether it would be best for a select committee or standing committees to look into the budget.

We will come back with this next year, Madam Speaker. I would ask that members reflect and consider this. There are arguments both ways—I get it—but, at the end of the day, it is about the scrutiny of the budget. It is hard for the opposition to view that

a committee chaired by the government looking into the government is providing effective scrutiny. It is really hard for us to get our heads around that.

I have no criticism of the chairs. It is a difficult job sometimes when you are from a political party but you are chairing in a tripartisan way. The reality is that when you have a government majority committee that is chaired by a government member that is supposedly holding the government to account and scrutinising the budget, it is pretty hard for me to get my head around the fact that it will be able to do the job as effectively as a committee that is singularly established to look into the budget and can do so in a substantive, holistic fashion.

We will be coming back to this place. I only speak today to make sure that members are aware of that and that they consider it in good faith, because I do think it is a better way of doing business. There is no particular gamesmanship being played here. It is simply a matter of me thinking that that is the way we can do a better job, in a committee sense, of inquiring into the budget.

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) (10.36): We agree with removing this from the notice paper. I will make some comments on Mr Hanson's remarks, particularly on his reflection of the admin and procedure committee. I served on that committee, as you would remember, Madam Speaker, for a while. The numbers that he talks about on admin and procedure are quite even. I think Mr Hanson really needs to reflect on the number of Liberals here in the parliament. If the Liberals continue with the policies and actions that they have at the moment, those numbers will continue to decline. I think it is time for him to reflect on where the party is going as a whole and see whether or not he can do better for the next election.

MR BRADDOCK (Yerrabi) (10.37): Noting Mr Hanson's concerns and arguments—and he is right; there are pros and cons to both models—we regard this question as still being open and we will support the discharge today. The Greens are in the process of collating the lessons learned from the past estimates process. As you can imagine, this is not easy to distil, given how affected it was during the COVID lockdowns. Once we have consolidated the lessons learned, we will be able to come to a view on how we would see the estimates model, going forward.

MR HANSON (Murrumbidgee) (10.37), in reply: Well, good on you, Mr Braddock. That is the sort of response that I was hoping for: a serious consideration of the pros and cons, the advantages and disadvantages. We have formed a view that it is a live issue and it is good that you are going to consider it. I am not sure that a response that basically says, "Hey, we've got the numbers, so you can get stuffed", which is essentially the Andrew Barr message and now the Mick Gentleman message, actually adds to that debate. That is quite clearly the view of the Labor Party: "We've got the numbers; we'll do what we like." I would hope that the Greens would not support that sort of view of the world and would, somewhere in a deep dark corner, still think that accountability of the government is a good thing.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Environment, Climate Change and Biodiversity—Standing Committee

Statement by chair

DR PATERSON (Murrumbidgee) (10.38): Pursuant to standing order 246A, I wish to make a statement on behalf of the Standing Committee on Environment, Climate Change and Biodiversity relating to statutory appointments in accordance with continuing resolution 5A. I wish to inform the Assembly that during the reporting period—1 January 2021 to 30 June 2021—the committee considered one appointment to the ACT Climate Change Council. I now table a schedule of the statutory appointments considered during this period. I present the following paper:

Environment, Climate Change and Biodiversity—Standing Committee—
Schedule of Statutory Appointments—10th Assembly—Period 1 January to
30 June 2021.

Executive business—precedence

Ordered that executive business be called on.

Appropriation Bill 2021-2022

[Cognate bill:

Appropriation (Office of the Legislative Assembly) Bill 2021-2022

Cognate papers:

Standing Committee Reports on Appropriation Bill 2021-2022 and
Appropriation (Office of the Legislative Assembly) Bill 2021-2022]

Detail stage

Schedule 1—Appropriations—Proposed expenditure.

Debate resumed from 24 November 2021.

Superannuation Provision Account—Part 1.9.

MADAM SPEAKER: I remind members that in debating order of the day No 1, executive business, they may also address their remarks to executive business order of the day No 2.

MR BARR (Kurrajong—Chief Minister, Treasurer, Minister for Climate Action, Minister for Economic Development and Minister for Tourism) (10.40): This appropriation to the superannuation provision account is used to extinguish the territory's annual employer superannuation liability obligations to the Australian government.

The account paid just short of \$300 million—\$298 million—in superannuation benefits to the Australian government in 2021. That is estimated to increase to \$328 million in this fiscal year. The latest liability valuation for superannuation that was included in the 2020-21 budget incorporated an update to both the demographic

and financial assumptions. That resulted in a slight increase in the projected liability valuation and superannuation expense.

These are for good reasons, in that more people are choosing a pension rather than a lump sum payment, including non-indexed pension election from eligible members, and what, perhaps, in actuarial speak, could be referred to as improvements in pensioner mortality, which means people are living longer. That is a good thing, but it does, of course, lead to an increase in the long-term liability. It is perhaps a happy increase, in that people are enjoying a longer retirement and are electing to take a pension rather than a lump sum.

In closing, the government remains fully committed to fully funding the future defined benefit employer superannuation liabilities through the accumulation of capital in the superannuation provision account. Where we invest has been the subject of considerable discussion over the estimates period, as it is every year. It is important to acknowledge that the performance of the investment has exceeded the CPI, plus whatever the target above CPI is, in most of the years of the history of this account, which is a testimony to some very good investment policies from the territory government. I commend this line in the appropriation bill to the Assembly.

Proposed expenditure agreed to.

Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate—Part 1.10.

MS CASTLEY (Yerrabi) (10.43): I will speak in my capacity as the shadow minister for the environment. On 6 October, the Chief Minister and Treasurer handed down the budget and talked about real climate action and environment protection. The Chief Minister and the Greens talk about being leaders and innovators on climate action. From reading the budget, one wonders whether they mean what they say.

The focus of this budget is on reducing emissions from government operations through programs such as electric emergency vehicles and energy efficiency upgrades for government offices in Woden. While acknowledging the importance of government reducing its own emissions, the Canberra Liberals do not want this to be at the expense of the real challenge of achieving significant reductions across the community.

It is interesting that the Auditor-General's report revealed that government operations accounted for only four per cent of the territory's emissions in 2020. Canberrans want to see the government taking strong action on climate change. They also want to see the benefits in their homes and neighbourhoods. The Canberra Liberals are disappointed that the budget does not focus enough on supporting the wider community to reduce their emissions.

The Canberra Liberals are concerned to see that, in our tripartisan commitment to strong climate action, vulnerable Canberrans are not left behind. The government's vulnerable household scheme has copped criticism for receiving only 10 per cent of the \$50 million that was agreed in the parliamentary agreement. Just 10 per cent of the \$50 million has been directed to the vulnerable household scheme.

Canberrans understand that reducing emissions is expensive. We need to invest in R&D and technology and equipment. But we also need to confront the adverse effects of our targets, such as the increase in electricity prices that has resulted. The Canberra Liberals are disappointed that the government has not given this issue the attention it deserves.

The budget was a missed opportunity for the Labor-Greens government to focus on community climate action. Only \$600,000 will be directed over the next four years to community groups, despite the government claiming that support and leadership across the community will become even more important as we move into the next stage of reducing emissions. The Canberra Liberals would have liked to see a greater funding commitment, given we all know that community engagement on climate is vital, along with education and clear communication.

The Chief Minister claimed in his budget speech that the government would help to protect Canberra's unique environment by increasing funding to the ACT Healthy Waterways project. An extra \$3.5 million has been allocated for this program, but it remains to be seen what the government will do to improve water quality in the ACT. The Canberra Liberals also question what effective action will be achieved, given that responsibility for water management, policy and programs crosses so many directorates and agencies in the territory. The Canberra Liberals hope that more clarity and information will be provided to the Assembly about how the government plans to spend this additional funding and how it will improve water quality.

Before concluding, I want to raise my concerns about the lack of transparency in the government's policy and programs relating to climate issues. Too often we come across a report that has not been made public or funding that is announced with little detail or information. The Canberra Liberals and the Canberra community care passionately about climate issues and want to understand what specific programs the government is funding and what emissions reductions they will achieve.

We need regular public reporting on the success of these measures so that the community can have confidence that their money is well spent. A number of important documents have not been released—the 10-year review of the Climate Change and Greenhouse Gas Reduction Act; the public charging master plan; the government's plan to phase out fossil fuel gas by 2045; and the establishment of a fleet advisory service to support businesses and community transitioning to zero emissions vehicles.

All of these documents have been referred to in the government's last two budgets, but the Assembly is yet to hear anything more about them. We need more transparency and accountability when it comes to our climate initiatives, particularly given that there is tripartisan agreement to achieve our climate goals.

The Canberra Liberals want to see more funding for community groups, vulnerable households and emissions reduction programs. The Canberra Liberals also call on the government to provide detailed breakdowns and performance targets for all programs and climate initiatives. This includes a cost-benefit analysis so that Canberrans can

assess the effectiveness of government policies and programs and hold the government to account on such important work.

MS CLAY (Ginninderra) (10.48): As the Greens spokesperson for planning and parks and conservation, I would like to make a few comments on the budget. I have learned more about planning in the past 12 months than I ever thought I would in a lifetime. I am really grateful to be chairing the planning committee. It has been an invaluable way to learn, although I am speaking today in my capacity as an MLA.

The next 12 months will see some major decisions on planning that will shape Canberra's future for decades to come. The ACT Planning System Review and Reform Project is one of those rare opportunities for the community to be involved in the development of the ACT's new planning system. Our current system is not working for us. I hear regular complaints from many different stakeholders—from those in the community when I am out on stalls or at events and when they write to me, all the way up to people in the industry. This is our chance to get it right.

I am glad that the ACT Planning System Review and Reform Project is a priority again in this budget. I want to take this opportunity to talk about why it is important and what the ACT Greens want to see come out of this. We need to get this review and the new legislation right.

Reviewing your planning laws is not something that you do often; nor should you. I want to make sure that the new system is robust enough that it is still around when my seven-year-old is an adult. I want to make sure that it looks after her, and her generation, and all of the things we love about Canberra—the bush and the biodiversity that make Canberra home. I want to make sure that it is sustainable and takes into consideration our changing climate. I want to make sure that it provides a home, in different shapes and sizes, for everyone.

The ACT Greens have considered the sorts of things that we would like to see in this new planning system. We have cut our very long list down to eight issues. These are: climate change, person-centred development, affordable housing, community consultation, protecting trees and green space, respecting Aboriginal culture, adequately resourcing our decision-makers, and holding those decisions to account.

Climate change and emissions reduction targets should be factored in to our planning decisions. We should consider our emissions reduction targets when we build new roads or duplicate or extend existing roads. We need to consider the heat island effect when developing Canberra. But we should not simply think about adapting to the climate change that is already locked in. We need to keep working to reduce our emissions in the first place.

The built environment is a major source of scope 3 embedded emissions. Minister Vassarotti recently tabled the Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment's report on this. That report is a great starting point to measure these emissions and start cutting back. There are so many opportunities to use design to reduce the amount of building materials we need. We can also recover more with different demolition techniques, and we can use recycled materials in our construction. We can choose

some of the new materials entering the market, like low-carbon concrete and carbon sequestering concrete. Lastly, we need to ensure that we plan for extreme events across the ACT. We need a planning system that ensures our built form can withstand changing conditions and provide for comfort and safety.

The next item on our long list is about people-centred planning. We would like to see the planning system deliver development that works for people. It needs to be well designed, high quality and environmentally sustainable. Development should be driven by the needs and strategic priorities of Canberrans, not led by the priorities of developers. This is really important.

The new planning system should create settings to support more affordable housing for Canberrans. We understand that a lot of the factors affecting housing affordability are outside ACT government control, but a few levers are in our sphere. We particularly need affordable housing close to public and active transport connections, parks, schools and shops, and we need to prioritise transit-oriented development that is good for the climate, people and the environment.

The new planning system also needs to respectfully and genuinely listen to communities and provide communities with useful information about planning proposals and decisions. The information provided to the community needs to be accessible. Big projects should involve face-to-face consultation, and final proposals need to include genuine attempts to incorporate the concerns of the community.

The planning review needs to integrate feedback from previous committee work, including the previous Assembly's inquiry into development application processes in the ACT. A number of recommendations set out how we can better improve consultation processes and give greater transparency for development application processes. We look forward to seeing these recommendations actioned in the new planning act.

Our new planning system needs to better protect trees and green spaces for current and future generations, for public use and for the protection of biodiversity and habitat. A draft variation was tabled recently that will assist with that, and I understand more reforms will come. Green spaces that are well cared for need to be integrated into both the development of future estates and protected in current suburbs. We need our green spaces to make our city liveable and to meet our living infrastructure targets.

Our future development should not harm threatened species. Decisions should be based on environmental impact statements that are independently assessed. We need to understand and track the cumulative effects of developments on threatened species and wildlife corridors, and to consider our environment as a whole, not block by block.

This land always was and always will be Aboriginal land. The new planning system should recognise that. It should respect the role of traditional custodians in preserving culture and stewarding the environment in the ACT, and it should require respectful engagement with Aboriginal traditional custodians on planning matters. Free, prior and informed consent is important, and we would like to see the new act reflect this.

We want to see integrity in the system. We want to ensure that there is sufficient independence and expertise for assessment and review. Greater integrity means that the decision-making bodies and entities involved in the planning system should be adequately resourced. They need enough people, and they need adequately skilled and qualified people.

They need the right tools, including modern IT systems and 3D mapping. Planning decisions need to be held to account, monitored thoroughly and enforced transparently. What we see built on the ground should match the laws and systems in place to approve them. The system should also give the community the right to appeal decisions—something that call-in powers erase.

Finally, we want to ensure that reviews of planning decisions are assessed quickly by properly resourced review bodies. Review bodies play an important role in providing checks and balances. If they are not resourced to do their job properly, they cannot provide accountability and transparency.

Why are all of these things important? It is because we are living in a climate emergency. It is because we have an extinction crisis. It is because we have a housing affordability crisis. People need homes but we cannot keep sprawling to build them. We need to do it within our existing footprint.

The ACT is a leader in so many areas of policy. I would like to see a new planning system that leads the way, too. We should not race to the bottom and take the worst standards from other jurisdictions. We should improve on others all around Australia.

I was really pleased to see that the directorate took on board feedback about stakeholder consultation during this review. I was delighted to hear Minister Gentleman report back on consultations with stakeholders this week. I look forward to seeing the exposure draft in February, and I am glad that there will be a three-month public consultation period at that detailed stage.

We have also set a lot of targets that we need to meet in our planning and our parks and conservation area. We are continuing to watch closely the infill and greenfield outcomes each year, and whether or not we are meeting the 70 per cent infill and 30 per cent greenfield targets that we have set. We Greens actually have a target of 80 per cent, with a long-term view to staying entirely within our existing urban footprint. The current 70 per cent infill target consists of private and public investment in land, and I am keen to see the creative ways we will use to build affordable housing that meets this target.

We cannot keep sprawling forever. But there are challenges. There is much to protect within our border and outside it. A lot of remaining greenfield land has significant biodiversity values. Canberra has a lot of grasslands, and precious habitat and wildlife. We need to protect these for future generations and in their own right.

We are keeping a close eye on the western edge study, to ensure that as much of it is protected as possible, and to make sure that we choose those really precious areas to

protect. I am also keen to see our progress towards the 30 per cent living infrastructure targets. I am glad that these remain a priority in this budget. They will be assisted by the draft variation that I mentioned, DV 369, that was recently tabled. That DV introduces a footprint into all future housing development, and we look forward to monitoring its effectiveness and seeing the other new laws that will support it.

I was really thrilled to see that this budget gives recurrent funding for Landcare and catchment groups. That will ensure that Landcare and catchment groups are able to forward plan their activities for the first time, and it will make a significant difference to what they can actually achieve on the ground. It is really important. Landcare and catchment groups do amazing work, and they have done for decades. *(Second speaking period taken.)* The thousands upon thousands of hours spent by tireless volunteers to keep our bush in good condition, deal with weed management, deal with erosion and plant natives is invaluable. This funding is a recognition of the contribution that those volunteers make and the importance of their work. We look forward to seeing the continuing fruits of their labour in the next three years.

The Greens are happy to support these budget measures, and I look forward to seeing the details of the planning review.

MR PARTON (Brindabella) (10.59): As the shadow minister for housing, I want to make a few points on the Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate and its appropriation. This organisation and its minister, Mr Gentleman, play a vital role in influencing Canberra's housing situation. And what a dire situation we have, Mr Assistant Speaker. In previous decades, Canberrans, it would be safe to say, enjoyed an enduring accessibility to affordable housing. I am told that after World War II people moving to Canberra could wander into an office of the relevant department, look at a block map and say, "I'll have that one, please; I'd like to live there." Later on, you had to pay for a block of land, but it was still chosen over the counter.

Those were the halcyon days. Obviously, we are never going to return there. I certainly appreciate that time has moved along, with land development costs, building costs and land use constraints. But, just as occurred in the 1950s, the government entity—that is, this government—continues to control the allocation of land for housing in the territory. The philosophy behind government control of land release was exercised to make sure that the mass influx of commonwealth public service employees could be efficiently housed.

History shows, of course, that Canberra expanded quite rapidly as a result, and it continues to do so. Back then, the city planners and the National Capital Development Commission did in fact expect continuous growth and were preoccupied with constant revisions of the city plan. The key objective, of course, was to maintain a steady supply of residential land for private residential dwellings and social housing.

This strategy worked reasonably well under various government organisations that had responsibility for residential land supply. It also guaranteed that those who were after a block of land to build a house had a fair chance of doing so, which is in stark contrast to what we see now.

In recent years there has been a tragic downturn in government policy on housing. This government has decided that, quite simply, it is not appropriate to raise kids in a house with a backyard. It does not matter which way Mr Gentleman wants to spin it, that is the outcome; rather, they want you to raise your family in medium or high-density apartment complexes, in cramped spaces, with limited freedom to move, exercise or play with the dog. What about the trampoline? No, it is not going to join you in that particular residence.

I am not saying that 100 per cent of families want a standalone house. That has never been what we have said. A few years back, the government ran an independent survey, which I am sure we will hear referred to again and again in this place, and around 90 per cent of respondents expressed a preference for standalone housing. Of course, the government did not warm to those metrics and commissioned other studies which concluded that Canberrans wanted more housing choices, based on higher density levels.

These survey results were the most convenient outcome for the government, and they are the ones that the government is running with. In effect, the evidence acquired by the government gave them a rationale or, more likely, an excuse for reducing suburban expansion and expanding urban infill. This produced the current strategy whereby 70 per cent of new housing will be provided within the existing urban footprint. This must be a bit of a conundrum for the Greens—I know Ms Clay touched on this a little—in that, effectively, to some extent they have signed up to creating some concrete jungles in our urban open spaces, apparently in the interests of stemming urban sprawl and helping the environment.

This government's urban infill policy has some far-reaching consequences. Its implementation involves the strangulation of land releases in greenfield sites to forcibly channel demand back into the urban boundary. The consequences for first home buyers are quite horrific, with standalone housing commonly priced at well over \$1 million. In effect, we are seeing that most of an entire generation of first home buyers will have been denied the choice of a standalone house to raise a family and, in many cases, denied the choice of owning any dwelling at all. This government says, and continues to say, that we have plenty of housing choices, so long as that choice is a unit in a high-density development.

Of course, the minister would say that our absurdly high house prices are a product of things way outside the government's control. I would point the minister to a number of things. Firstly, this is the only government anywhere in Australia that has complete control of land release. You own the land, you decide when to release it and you decide on the price. Secondly, this is the only government anywhere in the country that does not have to deal with individual council planning laws, because there are no councils. Thirdly, although there is a housing crisis of sorts playing out in a number of jurisdictions in Australia, the effects are far worse here than just about anywhere else in the country.

I would point members to the CoreLogic data released this week that shows very clearly that the gap between wage growth and house price growth in the ACT is

among the widest in the country. In the ACT wages across the private-public sector increased 81.5 per cent over 20 years, while dwellings rose in value by 224 per cent in the time that Labor and the Greens have shared power here—224 per cent. In the Northern Territory, the increase was less than half of that, at 99 per cent. In WA it was only 139 per cent. In South Australia it was 171 per cent. It is abundantly clear that the crisis has hit much harder here than in most other places.

Every time we bring these matters up in the chamber, our friend Mr Gentleman carps on about the same stuff. He says things like, “Those evil Liberals; they’re going to expand the outer reaches of the city and they’re going to bulldoze Kowen Forest.” He speaks of Kowen Forest as though it is like the Everglades or the Daintree Rainforest. Kowen Forest is a commercial pine plantation. Mr Gentleman is well aware of that because, of course, it is owned by ACT government.

The only two parties in this place that have a standing policy to bulldoze Kowen Forest are Labor and the Greens. As part of its use as a commercial pine plantation it is clear that there are bits that regularly involve the use of a bulldozer. There is no policy from the Canberra Liberals to bulldoze Kowen Forest. The only two parties that have a policy to bulldoze Kowen Forest are Labor and the Greens. Again, I would remind the minister—he knows full well—that it is a commercial pine plantation. Fine; it is a great place through which to ride your mountain bike, but that is a secondary use of Kowen Forest.

I would also point out to the minister the fact that his government is the one that passed a bill recently allowing this government to purchase land, willy-nilly, in New South Wales, very clearly for residential development. I would say to the minister: “Don’t come in here and accuse us of throwing out the city boundaries far and wide.” I would say to the minister: “You guys are the ones who are pushing to expand the boundary of the city across the interstate border.”

We still really do not know—I think we do know, and we have asked questions over a number of years—about the farmland that was purchased out west of Molonglo. No-one can tell us why that was purchased. I do not believe that it was to graze sheep. I do not think that it was purchased to graze cattle.

Another far-reaching impact, of course, is the magnificent gift that we have handed to nearby New South Wales landowners and councils—Yass, Murrumbateman, Bungendore, Queanbeyan and Googong. They are all enjoying an absolute bonanza from this government’s refusal to let people live in the territory in the sort of dwelling that they wish to live in.

It does not stop there. This Assembly, of course, has given the Suburban Land Agency the legal tick to buy land in New South Wales. Minister Gentleman glibly says that he is releasing sites for 41,000 dwellings against a population growth of 17½ thousand. He also says that our choices have never been greater than they are now, and that his government is offering an array of genuine alternatives. To some extent, his alternatives are indeed genuine, Mr Assistant Speaker, because if you can access \$1 million to \$1½ million, your choice in this town is quite substantial. Of course, if you cannot, if you are unfortunate enough to be in the lower two income quintiles—

and, dare I say it, probably now the lower three—you are out of luck. Even couples with secure jobs starting out on their careers are locked out. Of course, ministers Gentleman and Berry would say that there are stacks of choices.

The reality is that this government's denial of its capacity to do something is culpable. It is the monopoly manager of land supply. It controls planning policy. It controls a \$7.6 billion spending budget. Yet it will say that our housing crisis is caused by the federal government, the Reserve Bank, taxation policy, revenue policy or a bad market.

We need to move from the fantasy conjured up and perpetrated by this government and focus on reality. Each week, media reporting presents an ever depressing panorama of broken dreams, with most standalone houses selling for \$900,000-plus. If you ever needed stark evidence of the government's failure in this space, we would point members back to the recent ballot in Taylor, with 115 blocks and 7,484 applicants.

When Mr Gentleman says his government is on top of all of this, he might actually be correct, especially if you have \$1 million up your sleeve for a house or \$700,000 for a unit. With those numbers at play, it is quite possible that the minister's policies might actually force—indeed, I believe are forcing—people into homelessness. (*Second speaking period taken.*)

I have been talking about those who could normally afford a home and were previously able to do so, but we also have a persistent homelessness problem. To the government's credit, it is trying to do a few positive things in this area. For example, it has quarantined 15 per cent of land release for affordable housing and public housing—or it is trying to do so.

I also recognise that EPSDD's output 6.3, housing strategy, embodies an aim of 400 new houses being added to the public housing stock, as well as 600 affordable dwellings. Oddly enough, according to projections in another budget statement, housing stock numbers are expected to actually decrease, which must surely exacerbate our homelessness problem.

Mr Assistant Speaker, in this regard there is no better depiction of the yawning gap in policy viewpoints than a couple of articles in a recent edition of *Canberra Weekly*. On the very same page we had Minister Gentleman reporting on a co-housing project in Ainslie and the CEO of ACTCOSS reporting on our housing situation. As you can imagine, their tone was completely different. Minister Gentleman, of course, was touting the virtues of a compact city and his provision of increased housing choices and, on the very same page, the CEO of ACTCOSS painted an extremely grim picture of what she describes as a housing crisis.

Of course, this crisis has nothing to do with government policy, according to this government. Dr Campbell pointed out that we have the highest median rents of any capital city, thus promoting the highest rates of rental stress among lower income private households. Worse still, she points to 1,600 people in Canberra being homeless.

The government's fix for all of this is a major renewal program, which is great for existing public housing tenants—and I certainly do not deny them this—but it is harder to see what the budget will do right now to address the crisis that is highlighted by ACTCOSS, highlighted by the Canberra Liberals and highlighted by Jon Stanhope. I suspect that it is a crisis of mounting urgency. Perhaps it is the case that, with the raft of learned reports, plans, focus group outcomes and action summaries done by this government, there is actually a light shining at the end of the tunnel. We would hope that is the case, but I cannot see it.

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) (11.11): Thanks for the opportunity to share some of the important work my portfolio areas within the Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate are doing in this financial year. I am proud to highlight some of the government's critical work in delivering planning and development outcomes to support the continued growth of our city, delivering on a compact and efficient city and enhancing our existing urban areas. I will touch on important initiatives by the ACT Parks and Conservation Service as well.

Throughout 2021, the directorate has been continuing to work on the ACT planning system review and reform project, moving forward with proposed changes to give effect to our reform goals and deliver on previously announced policy directions. Even with the impacts from the pandemic this year, engagement on aspects of work with the community has occurred with adapted approaches.

A key piece of work that has progressed through the year is the development of the new planning act. In 2021 and through 2022 the directorate will continue progressing work on district strategies, which are a new level of spatial and strategic planning for the territory. Stakeholder workshops and online activities on district planning have helped inform key aspects of the district planning approach and the preparation of draft district strategies for the eight urban districts in the ACT.

The government is continuing to implement the Managing Buildings Better reforms under the unit titles legislation. These reforms will make it fairer and easier to live and work together in apartments, townhouses, mixed-use developments and commercial units. Work on stage 2 of the reforms has begun, in collaboration with the Unit Titles Reform Consultative Group.

The government's indicative land release program is a vital tool in implementing the desired growth and settlement patterns of our city, balancing the supply of land to meet the needs of our growing and changing city. The ACT government continues to work on a forward program of land release to make sure that the program responds to circumstances forecast for the next few years.

This year, the ACT government released a five-year indicative land release program alongside the ACT budget. The residential land release program for the next five years targets the release of more than 16,000 homes to cater for demand for new

housing. This represents housing for 41,000 Canberrans, as population growth is forecast to be 17,500.

The government is creating a more compact and efficient city in consideration of lowering emissions and the impacts of climate change. We are looking at ways of maximising infrastructure and our land, while considering the valued characteristics of our city and environment, and planning for the future.

Let me flag some of the important urban regeneration and development projects being delivered by the directorate.

The budget provides for site investigations and planning work in the East Lake precinct to guide sustainable development, in collaboration with the community. This work will include initial feasibility and place planning to support land release in providing improved housing supply and choice in this key inner south area.

At section 76 in Watson, local residents will have the opportunity early next year to have their say on the draft concept for a one-hectare park. Construction of the park is planned for 2022-23. On completion, it will provide new and existing residents with access to a high-quality play and recreational amenity.

We are continuing essential planning and site investigations to prepare land for future housing, commercial, community and other uses in existing urban and greenfield areas. Managing and maintaining land supply to meet the needs of our growing and changing city contribute to building a sustainable city and are vital for housing diversity, affordability and economic activity in the territory.

The government has committed to delivering affordable, build-to-rent housing, co-located with the Common Ground site in Gungahlin town centre. To meet the delivery target of December 2024, \$640,000 has been allocated to complete due diligence site feasibility investigations and concept design. These studies will inform proposals for the budget and the development of detailed design and construction.

Land management includes the work of our Parks and Conservation Service. I would like to report on two initiatives in the 2021-22 budget that further support this government's commitment to environmental management and protecting reserves.

The protecting Canberra's unique environment Franklin Nature Reserve enhancements initiative sets aside \$3.055 million over the next four years to invest in protecting endangered rural temperate grasslands. This initiative will deliver offset commitments and allow the government to comply with the commonwealth government development approval conditions—namely, to mitigate the impact of development on matters of national environmental significance. Land management activities such as pest control, weed control and biomass control will help manage conservation values at Budjan Galindji, Nadjung Mada and the Gooromon grasslands reserve complex.

I will conclude by reporting that the budget sets aside \$600,000 in 2021-22 to invest in upgrades to the Tidbinbilla visitor centre. Members may recall that the very

distinctive visitor centre at Tidbinbilla was built in 2001 from mudbricks sourced from and constructed on site. This new money will be used to deliver design and repair works, predominantly to the roof of the building, and to design the upgrade of accessible toilet facilities.

This is but a snapshot of the good work within the directorate. I am delighted by how its people are contributing to planning and caring for our territory so that we can continue to grow sustainably while protecting our environment. I would like to thank the hardworking staff from the Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate for all their dedication this year. In particular, I would like to thank staff for their flexibility and resilience this year, in helping the ACT government respond to the pandemic. They are key staff who ensure that our city remains a great place to live, work and stay connected to nature.

MR CAIN (Ginninderra) (11.19): We will be supporting the appropriation. We trust that it is well used, but the signs are not good when we look at the history of this government's management of planning in the territory. We have not got the balance right, and I fear it is only going to get worse once we see the new planning act and Territory Plan.

Yesterday, the minister indicated that there would be a consultation period once the outcomes of the planning review are released early next year. However, my attendance at six of the eight district planning forums showed that the previous consultation was merely a superficial exercise, something that is frequently reinforced to me at community council meetings.

During the estimates session with the combined community councils on 15 October regarding the consultation during the planning review, one attending chair stated that it was a tick-box exercise; another said that it was non-existent consultation; and a third said that it was pitiful engagement by government. This is the view of the community councils in our districts in Canberra. Shameful.

We have seen poor planning outcomes delivered by this government for over a decade. We recognise that there is a need to both meet the huge growth in demand for housing that we have seen over the past two decades and retain the essence of what it means to live in Australia's bush capital, as well as retain its garden city character.

People of this country should be proud that Canberra is their capital. They should look at this city and its streetscapes, its suburbs and its town centres and be glad that this is the capital city of Australia. Canberra should be a postcard for this nation. I wonder how many would be pleased to see it in its current development.

During question time yesterday, I mentioned the Winton report on housing choices. As the minister is aware, in 2015 the Winton report was issued. This report was in response to the government's own survey of the community's housing and planning preferences.

Here are some of the key findings from that report. I acknowledge the important messaging on this by a former Labor Chief Minister, Jon Stanhope, who should be

held as the greatest success story for the Labor Party in the ACT's parliamentary history but who somehow does not seem to be very satisfied with the current Labor Chief Minister's government.

The outcomes of the report included that about 85.5 per cent of Canberrans lived in a detached house. Of those who had plans to move to a new dwelling in the future, 91 per cent proposed to move to a detached house. Of those who had plans to move to a new dwelling in the future, none intended to move to a townhouse or dual occupancy, and a mere 8.3 per cent wanted to move to an apartment.

Further, asked what form of dwelling Canberrans would want to live in in an ideal world, 84.2 per cent of Canberrans said that they wanted to live in detached housing. The most prevalent reason, at 52.7 per cent, dictating people's choice of dwelling, was affordability. What a surprise. My colleague Mr Parton spoke on this very issue just a few minutes ago.

A mere 4.6 per cent of people in Canberra thought that there should be more apartment buildings of more than six storeys, and only 5.7 per cent supported more apartment buildings of between four and six storeys. You would not imagine this being an outcome from the town centres and main arterial roads in Canberra. You would not expect that. We are seeing something very different from these preferences of Canberrans. A staggering 79.3 per cent of the people of Canberra believed that there should be no more apartment buildings of more than six storeys built in Canberra. That is the end of my summary of that key report on housing preferences and planning outcomes, which the government itself instituted.

I agree in some ways with my colleague Ms Clay on the importance of green spaces in the territory. Mr Parton touched on this as well. It seems that the Labor-Greens government will pursue density at the expense of green spaces and tree canopy. Green spaces should be preserved for many reasons, including the importance of plant life as a relatively cost-effective way of addressing climate change and heat banks. They provide permeable surfaces to assist with the management of run-off.

DV369 has some worthy features, and we will be monitoring its implementation closely. However, if the government continues with the release of small parcels for detached housing, I worry that owners will be choosing two-storey constructions which (1) are more expensive and (2) will consequently further drive up the price of detached housing in the territory.

The Canberra Liberals share the concern of much of the community about RZ2-type development happening in RZ1 zones. The demonstration housing project is perhaps an attempt to do RZ2 in RZ1 by stealth. Plot variations in the Territory Plan should not be standard practice and should not be allowed in general. People who buy a house in the suburbs want certainty, with the expectation that they are not buying a home that will have a block of flats next to it within 12 months. Separately titled dual occupancies on large RZ1 blocks, rather than spot variations, would be a better way to achieve balanced density in our suburbs while retaining our green spaces, our streetscapes and the privacy of residents.

We need a sensible approach to mid-rise medium density in other residential zones. The Kingston foreshore is a good example of using reasonable building heights and water frontage to create a precinct with character. We need to move away from the trend toward high-rise towers in town centres. When I am out in the community, across Canberra, meeting with people and groups—at their doors, in the shopping centres—I find that very few people are keen on these. People want larger blocks with more room, with a yard. I have spoken to lots of people moving into my electorate of Ginninderra who move in because they enjoy the streetscape, the privacy and the room at the back of the house where their children can enjoy some secure playtime.

Mr Parton has touched on building quality on many occasions. Building quality continues to be a concern for Canberrans. The government should improve its current regulation of construction.

I support the appropriation, but I encourage the community to continue to make known to government their views about what they see Canberra turning into and the planning decisions of this minister.

MS VASSAROTTI (Kurrajong—Minister for the Environment, Minister for Heritage, Minister for Homelessness and Housing Services and Minister for Sustainable Building and Construction) (11.28): I am really pleased to speak today on some of the issues that sit within my portfolio area within this output class.

Canberra is a city built on Ngunnawal country, within the natural setting of our hills, ridgeways and waterways. Our parks, reserves, lakes and river corridors are part of our tree-enriched city. As Canberrans, we value highly our natural environment and our access to nature throughout and around our city. Almost 50 per cent of our population live within 500 metres of a park or reserve, and 25 per cent of our population live within 100 metres. We value our strong connection to nature and understand that our health and wellbeing are enhanced by access to our natural environment. That is why I am really pleased that we are putting many resources into protecting this environment.

I would like to note the support that we are providing for environmental volunteer groups and the three ACT catchment management groups to care for the environment through coordinated community engagement and volunteering. The contribution that these groups make is staggering, from pulling weeds out to caring for injured wildlife, participating in citizen science programs like Frogwatch and Waterwatch, and developing rehabilitation and restoration projects.

For 2021-22, the three ACT catchment management groups have been granted \$131,500 each, a total of \$394,500, to continue their community stewardship work. These catchment groups are each receiving approximately \$87,000, \$261,000 in total this year, to deliver the Waterwatch program, with the Frogwatch program also receiving \$87,000 this year. ACT Wildlife has been granted \$103,000 to care for sick and injured wildlife.

In addition, funding has been made available to the community for local, ongoing on-ground projects through the environment grants program. This includes ACT

environment grant stream funding totalling \$315,000, and the nature in the city grant stream funding, a total of \$100,000.

The recent high rainfall after years of dry conditions is why we are investing in implementing invasive species management programs, following significant invasive plant growth as a consequence of La Nina weather patterns and our changing environment. The ACT government has invested \$414,000 this year to manage invasive species in the territory.

We are also investing directly in protecting and conserving our heritage. In particular, we are supporting a new heritage database to make heritage data and information more accessible so that we can understand, protect and conserve our heritage. The 2020-21 budget allocated around \$500,000 across the forward estimates to scope and design a new heritage database. The funding of \$193,000 through the 2021-22 budget has enhanced the initial allocation of \$60,000, and the design and discovery phase of the project is currently underway. Without quality heritage information systems in place, we may inadvertently lose irreplaceable heritage assets.

I am pleased to advise that the ACT government has committed to provide \$525,000 through a multi-year funding agreement with National Trust ACT. Funding of \$75,000 in the 2020-21 financial year was allocated, with a further \$150,000 per annum allocated for three years to support their important activities.

We are continuing to support our Heritage Festival. This year, we had over 150 diverse events taking place across the Canberra region, including workshops, tours, talks, suburban walks, virtual events and more. Now in its 38th year, the festival raises awareness of the ongoing need to conserve our Ngunnawal and other Aboriginal cultural heritage and the ACT's natural and historical heritage. We are extremely proud to be continuing to support our Heritage Festival and hope many of the members here get to some of the great events.

I would now like to discuss some of the work that is continuing to be supported in this budget through my role as Minister for Sustainable Building and Construction. First, I would like to acknowledge the impact of the COVID-19 public health emergency on the building and construction sector and thank them for the way the industry collaborated with government throughout the lockdown period to support the community overall to stay safe. I acknowledge the ongoing impact of COVID-19 on the workforce, as well as on access to materials. I am mindful of this as we work through the reform agenda and continue to work closely with industry, as well as the broader community.

The reforms in this area have been chosen to target the cause of problems and cover design and documentation, inspections and supervision, practitioner licensing, contracts for residential buildings and building work, project funding, payment, claims and retention, and auditing. The second stage of reforms will include addressing issues of licensing and accountability for people designing, building and certifying buildings, and implementing a residential building dispute resolution scheme.

The government will be introducing a licensing scheme for property developers, establishing a team of building certifiers within the ACT public service and introducing a registration scheme for engineers in the building sector in this term of government. We are well involved in this work and will continue it over the next year.

We will continue to collaborate with other jurisdictions, through the Building Ministers Meeting and the Australian Building Codes Board, on national building regulation matters, including work to progress the recommendations of the *Building confidence* report and accessibility standards for new houses, townhouses and apartments in the National Construction Code. Introducing minimum accessibility standards for new homes will increase the availability of homes able to be adapted for and accessible to all members of the community, regardless of age, disability and other factors.

Another important focus of the National Construction Code is the proposed increase in energy efficiency standards for residential buildings. The ACT government has commitments within the parliamentary and governing agreement to increase the sustainability and efficiency of buildings in the ACT. This work at the national level is an important step to progress these ambitions.

I would like to touch on the Asbestos Response Taskforce as it continues its work to deliver the Loose-fill Asbestos Insulation Eradication Scheme. Significant progress has been made to realise the goal of eradicating loose-fill asbestos insulation from Canberra homes, with 97 per cent of the 1,028 known affected properties now demolished.

I would like to thank the many staff within the Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate who work incredibly hard to progress a range of very diverse priorities and who, particularly over this COVID-19 period, have done this in the context of increasing demands.

These are just a few of the exciting initiatives that my portfolios will be delivering over this financial year to enhance the environment, maintain the ACT's heritage assets, create a sustainable and high-quality built environment and, most importantly, support the Canberra community. I am really proud of these programs and the outcomes that they will deliver for the city, the community and the environment.

MR RATTENBURY (Kurrajong—Attorney-General, Minister for Consumer Affairs, Minister for Gaming and Minister for Water, Energy and Emissions Reduction) (11.37): I rise to support the appropriation bill, including a range of new measures the government is pursuing to meet the territory's world-leading climate change targets and improve water quality. Firstly, let me speak about emissions reduction and climate change measures. These will help to ensure that we continue to build on our achievements to date as we strive together to reach net zero emissions by 2045, bearing in mind that we have already reduced our emissions by more than 40 per cent.

The measures I will speak about today are about how the government is leading by example through establishing a social cost of carbon; our efforts to reduce emissions

from transport by continuing to support the ACT community's uptake of zero-emissions vehicles; and the range of programs the government has established to provide direct support to ACT households, community clubs and community organisations to help ensure that no-one is left behind as we transition to net zero emissions by 2045.

The ACT government is committed to continuing to lead the nation in taking action on climate change. Collectively, we must reduce the greenhouse gas emissions we produce so that we have a healthy planet and an environment where all people and species thrive. The ACT government is looking closely at its own operations to make sure that we are taking strong steps towards achieving our ambitious emissions reduction targets.

To support this important work, we have put in dollar terms the cost of inaction on climate change, which economists call the social cost of carbon. In this budget, the ACT government has adopted an interim social cost of carbon value of \$20 per tonne of emissions. In practice, this means that the government will bill itself for the cost of its emissions, creating a pool of funds that the government will reinvest in emissions reduction activities and projects.

The ACT is the first jurisdiction in Australia to take this important step forward. This will help our government to make better decisions for the wellbeing of our community. It will require our agencies to focus on the emissions profile of potential new projects, existing infrastructure and the like. We have been very clear that the money raised from this social cost of carbon will be used to reinvest in projects, whether that is, for example, replacing a gas boiler in a government building or helping to transition the government fleet.

These initiatives are about making sure that the government gets its own house in order and sets an example for the community. There is no doubt that the steps the government has already taken have enabled others to follow on from that, whether that has been other governments, businesses or community organisations.

The fleet advisory service is an example of that. I noted Ms Castley's comments, and I can let her know that the fleet advisory service already operates. It is out there doing its job, as we expect it to, helping the private sector to think about how they can transition their own fleets, where they have one. They are using the lessons that government has drawn through transitioning its fleet to what is now one of the largest zero-emissions vehicle fleets in the country—using the learnings that have come from that on the cost of vehicles, how to bring vehicles into the fleet, and what sort of charging infrastructure you need, sharing that knowledge to help amplify the efforts that government has already taken.

That leads me to the issue of transport emissions. We are taking strong action to reduce emissions from transport in the ACT. Transport emissions now account for around 60 per cent of the ACT's greenhouse gas emissions. Of these emissions, an estimated 70 per cent are from private vehicles. These figures underline the scale and complexity of the challenge we need to address. Reducing the number of high-emitting vehicles on our roads is therefore an important step towards reaching our emissions reduction targets.

As I have touched on, the ACT has been leading Australia in zero-emissions vehicle policy and incentives. In May this year, the government announced two years of free registration for newly registered new and used zero-emissions vehicles. In the 2021-22 budget, the government extended this for an additional two years, to 30 June 2024. This initiative will continue to support community uptake of zero-emissions vehicles and reduce emissions from transport in the ACT. There is no doubt that this policy is having an impact. We saw a significant increase in the number of zero-emissions vehicle registrations immediately after that policy was introduced in May this year.

As I have touched on, the government is also continuing to transition its own fleet of vehicles. We now have more than 170 zero-emissions vehicles in the ACT government fleet—and this is growing as we turn the fleet over—along with the charging infrastructure to support that.

We are continuing to make strong progress in implementing other recent government commitments to support zero-emissions vehicle uptake. I have spoken about the fleet advisory service. We are about to release the charging master plan, and we will soon get underway with the expression of interest and tendering process for 50 public charging stations. This work is all rolling out. It will help accelerate a process we have already started and help Canberrans get more involved in a transition to a zero-emissions vehicle fleet.

As we reach our milestones, we need to ensure that all parts of the community are helped to continue on this journey. As the effects of climate change are felt, we must ensure that we are supporting our community's resilience to the effects of climate change. The government is continuing to deliver climate change adaptation commitments, including improved living infrastructure, climate data and risk-based assessments, and support for community action and awareness.

The budget commits \$2.6 million to continue to support the delivery of our commitments under the *Canberra living infrastructure plan: Cooling the city*.

The government knows that it cannot support the community alone. It has committed \$600,000 over four years to continue the Community Zero Emissions Grants program. Community organisations have an important role to play and are often uniquely placed to work with our community to take meaningful action. They can often do things and be creative in a way that is harder for government. That is why I was so keen to get this program started, and I am very pleased that we are continuing it. This funding will continue to support community-led projects that help us to transition to net zero emissions and that increase our community's resilience to the impacts of climate change. The first round under this new phase of funding will open this financial year.

In the budget, the government also allocated the first \$5 million of the \$50 million vulnerable household energy support scheme. This scheme provides funding to support vulnerable households to upgrade the efficiency of their properties and invest in energy-saving, new energy technologies. This includes public housing, poorly

performing rental properties and low income owner-occupiers. This measure is also supporting the introduction of minimum energy requirements for rental properties. The government will make a regulation to enact the standard to start from mid-2022, with the minimum standard being phased in over a number of years.

The government is continuing to deliver the Energy Efficiency Improvement Scheme, with \$8.9 million allocated over four years for the ongoing administration of the scheme. This includes the continued delivery of the Actsmart Low Income Household Program. All expenses are fully offset from funds paid into the scheme by tier 2 electricity retailers. The scheme places an obligation on electricity retailers to make energy savings in households and small to medium-sized businesses, with 40 per cent of the energy savings required to be delivered to low income priority households in 2022.

The priority household target, currently set at 30 per cent of the retailer energy saving obligation, will increase to 40 per cent in this coming year. This is in recognition of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, increasing electricity prices, and a growing need within the community for access to energy-saving activities, with the associated improvements in thermal comfort and savings on energy bills.

The Actsmart Low Income Household Program is trusted within the community, with over 4,200 in-home energy assessments undertaken since October 2015. The program supports vulnerable households with free energy efficiency education and upgrade activities, including draught proofing and curtain installation.

The solar for low income program will continue, with the ACT government committing \$3.1 million over four years to provide subsidies of up to \$2,500 for eligible home owners. Already over 670 low income home owners have installed rooftop solar systems since the program launched in December 2017, saving a household between \$900 and \$1,700 per year.

Assisting the most vulnerable in our community does not just save energy and emissions; it also allows people to live more comfortable and dignified lives, as all members of our community deserve to. This is not just a part of our climate change response; it is our duty to those who are struggling.

The last measure I will discuss specifically is the \$5 million funding for upgrades to community clubs to make them more sustainable. By investing in more efficient energy technologies, these vital community assets will be able to provide even more services to the community and improve their long-term financial viability. Through these upgrades, we also have an opportunity to ensure that these clubs are appropriate places to provide community shelter when there are heatwaves, fires, smoke or other community hazards.

The Community Clubs Program delivers on a commitment to reduce harm from gaming while supporting sustainable clubs. The program offers rebates of up to \$75,000 to support eligible clubs to undertake energy efficiency upgrades, build envelope improvements and install rooftop solar and energy storage systems to reduce clubs' energy use and their bills. It will also support clubs with their transition from

gas. Additionally, clubs will be given the opportunity to provide their plan to become an extreme weather refuge site as part of the program. Registrations for the program opened in October just gone, with energy assessments expected to start in the December quarter.

I now turn to water. We have also introduced a range of measures to improve catchment health and water quality. Water security and water quality are critical for the health and wellbeing of all Canberrans and the environment. Clean and secure water for drinking, agriculture, biodiversity and greening the city requires action.

We also need to protect our catchments for our water supply, for environmental outcomes and to reduce nutrients entering our waterways, to ensure water quality and availability. The effect of climate change on our water resources is an additional pressure on top of our long-term highly variable climate. This is becoming more pronounced, reaffirming our resolve to futureproof our region.

To rise to this challenge, our administrative arrangements for water management are being reviewed. Government is collaborating across all relevant areas to ensure that we take forward a holistic and coordinated approach to water programs and policies. We are investigating reforms to our administrative arrangement that will strengthen the foundations for a water secure city. These reforms will support the breadth of services and program investment that we are already delivering to protect our catchments and water supplies. Working in partnership with the community is critical to delivering on-ground activities to secure our water future and protect the core values that a healthy environment provides for us all.

The government acknowledges the important role that our ACT regional catchment management groups provide in caring for our environment. We are continuing to support these groups, with \$348,000 to deliver citizen science volunteer programs such as the iconic Waterwatch and Frogwatch programs.

We are committed to strengthening our support for the Ngunnawal traditional custodians to be a critical partner in building our water secure city. We have initiated an employment program that will ensure that traditional values and perspectives are incorporated into all aspects of our planning, policy and program delivery.

I recently announced the appointment of a Ngunnawal water policy officer who will partner with us on water planning. I am excited by the opportunities that this presents for the government's business in assisting the Ngunnawal community to maintain its connection to country and waterways. The water policy officer position is one of six new Indigenous positions within the directorate.

I am pleased that we are continuing to undertake important work to improve the health of our waterways. The ACT Healthy Waterways program, from 2014 to June 2020, comprised a \$93.5 million joint initiative of the Australian and ACT governments to protect and improve long-term water quality in the ACT and the Murrumbidgee River system. The 20 water quality assets built for this investment are now annually intercepting approximately 1,900 tonnes of pollutants from our waterways, including 1,885 tonnes of sediment, 14 tonnes of nitrogen and 2.4 tonnes

of phosphorus. This is reducing the level of gross pollutants, sediment and nutrients entering the ACT's lakes and waterways.

The Healthy Waterways program is demonstrating important outcomes. In 2021-22 we are investing a further \$7.5 million to continue this program, and this includes \$1.6 million of capital works. An example of the innovative work delivered through this program is the floating wetland that was installed in Lake Tuggeranong earlier this year. It will contribute to improving water quality and reduce the appearance of blue-green algal blooms.

Five more water quality assets will be built under the Healthy Waterways program this financial year, including three bioretention swales which will be put in place by March 2022 to prevent nutrients entering stormwater from the Kambah playing fields, and two floating wetlands that will be deployed by April 2022 to improve water quality in Yerrabi Pond.

The new investment in the Healthy Waterways program is also being used to continue research, develop innovative technology and conduct catchment planning to inform infrastructure placement and education programs that best target the source of pollution entering our freshwater lakes and ponds.

It is important to recognise that investment in these water catchment management activities and water security planning is the intended purpose of the water abstraction charge which all Canberrans contribute to in their water use fees. The revenue from this water charge is to ensure that we can maintain a healthy environment and provide for a secure water city.

In summary, water security and water quality are critical to the health and wellbeing of all life, and a concerted effort to conserve this precious source and improve its quality is why the government is continuing to invest in Healthy Waterways water efficiency initiatives, water governance review and policy development, in partnership with community and regional stakeholders.

I did note the observations made by Ms Castley earlier in the debate on a number of these areas. I welcome her significant interest in these topics. I am intrigued by her approach. She does of course represent a party in this place that did not take a climate change policy to the election, did not have a policy on electric vehicles, did not have a policy on energy efficiency, did not have a policy on adaptation, and did not have a policy on emissions reduction.

The commentary here is very welcome; there is now some engagement. It does feel like the true definition of a Monday expert, coming in here to appropriate the somewhat infamous line of telling us how the game was lost and how it could have been won. But I do welcome the engagement. I think some of it is not accurate. I think some of it is unfair on the work that has already been done, on the people who are seeking to roll it out. Nonetheless, those projects are being developed and they have delivered significant emissions reductions and now will continue to deliver emissions reductions.

The ACT, for example, has the highest rate of electric vehicle ownership in Australia per capita. That is an example of our starting to put in place the policies. I am the first one to walk into this place and say we have more work to do. I think to just come in here, having taken no policies to the election, not one, and then basically ask a whole series of questions about the policies we have done is fine; ask them. But have a little humility in the way that you approach the asking of those questions.

This investment continues to support our community. It does, as I have just articulated in my comments, provide significant support to households. I have not even spoken about the Sustainable Household Scheme that sits in the Chief Minister's portfolio responsibilities but which has been taken up enthusiastically by our community because they too want to contribute to emissions reduction.

Across the range of initiatives I have just spoken about, whether it is through the various low income support schemes, the support for community clubs, the support for community organisations, this government is not only delivering significant emissions reductions but continuing to empower our community to take the next steps as we all learn. There is no playbook for this. We have got to work it out as we go. We are working with our community to work it out. I think the numbers speak for themselves in terms of the impact that is being made. I commend this output class of the budget to the Assembly.

MS ORR (Yerrabi) (11.56): I rise today to briefly touch on some environment and planning initiatives I have been particularly happy to see included in this government's budget. These initiatives are Yerrabi focused, and I would like to take the time to go over them in the chamber, on behalf of my constituents.

As I have said many times in this place, the Gungahlin region holds one of the highest rates of population growth in the country. I am therefore delighted to note that this government will be maintaining and growing affordable housing in Yerrabi, with the Gungahlin Common Ground build-to-rent project. Funds are being allocated to support initial work, planning and design for the first stage of the build-to-rent affordable rental project co-located with Common Ground Gungahlin.

Common Ground is already doing excellent work in Gungahlin's town centre, providing affordable rent to those in the community who need it most, in a safe, supportive, diverse, harmonious and inclusive, fashion. The addition of this build-to-rent project is a much-welcomed initiative, and I sincerely look forward to its development in the coming years.

This government's budget protects both people and the environment. In addition to building Common Ground in the town centre, the Franklin grasslands will also see some additional attention. Indeed, this budget's Franklin Nature Reserve enhancement initiative will ensure that environmental biodiversity offset commitments will continue to be delivered to support land releases as part of the Gungahlin strategic assessment. This includes the employment of rangers and other staff to deliver the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act requirements in supporting the delivery of the government indicative land release program.

I know for a fact that the Yerrabi community sincerely values precious spaces like the grasslands because I have seen firsthand the willingness of Canberrans to both voluntarily and privately participate in the conservation of these precious gems, whether it be through groups like Friends of Grasslands or in an individual capacity. The Franklin Nature Reserve is priceless because of its unique native ecosystem. But it is also priceless because of the high value that people place on it. It is absolutely right that this government has, through this budget initiative, shown the people of Yerrabi that it will indeed continue to maintain these invaluable spaces.

MR HANSON (Murrumbidgee) (11.59): Ms Lawder is at an appointment and is unable to be in the Assembly this morning but has asked me to read some comments to the Assembly for her, relating to water quality. Water quality does not just fall under any of my shadow portfolio responsibilities. However my interest in them—and by “my”, I mean Ms Lawder’s interest in the matter—is no secret. As a local member for Tuggeranong, the issue of water quality matters to many of my constituents, particularly in relation to the poor quality we often see at Lake Tuggeranong.

Despite its best efforts, this government has not achieved much when it comes to improving the water quality in our lakes and waterways. Since its introduction, the Healthy Waterways project has delivered 20 projects that the government said would improve Canberra water quality and also flow downstream into the Murrumbidgee River and the Murray-Darling Basin. The government has not produced any evidence to demonstrate that water quality has in fact improved, and algal blooms are just as prevalent. Whilst I am glad to see funding being allocated to improve water quality, it appears that the government is throwing more money at this problem without adequately addressing the issues identified in the first 20 projects.

Another key issue for water quality in Canberra is that the government has poor control over water quality from urban developments, resulting in massive sediment movement from the Molonglo Valley subdivisions into the Molonglo River. The government also does not have any continuous water quality monitoring along the Molonglo River which would allow the source of the magnitude of pollution events to be determined. Due to poor planning and control, the creeks that connect the urban areas of the Molonglo River are scouring out, adding to the problem, and are now much more costly to mitigate.

I note that the government relies heavily on a conceptual water quality model. MUSIC is the term. This model is not applicable to real-world conditions and current climate and, therefore, water quality is at risk of not improving to any noticeable extent.

Further, the responses my office has received to questions on notice have been vague, unclear and sometimes inaccurate. For instance, the statement that stormwater connects to upper Stranger Pond and then Tuggeranong weir is simply incorrect. Whilst I appreciate the government’s efforts in this area, I am starting to believe that these efforts may be motivated by the government wanting to appear to be doing something in this space, as opposed to actually improving water quality in Canberra.

Proposed expenditure agreed to.

Major Projects Canberra—Part 1.11.

Debate interrupted in accordance with standing order 74 and the resumption of the debate made an order of the day for a later hour.

Sitting suspended from 12.02 to 2 pm.

Questions without notice
Government—data security

MRS JONES: My question is to the Treasurer. I refer to the story in the *Canberra Times* today about the major ACT government privacy breach that involves almost 30,000 ACT government workers compensation claims made since the commencement of self-government in 1989. This data was apparently uploaded to the public-facing Tenders ACT website by your directorate in 2018. Treasurer, were you informed at the time that this data was being made public, and if not, when did you become aware of the breach?

MR STEEL: Madam Speaker, I will take the question as the responsible minister for procurement as Special Minister of State.

I can confirm that the tender in question was seeking quotations for the administration of past and future ACT public service workers compensation claims for the period since 1989. The tender documents were placed on the Tenders ACT website in May 2018.

The tender was part of the ACT government's move to become a self-insurer and move away from Comcare as an assessor of workers compensation claims for ACT government employees. The tenderers estimate that the cost to provide accurate quotes was necessary to provide tenderers with information about the number, nature and duration of the claims that would require management.

The spreadsheet in question was provided for that purpose and includes redacted de-identified information about ACT government workers compensation claims. The spreadsheet was heavily redacted prior to release so that the identity of workers compensation claimants could not be determined. This included removal of data fields such as claimant name, day and month of birth, address and contact details.

I only became aware of any concern in relation to this particular procurement yesterday, Madam Speaker, when I was contacted by the media.

MRS JONES: Given that the identity of the claimants has been identified, have you taken responsibility for this breach by reporting it to the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner as required under your government's *CMTEDD information privacy policy*, on page 21?

MR STEEL: At this stage, we are not aware of a particular breach. That is why this has been referred to a review by the privacy officer in CMTEDD, who will be looking

at whether this has met all ACT government policy requirements and obligations under the privacy acts, both in the ACT and federally. We look forward to that review being undertaken and any recommendations that may come out of that review about whether there has in fact been a breach of privacy in this particular case and whether there are any further measures we can put in place to protect the privacy of individuals in procurements going forward.

MR HANSON: Minister, will you be notifying as many of the 30,000 people as possible about how you will compensate them for this breach of privacy?

MR STEEL: The actions that will be undertaken will be performed by the review that will be undertaken by CMTEDD into this matter. As I have stated before, there was a range of de-identified data that provided, where information that would have provided the claimant's name, date and month of birth, address and contact details was not part of the spreadsheet as part of that procurement. The fields that were listed in the spreadsheet included information like Comcare ID, gender, the directorate each individual was employed by, the duration of the claim, the dollar value associated with it, and the mechanism and location of the injury.

Once we have undertaken that review, there will be, no doubt, recommendations and findings about whether there has been a breach and any actions that may be required in order to address that. That may include potentially reaching out to anyone who may have been involved.

Government—data security

MR HANSON: My question is to the Special Minister of State. When releasing report No 3 in 2020 on data security the Auditor-General said:

ACT Government agencies have not clearly understood the risks and requirements of securing sensitive data, and are not well placed to respond to a data breach.

Knowing that the Auditor-General raised these significant concerns over cyber security in 2020, today's story in the *Canberra Times*, where it was revealed the government has deliberately released the personal information of 30,000 ACT public servants online, makes it clear that this government has totally failed to mitigate the data breach risks. As the minister responsible for cyber security, how have you allowed this data breach to persist for three years, including for over a year on your watch?

MR STEEL: I thank the member for his question. We have only just become aware in relation to this particular procurement. While typically the information on tender documents for procurements goes up on Tenders ACT and is removed after a period of time, it just so happens that a system change in 2020 resulted in these documents becoming visible again without the knowledge of Procurement ACT. That will no doubt be part of the review.

Of course, led by the Chief Digital Officer there is a significant program of engagement with directorates around cyber security, and we have outlined measures in recent budget to improve cyber security in the territory. We are consistently as part of a continuous improvement approach looking at how we can improve cyber security both in terms of hardware but also the knowledge and capability of directorates. We will continue to work centrally to support directorates to do that. If there has been a breach the findings will no doubt be used in that continuous improvement process in the future, but we have yet to determine whether there has been a breach.

MR HANSON: Minister, will you be taking responsibility for this breach of Canberrans' privacy? If not, who is responsible?

MR STEEL: I refer the member to the answer to the last question, which is that we have not determined whether there has been a breach in this particular case. We will be undertaking a review of this matter. I take responsibility for implementing any recommendations and actions that come out of that review.

MR CAIN: Minister, why would you expect the ACT community to trust you with their private information given this severe breach?

MR STEEL: Because we take any issues raised with us seriously. We are looking into that matter through a review by the privacy officer in CMTEED to make sure we have met all ACT government policies and protocols in relation to privacy and information. It is necessary—as in this particular case—to be able to go out to the market in order to procure services, and from time to time that may involve the release of government information. An attempt was made to ensure that information was redacted so it could not identify people involved, and we will look to see whether those protocols have been met in this case and whether any actions and measures may be required in the future to improve our processes.

Health Records (Privacy and Access) Act—data security

MR PARTON: My question is to the Minister for Health. Minister, in 2018 you were the minister for industrial relations and presided over the establishment of the ACT's workers compensation self-insurance arrangements. Now, as health minister, you administer the Health Records (Privacy and Access) Act 1997. When this Assembly debated amendments to the COVID-19 Emergency Response Act 2020 a couple of months ago, you did not support opposition proposals intended to ensure that COVID-19 check-in data could not be accessed by law enforcement agencies or misused by public servants. After the massive data breach involving nearly 30,000 workers compensation claims by ACT public servants, reported in the *Canberra Times* today, how can anyone trust you or the directorates that you administer with their personal health data?

MS STEPHEN-SMITH: I thank Mr Parton for the question. I think he is drawing multiple long bows there. I think the fundamental answer to the question is that the amendments that were put forward by the opposition did not actually achieve what Mr Parton has claimed they would have achieved. The amendments the government

was putting forward were precisely to protect the personal check-in information of individuals. What the opposition was seeking to do was to limit the use of business information and take the bill in a completely different direction. The amendments actually failed to do what the opposition thought they were going to do. That is why they were not supported. Our bill was entirely about ensuring that we protected the personal information of individuals who were checking in. That is what it was about and that is what it did.

MADAM SPEAKER: A supplementary.

MR PARTON: Minister, will you ensure that this massive data breach will also be investigated as a potential health records privacy breach?

MS STEPHEN-SMITH: I have not had an opportunity to catch up with Minister Steel about this matter, but I am very happy to have a conversation with him about how this review is going to work. I have confidence that the review will consider all matters in relation to the privacy of this information and whether or not there was, in fact, a data breach associated with this.

MRS JONES: A supplementary.

MADAM SPEAKER: Mrs Jones.

MRS JONES: Minister, why have you not had a conversation yet with the minister involved, given that it broke this morning and that this is 30,000 people's private health information about conditions they have been paid out for, some of whom have contacted me because they know that they are listed on that site?

MS STEPHEN-SMITH: Minister Steel and I are both busy people. I have had multiple meetings this morning and multiple pieces of work to do. I am obviously familiar with the procurement that was undertaken in 2018. As Minister Steel has indicated, that data would have been taken down immediately after that procurement. It would have been provided in a way, I understand, that would have protected that information at the time. I am very happy to have a conversation with Minister Steel when both of us are available to do that.

Domestic and family violence—16 days of activism

DR PATERSON: My question is to in the Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence: how are you and the ACT community marking the 16 days of activism against gender-based violence this year?

MS BERRY: I thank Dr Paterson for her interest in and support of eliminating domestic and family violence in the ACT and more broadly across the country. I want to acknowledge that the United Nations theme for this year's International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women is Orange the World: End Violence Against Women Now.

During these 16 days I want to firstly pay my respects to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, whose struggle is also bound up with continued injustice of colonisation and dispossession. I also want to acknowledge the work of generations before us who have fought in the campaign for gender equality that continues today.

This year for the 16 days I have written to Senator Michaelia Cash as Minister for Industrial Relations, with support from the domestic and family violence sector, women's support services and other advocates, including unions, calling once again for 10 days of paid domestic and family violence leave to be included in the national employment standards. Domestic and family violence can affect anyone and it can happen anywhere. It impacts all aspects of our society and it needs to be publicly acknowledged rather than continuing to be kept hidden.

The ACT government has already acknowledged this and has introduced 20 days of paid domestic and family violence leave, which is a formal entitlement in the ACT government's enterprise bargaining agreements. We have also implemented training for ACT government public service employees to ensure they understand their role in supporting people in their community around domestic and family violence. These are just a few examples of some of the activities the ACT government is engaged in in the next 16 days.

DR PATERSON: Minister, what other activities and events will community organisations hold during these 16 days?

MS BERRY: There is a calendar of events and online campaigns are being held during these 16 days. Today I was lucky enough to be on a panel with the Domestic Violence Crisis Service with the question asked: whose job is it to eliminate domestic and family violence? The answer is it is all our jobs. Governments can lead the way by implementing gendered policies to ensure domestic and family violence is front and centre of our decisions we make to ensure our community remains safe, but members of our community can also get involved in the 16 days of action.

On 30 November an online education session is being held by the Domestic Violence Crisis Service. You do not need to pay but you do need to register for that one. That is a really important initiative by DVCS for people who want to know what they can do in their community, their neighbourhoods and their homes to support people who might be experiencing domestic and family violence.

On 7 December there will be a conversation entitled "Ending domestic and family violence—what role do men's behaviour-change programs play," again, a really important subject for people to be involved in. And also do not forget to keep a close eye on social media posts from organisations like the YWCA, who will also be publishing different content focusing on the 16 days.

The 16 days is a great opportunity for Canberrans to get involved, to understand and to listen with kindness and empathy and understanding to the experiences of people to learn what we can all do together to eliminate domestic and family violence and violence against women.

Importantly, I ask that members of the ACT government and all MLAs engage in the conversation over the next 16 days, wear orange to show your support for the elimination of violence against women and share all those important messages across your own social media channels.

MS ORR: Minister, why are the 16 days of activism against gender-based violence so important?

MS BERRY: Creating change includes unpacking ideas that have forever been normalised around gendered violence. It is a challenge, that is for sure, that has been happening for decades before we were here. But what I hear in women's stories that I listen to when talking to my community, it is not impossible. In fact, it is unavoidable. Change is already happening and we are seeing that across our workplaces, across the country and across the world. We need to continue the momentum.

I know everybody is tired after the last couple of years responding to an international health pandemic, but we cannot take our eye off a gendered violence pandemic that has been facing women and girls for years in this country. We need to make sure we take every step we can as a community to eliminate violence against women.

ACT public service—data security

MR MILLIGAN: My question is to the Minister for Industrial Relations and Workplace Safety. This data breach, according to the *Canberra Times*, shows people's birth year, where they work, what their job is, what their injury is and how much compensation they received. Many of the affected workers will have incurred psychological injuries whilst at work in the ACT government. Will you apologise for the additional distress this data breach has no doubt caused them?

MR STEEL: I will take the question, Madam Speaker. I really want to clarify, because that is not quite right what Mr Milligan said in the prelude to his question, what was listed in the spreadsheet included information on the Comcare ID, gender, the directorate which the individual was employed by, not their job or role, the duration of the claim and dollar value associated with it, the mechanism and location of the injuries. That what was provided.

The tender with its associated information was approved for release by the head of the ACT Treasury then, on advice from the workers' compensation procurement officials and the Government Procurement Board. They made a determination then that the redacted information could be provided on to Tenders ACT. Now we are undertaking a review to see whether that was appropriate in the circumstances and in accordance with privacy legislation, including the Health Records Act and other pieces of legislation. We will let that review run its course to understand the matter and any recommendations that come out of it.

MR MILLIGAN: Minister, how will the ACT government be contacting each of these workers, some going back to 1989, as is required under the CMTEDD information privacy policy requirements relating to privacy data breaches?

MR STEEL: The opposition has already asked that question. I refer them to the answer to the previous question.

MR CAIN: Minister, what support services and compensation will you be providing for people, some of whom will no doubt have had their mental health affected adversely by learning of this data breach?

MR STEEL: I am not intending to pre-empt the review. That may provide findings and recommendations. We do not know that yet. We have to go through that process before we look any further.

Children and young people—National Youth Week

MR DAVIS: My question is to the minister for youth affairs. Minister, I have been contacted by a number of young Canberrans who are excited for Youth Week in April next year, but are concerned, given the news about the Multicultural Festival, that plans might not go ahead. Could you provide an update on National Youth Week?

MS BERRY: Of course, after the years that we have been through, young people want to be able to celebrate, and to have the opportunity to express their ideas and views and act on issues which impact on them and their peers. At this stage Youth Week will be going ahead, and decisions about whether or not that goes ahead will be made by the Chief Health Officer at the time. At the moment it is something that we can have hope for, and young people can have hope that it will continue. It will occur next year, from 4 April to 14 April.

We have already announced the 2021 Youth Week grants, which fund 14 events and activities across the ACT. These will include chill-out spaces and outreach, Belco's Got Talent finalist performance, Sport in the Street, and the GreenLaw GreenTea Wellness Program, a guided on-country walk.

Importantly, the 2022 ACT Youth Week grant program closed on 22 November. All of the applications are being assessed, and we will be notifying successful applicants soon.

MR DAVIS: Minister, are there any specific ACT government sponsored programs in my electorate of Brindabella to coincide with Youth Week?

MS BERRY: I can double-check exactly what events are happening across the territory. I encourage Mr Davis as well as everybody else in this place to spread the word about Youth Week to young people that they might be engaging with, and to contact the office for youth in the ACT government, who will be able to provide more details. Of course, keep a close eye on social media pages, because the Youth Week activities will be advertised broadly across social media, including with the Youth Advisory Council.

MR BRADDOCK: Minister, what kind of planning has been undertaken by the government to ensure Youth Week events can go ahead, in light of COVID?

MS BERRY: Like everyone else, the office for youth and the Youth Advisory Council have had to move very quickly online, to make sure that they engage around what sort of activities will occur during Youth Week and, importantly, making sure that we engage with all of the ACT's youth services, to understand from them what kinds of activities young people want to be engaged in to celebrate Youth Week in 2022. Again, I encourage people to keep an eye on their social media accounts, share on their various social media accounts and talk with young people in their lives about all of the activities that will be up for them to enjoy. They should understand that ACT Youth Week is about giving young people the chance to express their ideas and views on issues that impact on them.

Information Privacy Act—data security

MRS KIKKERT: My question is to the Attorney-General. Minister, I refer to the massive data breach reported in the *Canberra Times* involving the release by the ACT Treasury of private details of every workers compensation claim by every ACT public servant since self-government in 1989. The Information Privacy Act 2014 creates an offence related to the reckless or intentional release of protected private information about someone else. Minister, what steps are you intending to take to refer any potential offences under the Information Privacy Act to an appropriate independent investigative authority, such as the police?

MR RATTENBURY: I thank Mrs Kikkert for the question, but as the Special Minister of State has indicated there is a review currently underway. I think it is most appropriate that that review be finalised, at which point I will speak with the Special Minister of State about what the findings of that review are and whether it is appropriate to take further steps, either in the ways Mrs Kikkert has asked about or through any other matters that may be relevant in the light of the findings of that review.

Mrs Jones interjecting—

MADAM SPEAKER: Mrs Jones, your colleague has the floor.

MRS KIKKERT: Minister, do you believe that this is a serious breach of these almost 30,000 people's privacy, given that people can actually be identified, and do you expect to receive a report from the Australian Information Commissioner?

MR RATTENBURY: I think people were concerned to read that report in the paper today. That is why it is appropriate that the Special Minister of State has sought this review. Mrs Jones is interjecting. I think it is fair to say that this is a first step. It is about gathering information at this point and better understanding the circumstances of the situation. Then the government can assess what further steps may or may not need to be taken.

MRS JONES: Minister, will the review that is being undertaken internally be given to you, and will you consider that that is all the investigation that is required on something that could be a law breach being internally investigated by the government itself?

MR STEEL: I am happy to take that question. As the Attorney-General has noted, this will be a first step forward. We will make that available through the government to be able to consider those findings, recommendations and steps that need to be taken further, legally or otherwise, to make sure that any issues are addressed in the review.

At this point in time, it has not been determined that there has been a breach of privacy or health records legislation. We will look at the findings of the review to determine if there has been any breach and the steps that we need to take to remedy that breach and make sure that any issues do not occur in the future, if that may be the case.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders—children and families advocate

MS ORR: My question is to the Minister for Human Rights. The 2021-22 budget commits \$311,000 to appoint a temporary Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families advocate. Can you update the Assembly on the work underway to appoint the advocate?

MS CHEYNE: I thank Ms Orr for the question. The ACT government is fully implementing the recommendations of the Our Booris, Our Way review, including the recommendation to establish an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children's commissioner. We have heard clearly that the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community wants the commissioner established as soon as possible and, as minister responsible for this forum, I do too.

The commissioner's policy and legislative framework is currently being developed through a genuine co-design process so that the commissioner has the confidence of the community. That process is well underway. In the meantime, the community has asked for an interim role to be appointed. We have listened, and the 2021-22 budget commits \$311,000 for a temporary Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families advocate and a support staff member.

While the advocate will not have the full powers of the permanent commissioner, it is important that this role meets the needs, expectations and requirements of the community. We are currently working with community leaders, including the Our Booris, Our Way implementation oversight committee and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body to finalise the position description for the advocate. The role will be advertised in the coming weeks and I expect it will be filled early next year.

MS ORR: Minister, how is the co-design process for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children's commissioner progressing?

MS CHEYNE: As I mentioned, the commissioner role will be co-designed with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community in Canberra. While we have had to pivot and rethink how to run this process in a Covid-safe way, the co-design has been ramping up over the past few weeks. A discussion paper has recently been released by the facilitators, the Jumbunna Institute for Indigenous Education and Research at the University of Technology Sydney.

The community is being asked to consider the commissioner's functions, powers, governance structures, physical location and a culturally appropriate process for recruitment. Jumbunna has been holding one-on-one and small-group conversations with community members, and online community dialogues are also occurring this week. These discussions will continue over the next few weeks to develop and refine the commissioner role. I expect to introduce legislation to establish the permanent commissioner next year so that the commissioner can begin operating as soon as possible in 2022.

I encourage the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community to consider participating in the co-design process. If anyone has not yet, they can go to Jumbunna's website, which can be found by googling "Jumbunna", and within the UTS domain there are contact details on the page and people can get in touch with Jumbunna to discuss participating in the process.

MRS KIKKERT: Minister, will the commissioner have the authority to intervene in child protection decisions, as the community wants?

MS CHEYNE: I am not going to pre-empt the consultation that is occurring currently.

COVID-19—testing centre fees

MS CASTLEY: My question is to the Minister for Health. Minister, yesterday in the first correction you provided to this Assembly you said that the \$112 fee comprised a \$50 testing fee, plus \$5 GST, a \$50 handling fee, plus \$5 GST, and an "initiation fee" of \$2.40. In your second correction to this Assembly you said that you would be refunding the testing fee. Does this mean that a person who has paid the fee will get the whole \$112 back?

MS STEPHEN-SMITH: Yes, it does.

MS CASTLEY: A supplementary.

MADAM SPEAKER: Ms Castley.

MS CASTLEY: Minister, why are you are charging GST on COVID-19 tests when the GST act makes health services, including pathology services, GST free?

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

MRS JONES: Minister, how many people have paid this fee and how many will receive a refund?

MS STEPHEN-SMITH: Since 23 October 2021, ACT Pathology has identified a total of 314 consumers who have been billed or who have been queued to be billed. Since 14 November, ACT Pathology has seen a number of requests to support domestic travel. While the analysis was incomplete yesterday, at that stage it had

identified 85 domestic travellers, with 79 of those having received an invoice, and a further group of 28 individuals that ACT Pathology was still reviewing, some of whom may have been domestic travellers. As I indicated yesterday, ACT Pathology is continuing to undertake this assessment. It will be reversing all invoices for testing if it related to domestic travel and issuing refunds to those who have already paid. That process was already underway yesterday.

Information Privacy Act—data security

MR CAIN: My question is for the Attorney-General: the Information Privacy Act 2014 defines “personal information” to include information about an identified individual or an individual who is reasonably identifiable—I emphasise that last phrase. The Australian Information Commissioner who is also the ACT Privacy Commissioner has issued Australian privacy principles guidelines that make it clear that “reasonably identifiable” includes situations where the information is publicly released, a reasonable member of the public who accesses that information would be able to identify the individual.

In the *Canberra Times* story today an ACT government spokesperson is quoted as saying that this information was de-identified, but the *Canberra Times* stated that people familiar with the workers compensation system in the ACT have said they could also easily link information to individuals they knew or had worked with. Minister, isn't this information personal information given that the *Canberra Times* was able to identify individuals, and is it not correct that it has not been de-identified?

MR RATTENBURY: I welcome Mr Cain's detailed knowledge of the privacy principles. I think his recollection of them is quite accurate—certainly from my recall. As the Special Minister of State has indicated, the government is taking this very seriously. Mr Cain is asking for legal advice—I do not think I can answer it on the spot. But I can say that the government is looking at this. This is why there is now a review process going on. We need to clearly determine whether the principles Mr Cain has cited have been breached. That is what the government is currently working on, as has been outlined by the minister in his previous answers to questions today.

MR CAIN: Minister, if the government does not even know what personal information is and does not know itself what is reasonably identifiable personal information, why should the community trust this government with its confidential and private information?

MR RATTENBURY: I reject the premise of the question. The government does know, and the government is now comparing the circumstances of this matter to privacy principles to make that assessment. That is what is occurring.

Mrs Jones interjecting—

MR RATTENBURY: Mr Cain and Mrs Jones obviously have their opinions, but we need to work through this in a carefully considered way because the government takes personal privacy very seriously. We have a range of both legislative and policy requirements, and that is why this matter is being taken very seriously, as the Special Minister of State has outlined.

MR HANSON: Minister, when will the review be completed, and will the findings of that review be tabled in the Assembly or provided to the opposition?

MR STEEL: I will take that question, Madam Speaker. The review has only just been commissioned. Once we understand the scope of the work that is needed to undertake this review we will have a better understanding of the time frames. We also do not know what the findings will be and what will be the information contained in the review. The government will determine whether it is appropriate for it to be released. But it will certainly be available—

Mrs Jones: Are you hiding it?

MR STEEL: You are talking to us about releasing information inappropriately and then claiming that we should release information without knowing what is going to be in the document. We will make an assessment about whether it is appropriate to release that review once it is completed. It is an internal review and it will inform the work of the government going forward.

Planning—Lawson stage 2 development

MS CLAY: My question is to the Minister for Housing and Suburban Development, and relates to Lawson stage 2. Minister, Lawson stage 2 was intended to have a community hub, including a village centre, neighbourhood playground and community garden. I have also heard some great suggestions about community sporting facilities and the need for a supermarket. The government has run two tender processes that did not return a result, due to the proximity of the electricity substation. The Suburban Land Agency has just released a build-to-rent market sounding. Can you tell me what type of development this might lead to, and whether we will get affordable housing and the community facilities previously anticipated.

MS BERRY: I thank Ms Clay for the question and for her interest in Lawson stage 2, particularly the build-to-rent that we are investigating as part of that market sounding. The Suburban Land Agency today held a briefing with builders and community housing providers, which gave them the opportunity to ask questions about, and seek information about, bringing that build-to-rent model into the ACT, as part of the Lawson development. It also gives people in the community a chance to ask questions about that work. The ACT government has a long-term commitment to support people on low incomes with housing opportunities, and build-to-rent offers another opportunity for homes that are designed to meet the needs of renters, and offering a great place to live with longer rental periods as well as greater security of tenure. A market sounding process which has been underway, as I have talked about today, is underway at the moment, and that will be used to develop options for the government on that work at Lawson.

MS CLAY: When will infrastructure like the roads connecting Lawson stage 1 to Aikman and Ginninderra drives be constructed?

MS BERRY: I guess this part of the process that the Suburban Land Agency is conducting is a gathering-of-information process, and once we have the information

around the build-to-rent model, and a decision by the ACT government on a way forward, we will be able to provide information to the community about those other facilities that the Lawson community so dearly needs.

MR DAVIS: Minister, how is the government assessing the environmental values of the site, given its proximity to the critically endangered golden sun moth habitat?

MS BERRY: As with any project that the ACT government embarks on through the Suburban Land Agency along with the Planning Directorate, due diligence is conducted on that site, including environmental and cultural impacts of any developments, understanding the nature of the site. So, all of that will occur, and will continue to occur, as the development continues.

Alexander Maconochie Centre—COVID-19

MR BRADDOCK: My question is to the Minister for Corrections. Minister, can you please provide an update on the status of COVID within the AMC, and how this has been managed to protect detainees' and guards' health?

MR GENTLEMAN: I thank Mr Braddock for his question and his continued interest in the welfare of staff and detainees at AMC. COVID-19 has posed an unprecedented challenge across our entire community. Of course, AMC is no exception. There is no textbook or formula on how to respond to COVID-19 or, indeed, the pervasive Delta variant. It is an excellent outcome to have so far contained the spread of this highly infectious virus within AMC.

To date, a total of 10 detainees have tested positive to COVID-19 at AMC. Thankfully, they have all recovered. Each of these detainees was a new admission, and they have been isolated since admission. The current quarantine arrangements for new admissions will continue as is, for the foreseeable future.

As of 8 November 2021, 83 per cent of detainees have received their first vaccination, with 71 per cent fully vaccinated. So there has been a good uptake, and we will continue to encourage detainees to receive their vaccination if they have not already done so.

I want to thank staff for their professional work in responding to COVID-19. Staff have worked incredibly hard to keep AMC safe. Their success to date is a testament to the skill and expertise of ACT Corrective Services and ACT Health staff.

As you would be aware, COVID-19 restrictions in the ACT eased significantly several weeks ago, bringing us closer to a new normal. I understand that the Acting Commissioner of Corrective Services, Ray Johnson, has been working hard to translate these changes and determine their impact on the Corrective Services workplace at AMC. For example, while requirements on the use of face masks have eased in the community, staff at the CTU and AMC have been asked to continue wearing masks while at the workplace, in line with the high-risk setting. *(Time expired.)*

MR BRADDOCK: Minister, how is the transitional release centre being used as part of the AMC's response to COVID?

MR GENTLEMAN: We have been using every opportunity in different spaces across the AMC to ensure that detainees can remain safe. We have been using that opportunity as well as other accommodation opportunities within the AMC.

MRS KIKKERT: Minister, why is the rollout of CORIS delayed until April 2022?

MR GENTLEMAN: I am sorry; I missed the key part of the question.

MRS KIKKERT: Why has the rollout of the CORIS software that is currently being implemented at AMC been delayed until April 2022?

MR GENTLEMAN: Madam Speaker, I do not know how that relates to the COVID-19 situation.

MADAM SPEAKER: It is out of order.

Industrial relations—job security

MR PETTERSSON: My question is to the Minister for Industrial Relations and Workplace Safety. Minister, how is the ACT government ensuring secure employment within the ACT public service?

MR GENTLEMAN: I thank Mr Pettersson for the question and for his interest in employment matters and workplace rights across the ACT. This government knows that secure jobs are good jobs. That is why we are introducing our secure employment bill. The bill delivers on our commitments in the parliamentary and governing agreement to legislate to prevent the outsourcing or privatisation of public sector jobs and to implement a whole-of-government policy that government services will not be contracted out where they could be performed by our public servants.

The legislation will make it absolutely clear that all public sector entities must consider the benefits of insourcing and secure employment when making procurement decisions. ACT Labor made a commitment to working Canberrans at the last election that it would protect job security and working conditions. I am extremely proud that we will be delivering on this commitment. But the work does not stop there. Over the next few months we will be developing the framework that sits under this legislation, which will guide the decision-making process for hiring within our public service.

I want to sincerely thank officials at CMTEDD who have been working on this. They have been doing a great job. Together, we are achieving this great thing for the government and for Canberrans.

MR PETTERSSON: Minister, in what other ways is the ACT government protecting job security?

MR GENTLEMAN: The ACT government is using its significant buying power to support businesses that treat their workers properly, through the secure local jobs code. I talk about the secure local jobs code a lot in this place. That is because the government is very proud of the code. When we introduced it in 2019, it was a nation-leading suite of measures designed to ensure that our contractors are providing safe workplaces and secure jobs.

As you are aware, Madam Speaker, we have recently secured extra funding for the code to strengthen the powers of the registrar and further improve procurement processes. I hope that the Canberra Liberals will be voting to support these measures in the budget, but I doubt they will, because secure employment is not on their books.

The ACT government also has a union encouragement policy across all directorates. This policy is not the whim of government but a recognition of the importance of unions in the workplace. For many decades, unions have fought continuously for secure employment and the benefits it provides. The government knows this and recognises the ongoing importance of worker representation on the right to secure employment.

DR PATERSON: Minister, why is secure employment so important?

MR GENTLEMAN: I thank Dr Paterson for her interest in looking after our workers. Unlike the Liberals, we know that secure employment does matter. We all like to live comfortably without the stress of an unstable income. We all want to be safe at work and we want to know that secure jobs are safe jobs.

Despite this, the Liberals are doing everything they can to cut entitlements, to benefit big business and to make working families worse off. Their changes to the Fair Work Act earlier this year have entrenched casualisation in the workforce. There are more Australians than ever working multiple jobs just to get by.

For over 100 years in this country, pay and working conditions have been seen as important to good life. Since the Harvester judgement, Australians have had the right to a job with wages that support a family and allow for a balanced lifestyle. That is being destroyed by the Liberals. Wages have fallen under the Liberal government.

Under the Morrison government, the gender pay gap in Australia has increased. This is unacceptable. It is a direct result of his government's policies that have contributed to job insecurity and poor working conditions. The inaction from the federal government on policies that help women—better superannuation, wages and benefit increases, affordable child care and secure jobs—is appalling. And it is deliberately harmful. Their policies are hurting working Australians and leaving women worse off.

Mr Barr: Further questions can be placed on the notice paper.

Supplementary answers to questions without notice Information Privacy Act—data security

MR STEEL (Murrumbidgee—Minister for Skills, Minister for Transport and City Services and Special Minister of State) (2.48): Earlier in question time I was asked

about the release of workers compensation information through a procurement process. I just want to also note an important piece of information, which is that if any Canberrans believe that they are included in the dataset that was released and would like to speak to someone about the data release, they can contact the ACT government's workplace safety and industrial relations office to find out more from them.

COVID-19—testing centre fees

MS STEPHEN-SMITH (Kurrajong—Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs, Minister for Families and Community Services and Minister for Health) (2.48): During question time Ms Castley asked why GST was included in the \$112.40 cost of the COVID-19 testing for domestic travel. I understand that, in this case, consumers are considered to not be being tested for healthcare delivery services; so this gives the test a commercial basis and GST therefore applies. For example, that is the same basis on which pre-employment screening would be undertaken.

While I am on the same subject, for the purposes of clarity of *Hansard*, yesterday I took on notice a question from Mrs Jones. The question was: is the government receiving a 50 per cent repayment from the federal government for tests which include the provision of the certificate? I think it was probably clear from the information I provided after question time yesterday that that was not the case but, for the clarity of *Hansard*, so that that is recorded as answered, the answer to that question is no.

Planning—housing affordability

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) (2.50): I just want to clarify a response provided in question time on Tuesday to a question from Ms Lawder. When speaking about the Reserve Bank of Australia, I did misspeak. I should have said “they”, rather than “we”, when referring to evidence to a federal parliamentary inquiry—that is, the Reserve Bank of Australia has provided the evidence, not me. My misspeak came to light after a review of Tuesday's transcript.

Paper

Madam Speaker presented the following paper:

Bill referred to Committee, pursuant to the resolution of the Assembly of 2 December 2020, as amended—Bill not inquired into—Public Health Amendment Bill 2021—Copy of letter to the Speaker from the Chair of the Standing Committee on Health and Community Wellbeing, dated 24 November 2021.

Corrections Management Amendment Bill 2021

Mrs Kikkert, pursuant to notice, presented the bill and its explanatory statement.

Title read by Clerk.

MRS KIKKERT (Ginninderra) (2.50): I move:

That this bill be agreed to in principle.

After a lengthy period of consultation, I am pleased to present this bill to the Assembly. The purpose of this bill is to tighten up legislation surrounding the delivery of prohibited things into the Alexander Maconochie Centre, or AMC. These prohibited things include drugs, weapons and mobile phones. The introduction of prohibited things presents danger to detainees and staff and it threatens the progress that detainees are able to make towards genuine rehabilitation during their time in the corrections system.

The need to tighten up the legislation stems from the rapid rise in the use of remotely piloted aircraft, or RPA, commonly referred to as drones, to deliver prohibited items over security fences. This problem is emerging nationally and worldwide. And the ACT has not been immune, having experienced at least two attempted drone deliveries.

Other states have also been affected. Victoria reported that from March to early November 2020 there were 97 incidents involving remotely piloted aircraft at their prisons. The other states are responding to this developing problem and have moved to update their legislation in response, and we must too.

Consultation with legal practitioners has indicated that our existing legislation surrounding the delivery of prohibited things into the prison may not cover the delivery of those things via remotely piloted aircraft and that it would be beneficial to strengthen the legislation. As written, existing law does not clearly capture using remotely piloted aircraft to fly over the AMC and drop something inside. These changes will make it easier to charge and prosecute anyone who tries to deliver banned items into our prison via drones.

Consultation with the Civil Aviation Safety Authority, or CASA, which has authority over air space, revealed that Queensland has created legislation that should serve to legislate against delivery via remotely piloted aircraft without conflicting with commonwealth law.

The proposed amendments in the bill have been reviewed by the Human Rights Commission and a number of community groups. None of these organisations raised any objections to the amendments. We must move to strengthen our legislation against this problem quickly. The amendments I am proposing are an effective way to clarify and bolster our legislation without causing potential conflict with commonwealth law.

I commend this bill to the Assembly.

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

Active transport—*Her Way* report

DR PATERSON (Murrumbidgee) (2.55): I move:

That this Assembly:

(1) notes that:

- (a) the ACT Government is committed to prioritising the use of public transport and active modes of travel to meet a range of policies, ambitions and commitments related to action on climate change by reducing transport emissions, improving the liveability of our city and promoting mental and physical health and wellbeing;
- (b) construction works for Light Rail Stage 2 have commenced, and will bring significant traffic congestion and disruption for years to come, particularly for southside residents;
- (c) a Disruption Taskforce has been established by the ACT Government to help address this and provide solutions to relieve commuter stress;
- (d) the 2021-22 ACT Budget provided significant investments in active travel infrastructure across the ACT;
- (e) on 20 October this year, the Federal Treasurer, the Hon Josh Frydenberg MP, launched Australia's first Cycling Economy Report and noted the importance of cycling as a mode of travel and for the Australian economy;
- (f) Australia's cycling industry sustains more than 34 000 jobs and contributed \$6.3 billion to the economy in 2020;
- (g) research shows that women are around two-thirds less likely to ride a bike than men and have different travel patterns and needs;
- (h) there has never been a more important time to ensure greater uptake of public transport and active travel:
 - (i) we need to take action on climate change;
 - (ii) lack of physical activity is contributing to increased health costs;
 - (iii) petrol prices are rising; and
 - (iv) the COVID-19 lockdown has changed the way many people work, commute and live in their communities:
 - (A) there is an increased awareness of the need for social cohesion, community connectedness and safe, attractive suburbs and neighbourhoods, as well as support for local business; and
 - (B) our daily transport routes and modes is an important consideration as we establish new routines coming out of lockdown. The ACT Government's 2021-22 Budget investment in flexi-hub workplaces is one example of this;
- (i) Dr Paterson launched a discussion paper on 9 August 2021, calling on women in her electorate to comment on whether they would consider making greater use of public transport and active travel, and to outline barriers and constraints;

- (j) over 100 people responded via online survey, email and social media commentary. Some of the key findings are many women want to change their travel behaviour but key considerations and barriers are:
 - (i) time;
 - (ii) safety;
 - (iii) distance;
 - (iv) trip-chaining and household logistics; and
 - (v) quality of life; and
 - (k) Dr Paterson's *'Her Way' Recommendation Report*, dated 22 November 2021, responds directly to the comments received with the report outlining a number of initiatives to help reduce reliance on private vehicle use, particularly for southside women who want to switch away from private vehicles to public transport and active travel;
- (2) calls on the ACT Government to:
- (a) note the *'Her Way' Recommendation Report* authored by Dr Paterson, and dated 22 November 2021, including community comments and input; and
 - (b) seek to incorporate the recommendations, where considered appropriate by the ACT Government, in existing and future programs of work, including:
 - (i) initiatives of the Light Rail Stage 2 Disruption Taskforce;
 - (ii) active travel infrastructure, initiatives and behaviour change programs;
 - (iii) public transport design and delivery;
 - (iv) urban planning design and delivery; and
 - (v) incorporating a range of user perspectives in the above; and
- (3) further notes that Dr Paterson welcomes the opportunity to remain involved in considerations by the ACT Government which relate to the purpose, objective and recommendations in the *'Her Way' Recommendation Report*.

I seek leave to present my *Her Way* report.

Leave granted.

DR PATERSON: I present the following paper:

'Her Way' Recommendation Report (2).

"Her Way" is a campaign I have developed to support women in my electorate who want to make better use of public transport and active travel. There are many people in our community who want to rely less on private cars but do not quite know where to start or how to overcome barriers and constraints, whether these are real or perceived. I want to help women to create that change, and there are many reasons to do this at an individual, community and government level.

At a government level, many of those reasons align with a wide range of the ACT government's key strategic policies, ambitions and intent, including to reduce transport emissions, address climate change, positively impact preventative health outcomes and contribute to a more liveable city. It is also timely to encourage and support transport mode change to coincide with the disruption that will be caused by the construction of light rail stage 2. As we all know, the construction of light rail stage 2 will create increased traffic congestion and disruption, particularly for people travelling to the city centre from the south side.

No-one likes wasting time in a traffic jam, and I want to do what I can to help my community avoid this. I commend Minister Steel and his disruption task force for the work they are doing in this space and for the clear, open, transparent and timely communications being provided to the community about the construction works.

However, I also believe that traffic congestion is everyone's responsibility. We all contribute to the traffic jam in which we are stuck. I once heard a quote: "You are not stuck in the traffic jam. You are the traffic jam." The best way to reduce traffic congestion is to reduce traffic.

In addition, the timing of light rail disruption and the end of one year and the start of another, together with a return to offices after the COVID-19 lockdown, also present a good opportunity to reassess our modes of transport and travel. At a personal level, there are equally many reasons why people in our community want to make changes to their travel modes and why I want to support them to do so.

After releasing a public discussion paper about active travel and public transport on 9 August, I received over 100 comments outlining why and how people would like to make changes and the barriers and constraints that exist. Among the reasons given by respondents about their desire to change their travel behaviour were the type of lifestyle they want to live, the type of city in which they wish to live and the quality of life they wish to lead.

They are not alone in this thinking, nor is it new. One of the most prominent urban planners of recent times, Jane Jacobs, applied these principles throughout her career, including in Greenwich Village, New York, in the 1950s and 1960s. Similarly, this was a time when there was considerable debate about transport disruption and its impact on community. Fundamentally, Jacobs sought to create safe, amenable, walkable and liveable neighbourhoods, particularly through applying a female lens. She is often heralded for having coined the phrases "social capital" and "eyes on the street", reflecting her advocacy for the linkage between peopled, active streets and safe, friendly neighbourhoods.

Public transport and active travel present a lifestyle we should aspire to. Whether or not we personally want to make greater use of public transport or active travel, it is good for all of us to support those in our community who do want to do so. For each person who chooses public transport or active travel over a private vehicle, there are reduced emissions, from which we all benefit; there is more road space and there are more carparks available for those who continue to drive; our neighbourhoods are

more pleasant, safer and provide greater amenity through the movement of people on foot, by bike and by scooter; and our local businesses and economy prosper.

My car plays a really important role in my life, arguably a critical role in my ability to facilitate my children's lives between school, friends and sports all over Canberra and regional New South Wales. Much of my role in this job is driving to meetings all over Canberra. However, I recognise that I rely on my car perhaps more than I should and that I can use my bike or public transport for some of the shorter trips that I make from home or plan and prioritise a day a week to engage with different modes of transport. And the point is that I actually want to do this.

Through this process, I have actually had to question and look at my own habits that I have created. For example, one reason I have not engaged in active travel and public transport is that I had in my head that I need my car in case a child needs to be picked up from school, for whatever reason. But when I think about it, I can honestly say, in the 13 years of my children going to childcare and school, I can count on one hand the number of times my children have need to be picked up from school. Perhaps I can let go of that anxiety a little and put a contingency plan in place in case I do not have my car on hand and a kid needs to be picked up. It is actually not the end of the world.

For some of us, perhaps there may be a different way. And I do acknowledge that not everyone wants to change every aspect of their travel behaviour and not everyone has an ability to do so. But I want to help support those who do want to make changes. I know, through the results of community input to the *Her Way* discussion paper, that there are plenty of people who also want to make those changes. But they do not know where to start.

The comments provided by the community have been instrumental in helping me understand how women want to change their travel behaviours and the key constraints and how best to overcome them. In the survey women were asked questions about their current mode of transport; their appetite for change, and which mode or modes for which types of journeys; flexible working arrangements; and barriers and constraints to their transport options.

Most respondents, 60 per cent, currently travel by private vehicle to and from work; followed by riding a bike, 15 per cent; and nine per cent had a combination of modes. For non-work-related journeys, an even larger per cent, 71 per cent, travel by private vehicle, followed by being a passenger in a private vehicle, making a total of 82 per cent of non-work-related journeys being taken by car. Many of these journeys are often short and local.

What was encouraging about the results of the survey was that a high percentage of these respondents, 51 per cent, indicated an interest in choosing a different mode of transport: primarily riding a bike, followed by an interest in catching public transport and then walking. This is a great place to start. What we need is not a small handful of people doing active travel perfectly but hundreds, if not thousands, of people taking small steps.

Key barriers and constraints to enabling these people to make greater use of public transport and active travel include concerns about safety, distance and logistics; having too much to carry or too much to do on the way, often referred to as trip chaining. Time considerations are a real factor in how respondents to the *Her Way* report chose to travel.

One respondent said, “Every minute of every day is planned and precise. We have no choice but to choose the most efficient way to do everything”. I think we can all relate to that. Safety concerns were also woven into nearly every aspect of barriers and constraints for women about their travel options, and my report recommendations reflect this. The 43 recommendations in the report are grouped around key themes of communication, infrastructure and creating the ecosystem.

Some of these include providing resources and tools to support people to prepare personalised travel plans; improve communication about the ACT government’s real-time digital technology app; design and conduct a dedicated marketing and communications campaign; continue to invest in the ACT’s active travel network, ensuring connectivity and safety; trialling pop-up, separated bike lane interventions; improve communications about secure bike-parking locations and ensure all bike-parking facilities are located in high areas of passive surveillance; provide more lighting at bus stops, interchanges, and, as part of the development of light rail stage 2, explore opportunity for increased safety on buses at night-time; review Park and Ride demand and capacity and continue to work collaboratively with stakeholders; trial street closures for increased people-based activity, similar to that recently undertaken in Manuka; encourage the use of e-bikes; support a culture of flexible working arrangements; establish a process to incorporate diverse and inclusive voices into policy, design and infrastructure outcomes; and continue to encourage and facilitate public transport and active travel to schools.

As part of my own continued work in this space, I am intending to engage further with Early Childcare ACT and the ACT Council of Parents and Citizens Association as well as to continue collaborating with a wide range of stakeholders for some great outcomes. I also intend to establish a focus group with some of the *Her Way* respondents to support each other and share our stories to inspire others to learn from the key stakeholder groups.

Regarding stakeholders, we are lucky to have so many skilled, knowledgeable and committed organisations in the ACT who are working in the active travel and public transport sectors. These organisations carry out really important advocacy work as well as a broad range of community programs, projects, campaigns and activities. I thank these groups for their ongoing commitment and tireless efforts and for their support of and input into the *Her Way* campaign.

Some of those groups include Pedal Power ACT, the Amy Gillett Foundation, the Heart Foundation, ACTCOSS, the YWCA, Conservation Council ACT, the Physical Activity Foundation, Girls on Bikes ACT, and Women’s Health Matters. I engaged closely with these groups in the last few months. And the *Her Way* recommendations have been strengthened and verified through their input.

Finally, I would like to thank Anna Gurnhill from my office for the work she has done in coordinating this campaign and for her contribution to positive active travel outcomes in the ACT.

I call on this Assembly to call on the ACT government to note the *Her Way* report recommendations, including the comments and input provided by community members. I further call on the ACT government to seek to incorporate the 43 recommendations, wherever possible, in existing and future programs for work, including initiatives of the light rail stage 2 disruption task force; the active travel infrastructure, initiatives and behaviour change programs; public transport design and delivery; urban planning design and delivery—incorporating a range of user perspectives in those activities, programs, projects and initiatives.

I also welcome the opportunity to remain involved in considerations by the ACT government which relate to the purpose, objective and recommendations in the *Her Way* recommendation report.

MR PARTON (Brindabella) (3.07): We will not be opposing this motion. There are some really cool things in this report. There are some really good things in this report, but I have to ask what it is doing in this chamber in this form. We need to get a full understanding of what is going on here, because this is Dr Paterson's report. She is a part of the government, and coming down here and asking your colleagues, when you have the numbers, to endorse the report is a bit like getting your mother to write you a reference for a job. Your mum is probably going to say that you are great!

Dr Paterson was elected as an MLA in the election of 2020. She is a representative of one of the governing parties. As a member of one of those governing parties, she has the ability to bring policy ideas to the table. She has the ability to go out in the community, survey people, and do research on all manner of things—and she is actually pretty good at that, as we can see in this report—and to bring those things back to her party. I would have thought that is accepted practice for us.

So, although I commend Dr Paterson for conducting this research, I am not quite sure why we are debating it in a motion. From my understanding of the motion, we are in the chamber today, voting on whether Dr Paterson's own party should listen to anything that she says. I do not know if this is a confidence thing, because Dr Paterson always strikes me as being quite confident. I do not know if there is factional trouble. I am just not sure. I do not know, but maybe there are those in the Labor Party who do not care to listen to Dr Paterson, and maybe her belief is that if she can get the Liberals to back her up in the chamber—and we are backing her up—then whoever her detractors are, will be forced to listen. I do not know who it is—whether it is Mr Gentleman who just will not listen or whether it is Mr Steel, given that they share an electorate. I know it can get a little bit like the *Hunger Games*, given that scenario.

Dr Paterson's report has given the minister an absolute bath, hasn't it? It savages the transport minister in a number of ways. Dr Paterson's report does not seek to water down the comments from constituents. Dr Paterson is an academic, very clearly, and

if she has things that she has researched, she will bring them to the table. I am assuming the report has not been watered down, because if this is the watered-down version—phew!—I want to see the original.

I am a big fan of Dr Paterson's report for a number of reasons. First and foremost, as we move towards net zero emissions in the ACT it is clear to everyone that transport emissions will be the key. And I think much of the push will involve getting Canberrans, male and female, onto public transport and into active travel. Around Australia, most of us have moved to that position in the debate, which has been really good to see. Dr Paterson has identified that women will play a major role in that shift, and their needs, and what motivates them, are often different to those of men. This report is extremely important, and it identifies a number of key directions for policy makers.

I am not going to lie; one of the other reasons I am such a big fan of Dr Paterson's report is that it is absolutely damning of the current bus network. It is scathing of the current bus network. When you go through the report and look at the balance of the comments, there are major sections of this report which look as if they could have come from us. Seriously, it could have been a Liberals report. But it did not come from us; it came from a Labor MLA, and I hope that this sort of criticism of the government's failed current bus network may lead to a rethink of sorts, because this voice of dissent is coming from within the machine.

Now, granted, when I said "voice of dissent" I meant that what Dr Paterson is doing is giving a voice to people who have responded to the survey. So I am not saying, necessarily, that Dr Paterson's is a voice of dissent. It is in that vein that I move the amendment that has been circulated in my name. I move:

After paragraph (1)(k), insert:

"(l) on balance, Dr Paterson's report is quite damning of the bus network for southside users, containing no less than 180 negative comments and reflections from survey respondents;"

It is a fairly simple amendment. If you want to see what it looks like to throw the transport minister under a bus, this is what it looks like. There are some holes in this report. Dr Paterson mentions more female drivers and a number of things about maps in the app, and I think one of the things that shines through from this report is that Dr Paterson is not a regular user of our buses, because if she was, she would see the large number of female bus drivers and she would be genuinely using the apps and maps that are already available.

The Paterson report got 100 responses in total. I note that the TCCS travel survey from four years ago got several thousand responses. Those responses, by and large, said the same thing but they were ignored by Labor and the Greens. This is a government preoccupied with toys and technology that offer little or no benefit for the majority of Canberrans. This report ratifies the notion that we have a city-wide transport network in chaos, run by a minister who is out of touch with community sentiment and with no real interest in listening.

Let me tell you, if you were to take this report from any other area of Canberra—potentially, not in the centre—you would get the same results. If you went to any outer suburban area, you would get the same results—complete and utter dissatisfaction from Canberra’s needy and disadvantaged families and just about every other social demographic category that relies on public transport to get them from home to school, to work, to the doctor, or simply to buy groceries. In Canberra, a complete day trip by bus is required to undertake basic life necessities, unless you are fortunate enough to own a car.

There are some pretty solid recommendations in the report, but because of the scope of the report some of those broader issues could not be tackled in this report. This report states that many people choose to walk, ride or drive rather than wait for a bus that would take them three times as long to get to where they need to go. Of course, in a number of cases the bus route does not exist anymore. People have given up waiting, and people who walk or ride cannot even rely on a quality footpath network or bike paths, because, once again, the government has failed.

So when members are considering whether or not to support my amendment—you never know!—they should note that it is pretty straight up and down. It is a factual amendment. It is difficult to argue that this report is not damning of the bus network. There are just shy of 200 negative comments. So it would be difficult to reject the amendment with a straight face—as painful as it may be for Labor and Greens members to accept it. So, do they want to accept the truth, or do they just want to keep looking the other way?

MS CLAY (Ginninderra) (3.15): I would like to thank Dr Paterson for bringing her motion to the Assembly today, and I would like to congratulate her. It is a really important part of our democracy that elected members use their private member’s motions, and this is a really valuable way to use it—on real policy and not scoring cheap points.

This is a great motion. Helping more people use active and public transport will reduce congestion, reduce climate emissions and improve lives. It is so important to identify different barriers for different people. Dr Paterson has done a great job on honing-in on the barriers for women on the southside. Using active and public transport should not be one more chore for women to do, or one more thing to feel guilty about if they cannot. We need to make active and public transport choices that suit women, not the other way around.

I have worked in active transport, and I have been cycling around Canberra as my primary mode of transport for the past two decades. I know about this. I have also been talking for years, socially and professionally, to women who do not walk or ride for transport. In fact, all of my regular bike-riding friends are men. This is not unusual. Here in Australia, more men ride than women. But that is not the case in many other countries, where walking and cycling are an ordinary way to move around a city.

In other places it is how you get to work, do the shopping, get your kids to school and get your produce to the market. People and planners have built their cities and their

lives around this. In those places, it is not just men walking and riding; women walk and ride as much or more, because women are often carrying the major load for these activities and that is how they do it. The streets are made safer with the high numbers of people, particularly women, using them. Those streets are dominated by people, not cars. There is a culture of care, where those who are driving understand and respect those who walk and ride, and they share the space. Depending on the affluence of the country, there is a vast amount of purpose-built, separated infrastructure to help people get around without a car.

But here in Australia, walking and particularly cycling are often viewed as sports or hobbies, and male-dominated ones at that. Walking and riding are fun. They are good for your mental and physical health. There are many events and groups you can join to do them for pleasure or competition. But walking and cycling are also essential means of transport and are the original zero-emissions transport. We should not forget that. Some of our newer forms of zero-emissions transport are also being dismissed in the same way. A few commentators have talked about e-bikes and scooters as fun. They have not yet recognised them for the primary mode of transport that they will soon become, and great ways to replace cars.

There are a lot of knock-on effects from viewing active travel as a hobby rather than as an essential municipal service. If we think of active travel as a hobby, we do not fund it, we do not build it and we do not maintain it the same way we do our roads. We do not support it with the facilities people need to make active travel a daily habit. We do not provide the road safety and separated paths and lanes that people want. We do not provide the programs and education we put into other core municipal services.

Canberra is a great cycling city, and we have higher uptake than in other parts of Australia, but it is still lower in many other countries. And women cycle here much less than men. I am really happy to be working with my colleagues Dr Paterson and Minister Steel on these issues. And I am really glad to see new funding for active travel in this budget.

The big opportunity is that if we build our footpaths and shared paths the right way and support them with programs, we will not simply increase active travel; we will help a lot of people in society who cannot or choose not to drive—parents with prams, those in wheelchairs or using walking frames, those who cannot afford a car or do not have a licence, older Canberrans who do not drive any more. They will all benefit from wide, well-maintained paths and paths that have are perfect for prams, bikes and wheelchairs because they have ramps for access. They will all use safe, separated infrastructure and get the benefits of a real culture of care.

Dr Paterson's motion and report also look at barriers for women using public transport. Now some of these barriers are the same as for active transport. Women need convenience. They have difficulty with trip-chaining, when running errands, buying groceries and dropping off their kids. They need good paths and connections to get to the bus stop or light rail. They constantly feel time poor. The ACT Greens, understand this. We were the original advocates for a convenient light rail system to service Canberra. We are great advocates for better buses, hourly weekend services and a network that genuinely meets the needs of our people.

Our policy platform highlights our commitment to this cause. We emphasise the transport modal hierarchy which prioritises sustainable modes of transport and discourages less sustainable modes of transport such as private car travel. We need to make some big changes, but we also need to identify small changes that make a real difference. I would like to highlight one ACT Greens commitment from the 2020 election, which should be included as a way to make bus commuting more comfortable. The Greens committed to allowing flexible bus stopping at night so that people concerned about their safety on their walk home can be dropped off closer to home. Drivers would be able to stop the bus between stops when a passenger rings the bell, wherever it is safe for the bus to stop. It is a simple but excellent idea, and it mirrors the feedback Dr Paterson received.

Dr Paterson recommended we explore opportunities for increased safety on buses at night-time, more female drivers and more personalised services which take people closer to their home. I welcome this. In previous budget estimates, I have also advocated for increased representation of women in our Transport Canberra staff. I am also really glad that Dr Paterson and Minister Steel have highlighted that the light rail stage 2 disruption taskforce is a key opportunity to increase public and active travel. Over the next few years we can increase the uptake of these, specifically for southside residents as part of the construction of light rail stage 2. It is hard to form habits but easy to lose them, and we have a key chance here that we must not waste.

There are 43 recommendations from this report, and I am glad to see this body of work put together. I have been working in this space, too. Earlier this year, I introduced legislation to make our roads safer for those who walk and ride. I am also working on a suite of measures to encourage active and public travel. We definitely need to improve our public and active travel, but we are not aiming to eliminate the car. That is not realistic in Canberra. And no one mode of transport will suit everyone. Many households will continue to have a car, but we will be doing a good job if we can reduce driving, help some people to stop driving altogether, and remove the need for some of those second and third household cars.

This is not about making women feel bad for not doing more. It is about bringing in better options that suit everyone, including women. And it is about shifting the load. I want to finish with a comment on culture. Government can do a lot to help our active and public travel with infrastructure, programs and education. But we also need a culture that supports these changes, and that means we need a culture of equality. Even here, in progressive Canberra, women do more of the housework, childcare, elder care and errands. They often do this as well as paid work, not instead of it. Survey after survey confirms this, and it needs to change.

My partner and I are an unusual example. We bucked the gender norms. I always used to ride, and he drove and ran the errands. When I was pregnant, my belly got so large I could not pedal. The day that happened, I took the car. I claimed it for the unborn foetus, and my partner started riding. He has actually never stopped. It was a really good habit-forming shift for him. Now I ride to work most of the time, and he works from home and some days he rides. He looks after our house and our daughter every day. Our daughter rides to school and he rides alongside her, and we are looking forward to the day she is old enough to do it alone.

This is how we manage with one car. And we do not use that car a lot, because we share our household responsibilities. I am really glad I am in a position where I can do this. It must sound like a fantasy to many women, particularly single mothers. But I do not thank my partner for looking after his child and for cooking the meals. He is a father, and he eats too. It is his responsibility, and it is his role to do his share. But I understand that this arrangement is not common. I wish that these loads were shared. We also need to make it easier for trip-chaining and transport for those that carry this responsibility on their own. We should do all we can to make it easier for everyone.

I would like to congratulate Dr Paterson on her motion. The ACT Greens are happy to support her motion in the original form. And we are happy to welcome another great advocate for public and active transport.

MRS JONES (Murrumbidgee) (3.24): I rise today to add Ms Lawder's comments to the debate, as she has had to leave for personal reasons. But before I do that, I would like to say that it is rare to have an academic turned politician—and, yes, it is unusual, but it is a factual report.

Ms Lawder's comments:

I rise to speak to Dr Paterson's motion, which calls on the government to note her *Way* recommendation report, seeks to incorporate the recommendations listed in the report, and notes that Dr Paterson welcomes the opportunity to remain in any considerations by the ACT government which relate to her report.

But now I would like to speak on how this motion impacts women in Canberra. I feel somewhat awkward about the nature of this motion and how it has found itself before the Assembly. Dr Paterson is a new member—the only new member elected for Labor, at the previous election. The fact that she has felt the need to write and publish a report, and then put this motion forward today, just to get her colleagues to listen to her, is concerning. I am not sure what sort of welcome Dr Paterson has received from her colleagues, but I would hope that naturally they would consider her concerns and allow her to be involved in any matter that she or her constituents were interested in. Perhaps this is something for those opposite to consider when they liaise with their colleagues in the future.

Whilst I think Dr Paterson has very good intentions with her *Her Way* report, I believe she has missed the mark. The vast majority of recommendations in Dr Paterson's report are not gendered. The majority of her recommendations are real and practical steps that aim to create a better Canberra for those who choose to utilise active and public transport. It is a damning read, highlighting the government's failure to provide an efficient public transport system. However, when viewed through the lens of gender, I believe these recommendations and the nature of this report is condescending towards women. To quote one of the women who responded to the survey, "It's not women's responsibility, nor obligation, to reduce congestion."

We know that, due to additional care-giving responsibilities, women are more likely to make additional stops on their commutes, whether that is at the school for drop-off or pick-up, or to care for an elderly parent. Women are also more likely to work casually or part-time because of care-giving responsibilities.

Women also traditionally undertake extensive amounts of unpaid work, with household work falling under a woman's responsibility in many cases. Public transport is planned largely to accommodate the traditional nine-to-five work schedule—a schedule that we know men are more accustomed to. Whilst I am sure that many women would love to utilise active travel more, the reality is that many simply cannot.

This report, and therefore this motion, has placed responsibility on women to do the government's work—to change their lives so that they are not blamed for the increasing congestion that will follow with the light rail upgrades. The simple fact is that men can contribute too; everyone can contribute. A lack of knowledge about how to fix a bike is an issue highlighted in the report. Bike repair is not something that only women can learn; men can too. It is true that some issues of safety, amongst other factors, are unique to women. However, such recommendations comprise a small part of the report. The majority are not gendered in nature and could easily be burdens shared by everyone. Further, if we want partners to contribute more to household tasks that preclude active and physical transport, like school drop-offs, it makes sense to include them in the recommendations.

Dr Paterson's motion essentially is a 44-page-long manifesto about how public transport has failed, placing the responsibility for its solution on women. It is not our responsibility. If women are the indicator species of Canberra's active and public transport ecosystems, then collect data on them. The ecosystem is not made of women only, and therefore its issues do not fall on women's backs. In ecology, an indicator species' troubles tell the tale of broader issues. In such cases you do not only assess and fix these issues; you assess and fix the issues of the whole ecosystem. This motion unfairly targets women. The increase in uptake of active and public transport is not only a woman's issue, and it needs to be addressed by the whole, and for the whole, Canberra community.

On a personal note—these are my words; Giulia's words—as Tara said earlier, I like to ride the bike to work when I can. And it is harder than driving. It should be a positive choice, not something that I have to do because of poor traffic planning under the light rail construction. Mine is a positive choice, and because of that I can enjoy it, as well as getting the health and fitness benefits, and benefiting the environment.

MS DAVIDSON (Murrumbidgee—Assistant Minister for Seniors, Veterans, Families and Community Services, Minister for Disability, Minister for Justice Health and Minister for Mental Health) (3.29): I would like to thank Dr Paterson for bringing forward a motion that enables us to apply a gendered lens to transport policy. I welcome her evidence-based approach to policy making. As well, I welcome Ms Clay's ongoing commitment, personally and professionally, to making active travel easier for all of us. There has been some really good, constructive debate from most of the people in here today—unfortunately, not all.

This piece of work by Dr Paterson builds on some fantastic social research work that has been undertaken by the Women's Centre for Health Matters in recent years, including the *What Makes Public Spaces Safer for ACT Women* report in 2019, which talked about footpaths, cycle paths and bus stops in Canberra. There were 363 reports that went into that piece of social research work. They also conducted a piece of work

in 2019 titled *Making ACT Bus Stops Work for Women*, which included 144 survey responses on 77 bus stops. The Women's Centre for Health Matters also worked with committed and creative public servants in the active travel team at TCCS on activities to encourage women to get into cycling in 2018-19.

This piece of work also builds on ACT Greens' work in 2020 to map all of the ACT's existing cycling infrastructure and then collaborate with community members and with Pedal Power on what gaps need to be prioritised within the network. That work talked a bit about dedicated cycleways that are separated from cars, end-of-trip facilities and bike lockers near Rapid bus route stops and light rail, which would make a big difference to people's ability to use public transport and active travel in combination.

I also really appreciated hearing Ms Clay's personal reflections on making choices between car use and active travel. I know what she is talking about; my family got its second car when I was pregnant so that I could avoid having to walk six to eight kilometres a day to use buses to get to a workplace that was just not on an easy-to-access bus route. These life-change points are opportunities to reassess transport options, and programs that are aimed at encouraging women to use active travel or public transport can really target these life-change points with constructive and helpful information on their options.

I would like to reinforce some of the points that Ms Clay was making about women experiencing barriers to using active travel and public transport. Those caring responsibilities have a very real impact, and that is how we end up with women doing so much more trip-chaining than men. Women often travel the same distance as men, but they make 13 per cent more trips per day than men. That comes from a summary of context analysis, data, community feedback and gender analysis published by the Office of Women in 2019.

Single women with kids, who are most concentrated in the outer suburbs where housing is cheaper but where bus timetables and cycle paths might be less convenient for getting to a minimum-wage job in the city, are definitely going to have a more difficult time of it, so taking those things into account when planning bus timetables and bus routes, and when planning where to locate bike lockers and infrastructure, can really help people.

Women with disability or chronic health conditions are going to benefit from having more access to separated cycleways, better footpaths and shared paths, and better lighting. Older women will also benefit from this. Mobility, accessibility and personal safety concerns are a big part of why we need to do so much work on age-friendly suburbs.

Women from diverse cultural backgrounds also have very real concerns about their personal safety because of the combination of abuse that they receive based on their cultural background and on gendered violence. In looking at what women are experiencing, the example that sticks in my head the most is from the Women's Centre for Health Matters work on women's perceptions of public safety. It was about a woman who had caught the bus home after dark and was followed from the bus stop down the path to her house by men who were shouting racist and sexist abuse at her.

These perceptions of safety are real, and they really do affect women's choices about how they get around our city. Men are often afraid that someone will take their money, but women are afraid that someone will take their lives, and it changes their behavioural choices.

So there are some real keys to improvement. I really welcome the ACT government continuing to work with the women's centre on those bus stop improvements and continuing to work on age-friendly suburbs and improvements to our footpaths. I would like to thank the Ministerial Advisory Council for Ageing and COTA ACT for their ongoing contributions and advice to ACT government on that. I really welcome the ACT government continuing to work with the access committee to make transport systems more accessible and inclusive for everyone; for continuing to work on lighting and active use of spaces. I welcome the government's work on infrastructure that supports strong connections between active travel and public transport and infrastructure that is accessible and inclusive, like those dedicated cycleways that are separated from cars, and more bike lockers and more end-of-trip facilities.

I really welcome Ms Clay's suggestions about flexible bus stops after dark. I saw this in action in Brooklyn in March of 2020, and it really did make a difference to the number of women who were using buses after dark to get around the city. With that, I welcome and support Dr Paterson's motion.

MR STEEL (Murrumbidgee—Minister for Skills, Minister for Transport and City Services and Special Minister of State) (3.36): I lend my support to Dr Paterson's motion and commend her on the great job that she has done in compiling the *Her Way* report. It is entirely appropriate for an important report like this to be brought forward to an important place like this, the Legislative Assembly, to debate these matters. It is very important that we all have deep consideration of these matters and are able to have the opportunity to debate them in the territory's parliament.

Her Way is a helpful, positive public policy document that engages with an important conversation about how Canberrans with different needs, routines and priorities can move around our city. The report sheds some important light on the challenges and considerations that south-side women face when it comes to switching from their private vehicles to other transport options.

This is really important, because we know that there is no one-size-fits-all set of transport options that is going to work for all Canberrans. There are some important structural issues that affect women's transport choices, like: the ongoing disparity in the share of caring and household work undertaken by women; the transport needs of children and the multi-stop journeys that women often take throughout their day; the diverse work patterns that women have outside the home, which do not necessarily reflect the simple 9 to 5 pattern; and the different ways in which women experience safety in public spaces and places, particularly at night and in places with limited traffic. We need to take all these factors into account, along with the individual feedback and experiences of Canberra women, if we are to design a transport network which provides the flexibility and mix of modes of transport that are necessary to meet people's diverse needs.

Last year the ACT government released a comprehensive transport strategy for the ACT, which we also consulted on. This strategy outlines our plans to reduce road congestion and vehicle carbon emissions as Canberra continues to grow. The strategy focuses on strengthening choice, by providing a diversity of flexible, reliable and sustainable ways for Canberrans to move around our city.

Dr Paterson touched upon Jane Jacob's views about the way we should be designing living cities. That is really important, because she was very much a person who was against the garden city ideology. There are many good things about garden cities, but there are also some really bad things. One of them is the nature of our city and the way that it was originally planned—it is spread out, which is not conducive to good design for public transport systems. It means that there is less passive surveillance along often dead areas of our city, along many of our major roads between the suburbs in particular. We need to work to address those failings of the planning system, those historical failings, as we move forward. We can do that through the recommendations in this report and through the transport strategy, particularly as our city continues to grow sustainably.

Our vision is for a world-class transport system that supports a compact, sustainable and vibrant city. That means prioritising a well-connected public transport network and high-quality walking and cycling infrastructure which connects people to local and regional centres, as well as key employment and entertainment hubs like the city.

We are backing up this strategy with a very real investment in more frequent public transport services; in active travel infrastructure like cycleways and footpaths; and in new modes of transport like the shared e-scooter scheme, which will roll out to the whole of the city in 2022. All of these contribute to making Canberra a more connected, vibrant and sustainable city.

We are currently delivering record investment in both public transport and active travel infrastructure. The government's \$5 billion infrastructure program outlined in the budget includes \$45 million for new active travel initiatives right across Canberra. This builds our pipeline of current walking and cycling projects to \$77 million over the forward estimates.

A very significant share of this money will be invested on Canberra's south side, where I know Dr Paterson has had a lot of feedback. This includes delivering a four-kilometre new shared path along the southern side of Sulwood Drive between Drakeford Drive and Athllon Drive, connecting with the rest of our shared path network. We are also constructing a new shared path connection and bridge linking Coombs near Klos Crossing to the city cyclepath network.

Sometimes taking decisive action to meet the needs of our community in the long term brings with it some short-term challenges. This is the case with delivering light rail to Woden, which is focused on building a better public transport system for Canberra. Building light rail will help to make Canberra a more connected, sustainable and vibrant city.

Stage 2 to Woden will provide more convenient and reliable transport options for people on the south side, helping to prevent future traffic gridlock and cut transport emissions, for a cleaner environment. In other words, it will provide significant long-term benefits for all Canberrans.

We are being up-front that what comes with that is some disruption to our road network in the short term during construction of the project. We expect that there will need to be lane closures and diversions in place for several years along some of the major approach roads into the city from the south side.

Analysis undertaken by TCCS has indicated that traffic capacity on Commonwealth Avenue could decrease from 5,200 vehicles per hour to as low as 1,100 vehicles per hour under a worst-case scenario. Commuters travelling on all other major arterials, like State Circle, Kings Avenue and Parkes Way, are likely to experience delays and unpredictable travel times during that period. Other routes from the Tuggeranong Parkway are also likely to see increased congestion as commuters divert from roads in central Canberra.

The ACT government is working proactively to limit this disruption where we can. We are upgrading the roundabout at the intersection of Coranderrk Street and Parkes Way, which will help to improve the capacity of this key intersection, which is already a bottleneck at the best of times. We have established a disruption task force to identify and implement other specific mitigation measures. We will be communicating with Canberrans early and often about what is happening.

We are committed to building light rail because it is about building a better public transport system. It will integrate with our bus system and help to provide more options for Canberrans to take public transport in the future.

What we have heard from the glass-jawed opposition is that they do not seem to be keen on taking feedback. The last several elections have been feedback enough that people want a better public transport system in this city. We are the only party, together with the Greens, that are committed to building light rail to Woden, building out our light rail system, which has shown so significantly its popularity and its ability to change people's perceptions and behaviour in relation to public transport and more sustainable forms of travel.

On stage 1 of light rail, we saw huge numbers using the service prior to the pandemic, and we are hoping that when we can welcome people back we will again see large numbers using that service in the future. And when the service is extended to Woden, it will provide those same benefits for the south side.

The Liberals want to prevent everyone on the south side having access to the gold standard services people enjoy on the north side and to prevent the people on the south side accessing better public transport. We want to build a better public transport system, combined with an improved active travel network, building on more than 3,000 kilometres worth of shared paths and footpaths around the territory to give people more options, particularly during a period when there is going to be disruption, but beyond that to create a more vibrant, sustainable and connected city into the future.

I again thank Dr Paterson for her report and recommendations, which will continue to be considered by government as we undertake that task.

DR PATERSON (Murrumbidgee) (3.45): I welcome members' support for the *Her Way* report and thank them for it. It is important to recognise that today is the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women. This global campaign recognises that violence in our community is gender based—that women are most often the target of violence and harassment in our community. This fact has significant implications for the choices women make in engaging with public transport and active travel.

The *Her Way* report showed that personal safety heavily influenced women's decisions around public transport and active travel. That is why it was very important that we focused on women in this report. Women and girls form 50 per cent of the population. That is 215,000 people in the ACT. It is critical that 50 per cent of the population feel safe and that we do all we can to ensure that.

As other members pointed out, women often bear the brunt of household labour and caring. However, this does not mean that women should be counted out of this conversation. That is exactly why I have targeted women. I do not understand why Ms Lawder has such a problem with me talking to women about this issue. I find it quite disturbing that Ms Lawder is the shadow minister for women and holds these views. I am seeking to amplify women's voices, to show the barriers and constraints. It is simply not good enough to say that, because women are busy with household responsibilities, we count them out of this conversation.

Through the *Her Way* campaign, I intended to give women in my electorate a voice, to let them know I am listening. I commend Minister Steel for being 100 per cent supportive of this campaign and this report from start to finish. He is a brave minister who is not afraid of genuine feedback and who has a genuine desire to improve public transport and active travel in the ACT and position us as a leader in Australia.

Mr Parton spoke of some of the barriers to engagement expressed by participants in this report. I am proud that I have been transparent with the findings of this report. I asked women to give their time to provide this feedback, and I am proud to table their voices in the Assembly. I am proud to be part of a government that is open to how we engage with these barriers, because it is the only way to overcome them.

Mr Parton's amendment is very disappointing. As the shadow minister for transport, is this the best he can come up with? With a straight face, Mr Parton, I reject your amendment.

This motion is about how we can improve people's lives in ways that ultimately lead to better social, environmental and economic outcomes. Walking and riding bikes in our suburbs and town centres are about much more than just a mode of transport and a means to an end. They are also about the interactions that we have along the way; the type of city we want to live in; the lifestyle and the quality of life we want to lead; the vitality and amenity of our neighbourhoods; improving individual physical, mental health and wellbeing outcomes; and protecting our environment.

Many cities across the world aspire to be leaders in their rates of participation in active travel and public transport. Every city has its own unique contexts and circumstances, environments and dynamics which need to be carefully navigated and negotiated. The ACT is leading the way in Australia.

Canberra is already the envy of many Australian cities and jurisdictions, and we already lead the nation in the rate of people riding a bike to work. Our existing shared path infrastructure, and continued commitment and investment by this government to expand, maintain and improve connections across the network, play a great role. However, we still have a way to go. I hope that this report makes a contribution to the next steps that we take.

I commend my federal Labor colleagues Alicia Payne and Dr Andrew Leigh for their current petition calling on the federal government to make a major contribution to boost funding for more cycling infrastructure in the ACT. You can sign their petition on Alicia Payne's website.

Her Way is about supporting and empowering those who want to make changes, and ensuring that there are appropriate programs, infrastructure, services and facilities in place to enable people to do this. It is about providing an opportunity and contributing to the type of city in which we want to live.

Question put:

That the amendment be agreed to.

The Assembly voted—

Ayes 7

Noes 14

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

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

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

Amendment negatived.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Leave of absence

Motion (by **Mr Hanson**) agreed to:

That leave of absence be granted to Ms Lawder for this sitting for personal reasons.

Municipal services—mowing

MR HANSON (Murrumbidgee) (3.55): I seek leave to move a motion about mowing on behalf of Ms Lawder.

Leave granted.

MR HANSON: I move:

That this Assembly:

(1) notes that:

- (a) the Bureau of Meteorology predicted a La Nina alert for this summer;
- (b) Canberra experienced its wettest winter in five years with more than 215 millimetres of rain being recorded at the Canberra Airport;
- (c) the recent ACT lockdown period delayed the scheduled commencement of the annual mowing program;
- (d) overgrown grass poses a significant fire hazard, can reduce driver visibility and increases the risk of snake encounters, particularly as Canberra experiences warmer weather;
- (e) Canberra residents want to take pride in their suburbs and be able to enjoy their neighbourhood parks and grasslands;
- (f) in the 2019-20 financial year, there were 8177 Fix My Street requests relating to “grass, trees and shrubs” lodged by residents;
- (g) the ACT Government has told residents for years to be patient and understanding regarding overgrown grass rather than adequately investing in mowing resources; and
- (h) the City Services crew does a great job, but they need to be better supported by this Government and require an increased mowing fleet; and

(2) calls on the ACT Government to:

- (a) provide additional funding this financial year to ensure mowing can be completed in a timely and efficient manner;
- (b) investigate how to improve the current mowing program so that residents aren't concerned about overgrown grass in their neighbourhoods each year; and
- (c) investigate how to better prevent grass clippings from mowing entering stormwater drains and waterways.

I welcome the opportunity to speak about this important issue today, and I thank Ms Lawder for putting it on the notice paper, although she is unable to attend.

This motion does a number of things, but importantly, it calls for a greater investment in ACT mowing resources. The reason we are raising this is that it echoes the concerns of many residents across this town. Each year—it is not isolated to this year—if you are out in the community, at the shops or at community councils, you

will find that people are incredibly frustrated about the overgrown grass in the neighbourhood.

These frustrations are warranted. I was at the Weston Creek Community Council last night, sitting next to Andrew. We were talking about the concerns about mowing in Holder. Ms Vassarotti was there; she may have heard Andrew's comments about the Holder Oval. It should be a great resource for the community, but for much of the time it cannot be used by the community, because it is not mowed. It requires local residents to go out. He said that they used to mow to try and get a bit of a track where they could walk. That is not what should be happening in a modern city like Canberra.

I am sure that the government will say, "We cannot do any more mowing, because it is raining." It is raining, but it seems that the government have an ongoing excuse—regardless of whether it is dry, raining or whatever, there is always an excuse. They do not have a strategic plan in place to address the fact that as a city and a country, we are a land where there is drought and where there is rain. When there are protracted periods of rain, this government is unable to address the issue substantively.

This is not a short-term problem. In 2008, when I was first elected to this place, a resident from Ainslie wrote to the *Canberra Times* saying that the appalling state of grassy areas, reserves and nature strips around Canberra at the time was an eyesore not only to residents but to visitors, particularly during holiday seasons, and posed a very high risk of accidents as visibility was impeded at some intersections.

That was in 2008 when I first came to this place. It has been a perennial problem in this city. You would know that, Mr Assistant Speaker Davis. Living down in Tuggeranong, you would know that this is an issue that is raised with us, as local members, on a continual basis. It is not improving. It has not been addressed by this government.

In the recent budget estimates process, the Standing Committee on Planning, Transport, and City Services recommended a number of issues with regard to suburb maintenance. Recommendation 17 states:

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government match mowing services to the prevailing weather conditions including services in very wet years.

Recommendation 18 further states:

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government investigate alternative mowing solutions.

That was from a government member majority committee. Even the government members recognise that this government is not getting the job done; it is failing when it comes to getting the mowing done in our suburbs. If members of the current Labor-Greens government are not satisfied with what is going on, there is a problem. I know that that is true for all members of the community.

This Tuesday there was a La Nina alert confirmed for summer. There has been a lot of rain, and it is not going to slow down anytime soon. That is going to have an effect on the mowing schedule. Of course it is. We accept that; we understand that. But this problem with the mowing schedule is not a new problem. Overgrown grass in the suburbs has been an issue year after year, since well before I got into this place. I just quoted from 2008. Every year it is a problem.

We know that we have hardworking people out there mowing. We really appreciate the work that our staff out there do. But they need to be better supported by this government. Every year this government says, “You need to be patient; you need to understand.” It is not good enough. We are a modern city. This is a government that just does not put its priority on the issues that matter out in the suburbs. Whether it is mowing, potholes or the condition of roads, footpaths and so on, we know that this is not a government that pays attention to it.

I was disappointed this morning that when we had an opportunity to work 12 extra days a year to focus the attention of this place on the core business of issues like mowing, those opposite rejected that opportunity. If we had more attention paid to those issues in this place, we could bring to the attention of this government issues raised by community councils, residents associations and members of the community. If we could do that, I think we would have more attention paid to the issues by the government. I really do. It would bring it to their attention. They would probably spend less time debating other matters, but if we had an extra day we would not have to lose other important matters that might need to be debated.

It should be something that matters to this government. It is not just the eyesore aspect; there are some significant safety implications when it comes to snakes in the grass and visibility for road traffic. Let me mention a media article on 16 October in the *Canberra Times*. It talked about problems with mowing here in the ACT. A couple of people commented. Here is one comment:

Why mention the rain fall and grass growth in Tuggeranong? Parts of Tuggeranong haven’t seen a government mower in two decades!

Here is another one:

Wollongong has around the same population as Canberra, yet the streets in the suburbs of that city seem to be well mown and there seems to be a sense of civic pride. Canberrans pay phenomenally high rates, which the graph on the rates notice tells us, \$2 billion goes on health. So how much comes from Commonwealth Grants, that the ACT Government needs to charge so much for rates, with so little to show for it? Should not a first principle of rates be that the money will be used on rate-related uses—garbage, roads, street cleaning (what a joke) footpaths and football fields? Get the basics right, then spray the rest of the money up the wall on all the social engineering projects.

That is a comment we hear all the time—that this government is not paying enough attention to the local government issues that are so important to Canberrans in the city. It is focused on its inner-city-centric view of the world; it is focused on the “inside the

beltway” issues it is fascinated by. Members opposite will talk about issues like energy, but when it comes to the matters that matter so much to people living in our suburbs, you see that this all seems very tedious for those opposite.

I commend the motion. I commend Ms Lawder for bringing it forward today and for the work that she has done in her area, in Tuggeranong, to advocate for this. If those opposite do not think it is important, let me say that we do. We will continue to advocate for these sorts of issues, be it mowing, potholes or other less glamorous things that this lot opposite do not want to talk about but that matter so much to members of our community.

MR STEEL (Murrumbidgee—Minister for Skills, Minister for Transport and City Services and Special Minister of State) (4.04): I welcome the opportunity to speak on this motion about our government’s ongoing investments in our annual mowing program. Members would admit, by looking out of the window at the moment, that we are well and truly set for a wet summer, following a very wet spring and a very wet winter. It is the seventh wettest winter on record. If we needed confirmation of this, the Bureau of Meteorology confirmed it for us on Tuesday, when La Nina conditions were officially declared.

I want to put on record just how much this is a priority for the government to invest in maintaining our parks and open spaces, including through regular mowing activities. This was not reflected in the motion that has now been moved by Mr Hanson.

During my speech on the budget yesterday, I tabled the Better Suburbs progress update for 2021-22, outlining how community priorities are being met through government investment. One of those priorities was to continue ensuring that suburbs are kept tidy and looking their best. Despite the challenges of COVID-19, suburbs and open spaces are mown every four weeks, with arterial roads mown every five weeks between September and March.

We have a team of 73 mowers, which have mown 72,000 hectares in the last two seasons—about 68 hectares per mower, per month. Our government has recognised this priority with additional resourcing when it is needed. During last year’s mowing season, I announced \$2.1 million in surge funding to boost mowing, weeding and following up amenity maintenance capacity. This saw additional staff and mowers come on board, and meant that we could undertake even more regular mowing.

Those who are interested in knowing when their suburb will be mown can go to cityservices.gov.au and search for the mowing map. Each mower now has a GPS tracker that allows Canberrans to view a live mowing map for our city, updated in real time.

Contrary to Mr Hanson’s motion, the spring mowing program commenced on 13 September and has consistently ramped up operations in accordance with COVID-safe plans and resource availability. Preparations for the mowing season commenced even earlier, in July 2021, and included the completion of training, undertaking mechanical and safety device services on all vehicles, and performance testing of supporting equipment.

Mowing services are now operating at full capacity. However, we ask for the community's patience as we continue this extremely wet mowing season. Seasonal conditions have temporarily caused grass growth to exceed the capacity of our mowing teams. If rainfall persists over the next few days, this may be the wettest November on record in the ACT, following the seventh wettest winter on record and a very wet June.

Recent and expected further rainfall, combined with warming weather, are producing conditions conducive to vigorous vegetation growth and grass growth across the city. This is temporarily challenging the ability of crews to maintain grassed areas. In these cases we prioritise safety-related mowing to ensure line of sight along roads and that essential access is maintained. This may mean that we only mow part of an area, the section that is the highest priority, and return to the remaining area at a later time.

Mr Assistant Speaker, even with the best-laid plans, you cannot mow a lawn when it is wet. It is not safe for the drivers, it damages the equipment and it churns up the ground, as any home gardener can tell you. In such cases, "Be right back" signage, letting the community know that it is too wet to mow, has been installed to notify the community that the area is simply too wet to mow.

I do not think Mr Hanson will be going out this afternoon to mow his front lawn. If he does, come and see me; we can give him a job! It is simply too wet for our mowers to get out there, and all of those rainy days are lost days in the mowing program. Despite all of that, our mowing crews are doing an incredible job in doing their best to get out and mow whenever it stops raining, to keep on top of the strong growth supported by this rain that we have seen. It really does not matter how many mowers you have; on a rainy day, you just cannot mow. That is a simple fact.

Even with the significant number of rain-affected days when mowing could not occur and with the vigorous growth that we have seen, our teams are currently running a week or two behind schedule, which is pretty good when you consider the combined impact of the La Nina weather conditions and of the COVID-19 lockdown on every sector of the ACT, including this one. I would like to thank our mowers and contractors for the work that they have been doing during this close-to-unprecedented rainfall. We will see in the coming days whether it is in fact unprecedented, which is, I know, a point that Ms Lawder has chosen to debate in the past.

Touching on other aspects of the motion, I want to highlight that TCCS does have existing standard operating procedures and policies relating to environmental care, especially for stormwater and waterway contamination, as well as for controlling weeds. While it is not practicable to catch all grass clippings, other measures are taken to reduce the impact of nutrients on our waterways. While operating near stormwater drains or culverts, mowers keep their discharge direction facing away from the drain and take immediate action in the case of a spill or leak. When it comes to weeding, mowers prioritise working from clean areas towards infested areas in order to minimise the risk of weeds spreading. TCCS teams always clean their mower, trailer and towing vehicle when leaving a weed-infested area.

I hope members are getting a sense of the huge amount of planning and coordination that go into keeping our city looking its best during the spring and summer. It is not just a matter of getting the Victa out of the shed on a Sunday afternoon. This is a large-scale logistical operation that is underpinned by a lot of planning work and investment.

Overall, we are taking practical steps to make sure that we have the resources, the mowers, to mow more hectares of open space every year. We will continue to monitor the weather patterns that we are facing and, if it looks like additional surge funding may be needed, of course, we will consider that, just as we delivered during the last mowing season as well. I propose an amendment which provides factual clarifications to the original motion and reflects the significant investment our government is making in mowing services across the city, as well as recognising the work that we need to do going forward to make sure that we respond to urban maintenance issues that arise as a result of our changing climate.

I move:

Omit all text after “That this Assembly”, substitute:

“(1) notes that:

- (a) on 12 October, the Bureau of Meteorology predicted a La Nina alert for this summer which was upgraded on 23 November;
- (b) Canberra experienced its wettest winter in five years with more than 215 millimetres of rain being recorded at the Canberra Airport;
- (c) the recent ACT lockdown period caused significant disruption to employment and service delivery across all sectors in the ACT, including regular mowing program activities;
- (d) the spring suburban mowing program commenced on 13 September and is operating at full capacity;
- (e) overgrown grass poses a significant fire hazard, can reduce driver visibility and increases the risk of snake encounters, particularly as Canberra experiences warmer weather;
- (f) Canberra residents want to take pride in their suburbs and be able to enjoy their neighbourhood parks and grasslands;
- (g) in the 2019-20 financial year, there were 8177 Fix My Street requests relating to ‘grass, trees and shrubs’ lodged by residents;
- (h) the ACT Government has boosted mowing funding by \$2.1 million to increase the number of mowing staff and mowing equipment, weeding activities, and follow-up amenity maintenance; and
- (i) the City Services crew does a great job, and will continue to deliver services for Canberrans with additional staff and an increased mowing fleet; and

(2) calls on the ACT Government to:

- (a) continue providing high levels of funding to mowing activities across Canberra;

- (b) continue to mow suburbs and areas of open space every four weeks, and arterial roads every five weeks during mowing season;
- (c) continually update and modify standard operating procedures to minimise grass clippings from entering stormwater drains and waterways; and
- (d) investigate how to respond to urban maintenance issues that arise as a result of increased climate variability through considering:
 - (i) mapping native grasses and ‘no mow’ areas, alongside education and training about grassland biodiversity and management;
 - (ii) continuing to provide resourcing to ensure greater resilience to the impacts of the changing climate;
 - (iii) improving mower hygiene to reduce weed spread; and
 - (iv) options for reducing the need to mow by revegetating areas in accordance with the ACT’s Living Infrastructure Plan.”.

MR BRADDOCK (Yerrabi) (4.11): I rise today as the Greens spokesperson for better suburbs. I would like to start by thanking city services staff for tackling what is basically an insurmountable task of keeping up with rampant grass growth this year. This includes the logistics, communication and organisational work that goes on behind the scenes, as well as those who are actually on the mowers.

I also want to thank people for contacting their local members and Fix My Street, highlighting safety concerns and alerting people about urgent areas. It is a wonderful testament to how engaged Canberrans are with their local government and how they are willing and able to reach out when they see problems in their local neighbourhood.

Like many others here, I am sure, my inbox has become filled with correspondence regarding the state of the grass in the ACT. I take comfort from the fact that, no matter how bad it gets for my inbox, Minister Steel’s is far worse. I would also like to thank Minister Steel and his staff for incorporating into the motion some of my concerns around biodiversity, climate resilience, secure jobs and cooling the city, as these issues relate to the mowing services across Canberra.

As the motion notes, we have had another extraordinary year, because of both the weather and interruptions due to the pandemic. The last registered La Nina event was a decade ago. For my eight-year-old daughters, this is the greenest and lushest they have ever seen the city.

This greenery, so welcome after the traumatic events of the Black Summer bushfires, has come with downsides. People have written to tell me about intersections and roundabouts that have become dangerous due to poor visibility. They have not been able to use local parks and public open spaces due to the length of the grass. This is not a beltway issue. I cross parks every day to walk my children to school and I have to walk through that grass.

I always get concerned when I hear calls for a surge capacity. This is talking about insecure jobs. The level of mowing required during a La Nina year is very different from what is required during a drought year. My interest is in ensuring that city

services has sufficient resources to perform high-quality urban maintenance that meets the goals for the biodiversity and cooling of our city, irrespective of the oncoming climate variability, and that the people doing those jobs have meaningful, secure employment with full access to leave and other entitlements.

This year, we need far more mowing, but in future years drought and water stress are far more likely. Projections show that future spring and winter rainfall will likely decrease, even as thunderstorms increase, along with the risk of summer fires. The rise in hot days and heatwaves will also be exacerbated in some parts of the city by the urban island heat effect.

This means we need a strong and skilled workforce that can take care of our public lands in a way that is responsive to the changing climate. We need landscapers and urban planners that can think about how to re-landscape public areas for climate resilience. We need horticulturists and skilled labour to undertake the planting, mowing, weeding and revegetation that will both reduce the urban heat island effect and enhance biodiversity, attract pollinators and increase amenity.

This might mean re-imagining some of the areas currently covered in fast-growing exotic grasses and weeds, with other local species, particularly where road safety is currently a concern. For example, I was buoyed to see the native species *Viola hederacea*, or the native violet, in the TCCS list of ground covers that are also suitable for bushfire-prone areas. This lovely and hardy little plant is a wonderful ground cover and a lawn substitute. Other native ground covers, like the creeping bulbulia, produce food for fruit-eating birds.

Rather than simply demanding more mowing every time a La Nina comes round, we may be able to have our cake and eat it too, if, with a little forethought, we reconsider vegetating areas with wildlife habitat by keeping in mind road safety and climate resilience.

Of course, grass will continue to be a staple of the Canberra landscape in parks, sportsgrounds, playgrounds and ovals. One important aspect of maintaining these areas is trying to contain the spread of weeds and invasive species. I was pleased to hear that city services redesigned a training package for mower operators to include education about directional mowing. This is a practice where you go from non-weed-infested areas to infested areas to limit weed spread. This also defines priority weed species that operators should look out for in urban open spaces. The training includes the need to identify and report new weed sites and outbreaks that mowers can assist with containing.

I look forward to hearing how the investigations into equipping mower operators with small handheld battery-operated blowers are going. This initiative will assist mower cleaning after mowing, when they have gone through an identified weed location, to limit the cross-contamination into other areas, and would be a welcome addition to improving mowing hygiene.

I also call for better mapping of native grasses, or no-mow areas, alongside the education and training about grassland biodiversity and management, to be incorporated into ongoing training and operational practices inside TCCS.

The other impact of mowing is on our creeks, rivers, ponds and lakes, so it is great to speak in support of TCCS being called on to continually update and modify the standard operating procedures to minimise grass clippings entering stormwater drains and waterways.

As Dr Fiona Dyer has pointed out, Canberra's urban streams do not have good water quality. Grass clippings are just one pollutant. Others include vehicle emissions, bird and animal droppings, leaves, rubbish and fertilisers. All of these can end up trapped in our ponds and lakes. This pollution caused the algal blooms on our lakes that were visible from space last summer. The best way to prevent these blooms is to prevent the nutrients from getting into the water bodies from our stormwater system. Grass clippings are a significant contributor, along with autumnal leaves.

However, prevention is not just a responsibility of the government. The landscape-wide implementation of water-sensitive urban design principles will also help, as will all Canberrans getting on board to help keep our stormwater clean.

The simple matter of mowing is also a matter of climate change adaptation, secure jobs, road safety, water quality and biodiversity. By taking a holistic view, we can get a better outcome not only for Canberrans but for the other living things that we share this beautiful space with.

MR MILLIGAN (Yerrabi) (4.19): I thank Ms Lawder for bringing this motion to the Assembly, and Mr Hanson for representing Ms Lawder and moving her motion.

I questioned the government a few months ago on their mowing schedule, in time for the spring season. They assured me that there is a three-week mowing schedule in place for peak growing seasons, although it appears that this is not the case, as the grass in Yerrabi continues to sprout, with no mowing or sign of maintenance in sight.

This overgrown grass has caused an uproar in my community, and I do not blame them, really. This government knew spring was coming; it happens at the same time every year. So I do not understand why the government could not get organised, get ahead and make sure that the grasses were under control.

Not only is overgrown grass a complete eyesore for our community it also poses a health and safety risk for all users. With the grasses above waist height at almost every intersection, how is one supposed to see oncoming traffic? How are motorists supposed to see children waiting to cross the road? The question is: who is responsible if an accident were to occur due to low visibility as a result of this government's neglect?

I also want to thank all of our local legends who are out there with their lawn mowers and whipper snippers, taking matters into their own hands, as they can see the danger posed by these overgrown intersections.

Mr Steel mentioned that, due to wet weather, they cannot get mowers out because it may cause damage to the ground and whatnot, but why can't you get a few blokes together with some whipper snippers and clean up some of these intersections? It

should not be left to angry residents to get out there with their lawnmowers and whipper snippers to do the job that this government cannot do. With the increase in rates that Yerrabi residents pay—in fact, all residents of the ACT—it is expected that there will be appropriate community services to match.

With the Canberra pollen count staying stagnant at “extreme”, let us visit the health implications that the overgrown grass has for our residents. Having just come out of lockdown, Canberrans were excited to finally get out and about again—out in the community and enjoying the weather. Hayfever symptoms are much like those of COVID—runny nose, sneezing, coughing and breathing difficulties. These are all symptoms for which people are told to immediately get a COVID test. We now have community members not only potentially getting unnecessary COVID tests, but also still not wanting to leave their homes due to the pollen count. Those who suffer from asthma, and who already have breathing difficulties, now have their symptoms made worse by the extreme pollen count.

Ms Lawder’s motion calls on the ACT Labor government to get back to the basics and actually care about the condition of our streets again. They had the whole winter and lockdown period to prepare for this spring season by employing more staff, conducting maintenance of their mowers and pre-empting the wet weather. It has been weeks, yet nothing has really changed for the residents of Yerrabi. After being in government for 20 years, you would think they would have the basics right by now; obviously not.

MR HANSON (Murrumbidgee) (4.23): I will speak to the amendment and close the debate. I must say that Mr Steel nearly had me there. I heard his impassioned speech, and I thought: “Maybe, with all those letters to the media, all those people are wrong. Maybe Mr Steel is right, and everything is hunky-dory. Maybe all those letters are wrong.” Are all of those people that approached us at our mobile offices—mine, Mr Deputy Speaker’s, Mr Milligan’s and Mr Cain’s—wrong as well? Is Mr Steel right? If you listened to Mr Steel, you would think that every grassed area in Canberra looks like a bowling green—they are just pristine!

All of the community councils must be getting it wrong, too, Mr Deputy Speaker, if you listened to Mr Steel. All of the people that raised their concerns at community council meetings, all of the people that have contacted my office, your office and Mr Milligan’s office, are wrong; it all looks like a bowling green.

He nearly had me. I thought, “No, he must be right.” Then Mr Braddock stood up and, in a spectacular own goal, made the point—and I will paraphrase him, “My inbox is full of concerns about mowing.” He said that; then he doubled down on that. He said, “I’m sure Mr Steel’s inbox is even more full of concerns about mowing.” I looked over at Mr Steel and he looked over at me. You could see his head sink because his case had just been blown out of the water by Mr Braddock.

Mr Steel was trying to say, “Everything’s fine. We’ve got this in hand. It’s all sweet. It all looks like a lovely bowling green out there.” Mr Braddock came barging in and said, “No, my inbox is full of problems. I’m sure Mr Steel’s inbox is full of problems.” Thanks, Mr Braddock! I appreciate that you steered me back to the right

cause here, in that people in our community probably have something to be concerned about when it comes to mowing in the suburbs.

Apart from a little bit of light-hearted banter here, it is a very serious issue, as Mr Milligan pointed out, when it comes to people suffering from hay fever, snakes not being visible in the grass, visibility on our roads and, importantly, the ability to use our recreational space and be proud of our suburbs.

We will not be supporting the amendment. It is very important that, as the situation varies, we do surge when required. Being militantly opposed to any people working in other than full-time jobs, when you have something like mowing, which is seasonal, is a bit like saying that fruit picking or any other job must always be done by full-time employees.

It is a good intent to have as many full-time jobs as possible, but there are circumstances where casualised, part-time, seasonal employment is absolutely the right way to go. The Greens' position seems to be that, because they are so militantly opposed to anybody having a casual, part-time or seasonal job, they will let the grass grow because they do not want to have anyone that is other than a full-time mower of the grass. That is crazy. It probably explains a lot. If that is the mindset that we see from those opposite, it explains why we have such a problem not just with mowing but with so many areas of basic government services.

Mr Steel's amendment waters down what Ms Lawder has put before us. It takes away the very important elements of providing more resources, and waters down the call to investigate the program so that residents are not concerned about overgrown grass in the neighbourhood each year.

We fundamentally believe that residents are concerned, and they want to know how it can be improved. This government seems not to support that. That is disappointing. We will not be supporting the amendment. I commend Ms Lawder's motion to this Assembly.

Question put:

That the amendment be agreed to.

The Assembly voted—

Ayes 14

Noes 7

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

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Amendment agreed to.

Original question, as amended, resolved in the affirmative.

Appropriation Bill 2021-2022

[Cognate bill:

Appropriation (Office of the Legislative Assembly) Bill 2021-2022

Cognate papers:

Standing Committee Reports on Appropriation Bill 2021-2022 and
Appropriation (Office of the Legislative Assembly) Bill 2021-2022]

Detail stage

Schedule 1—Appropriations—Proposed expenditure.

Major Projects Canberra—Part 1.11.

Debate resumed.

MR DEPUTY SPEAKER: I note that there is some confusion over whether we are debating Major Projects Canberra here or Housing ACT.

Standing orders—suspension

Motion (by **Mr Rattenbury**) agreed to, with the concurrence of an absolute majority:

That so much of the standing orders be suspended as would allow Part 1.12—
Housing ACT to be debated before Part 1.11—Major Projects Canberra.

Detail stage

Schedule 1—Appropriations—Proposed expenditure.

Debate resumed.

Housing ACT—Part 1.12.

MS VASSAROTTI (Kurrajong—Minister for the Environment, Minister for Heritage, Minister for Homelessness and Housing Services and Minister for Sustainable Building and Construction) (4.36): It is with great pleasure that I talk to some of the budget expenditure with regard to Housing ACT. The 2021-22 ACT budget is a landmark budget in relation to housing and homelessness. It is a landmark budget because it is the first where the ACT wellbeing framework principles are embedded in budget decision-making. It is a landmark budget because it further increases the ACT government's investment in public housing.

Recognising the vital role of public housing in our community, the ACT contributes the largest per capita investment in public housing in Australia and provides the most

public housing per 1,000 people of any Australian state or territory, at 26 per 1,000 people. This is more than double the national average of 12. It is a landmark budget because it invests \$8.6 million towards expanding the capacity of specialist homelessness services. This is a 12.7 per cent increase in funding across specialist homelessness sector services and comes during a time when the pandemic has exacerbated the risk of homelessness for those who are most vulnerable. This builds on the funding of \$1.948 million that was announced in the 2020-21 budget for the continuation of specialist homelessness programs that were established in response to COVID-19.

This budget illustrates the government's commitment to addressing homelessness in the ACT. In addition to the delivery of the Growing and Renewing Public Housing program, the government is committed to ensuring that existing public housing properties are safe, secure and well maintained to support tenant wellbeing. The securing high-quality public housing initiative is founded on three of the 12 wellbeing domains as outlined in the ACT wellbeing framework. They are safety, living standards and housing. With approximately 11,500 public housing properties, Housing ACT is the ACT's largest landlord, and it works on the basis of personal wellbeing. It works with tenants to meet their responsibilities under the Residential Tenancies Act.

As a model social landlord, Housing ACT undertakes upgrades and incurs costs that many private landlords do not. This includes security upgrades required in cases of domestic and family violence, or property modifications required to support ageing in place or to ensure that tenants with a disability have full use of their homes. Over the 2020-21 financial year, Housing ACT spent approximately \$41.7 million on repairs and upgrades, delivering 52,000 work orders. In the 2021-22 budget, the ACT government has allocated \$80 million to public housing maintenance over the next three years. This funding will ensure that public housing tenants live in safe, secure and affordable homes, and supports the government's commitment to provide housing options for all Canberrans.

This budget also recognises that, from March 2020 to now, there has been an increase in people accessing homelessness services in the ACT, and with increasingly complex needs brought on by the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Housing ACT works in collaboration with community sector partners to deliver housing and support for those experiencing homelessness or at risk of being homeless in the ACT. Throughout the pandemic, the specialist homelessness sector has demonstrated its responsiveness in adapting its service delivery in a COVID-safe operating environment and continuing to provide services to those in need.

In 2020-21 the sector successfully implemented several new initiatives to support Canberrans experiencing, or at risk of experiencing, homelessness due to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. And thank goodness we had those services as we faced the latest outbreak, including the client support fund, Winter Lodge, and MacKillop House. These programs have continued to provide crisis accommodation, transitional housing, domestic violence counselling, education, support and advocacy services to Canberrans in need. The successful implementation of these initiatives demonstrates what can be achieved through strong collaboration between government and the sector

in applying the strategic partnership principles to design and deliver targeted, client focused and flexible support to meet emerging needs.

The government acknowledge health, housing and home as fundamental domains of personal wellbeing, and we are really delighted to be able to deliver them through this budget. That is why, over the next four years, we will be using the additional \$18 million that has been committed through the parliamentary and governing agreement to expand the capacity of the specialist homelessness services sector. We will continue to work with our partners to co-design and to address homelessness in the ACT.

I would also like to take this moment to thank the Housing ACT staff for working through this particularly difficult time. This work is difficult. They are often working with people in a distressed and highly traumatised state who are dealing with issues that have gone wrong. So I thank all staff for the work that they have done throughout any year but this year in particular.

MR PARTON (Brindabella) (4.42): I have to confess that the housing and homelessness portfolio is the most challenging that I have had in this place, but it has also been, along the way, the most rewarding. I would have to say that those working in the space—including the two ministers in this chamber, the executive group manager of Housing ACT, and all of the housing managers and staff in Housing ACT—have my utmost respect and admiration, because of their jobs and dealing with the challenges that they face. I know that on occasions I do not make their jobs easier, and I am sorry.

Mrs Jones: Not really.

MR PARTON: I am genuinely sorry. I am sorry for that. If I end up causing you grief along the way, it is genuinely in the search for solutions to problems. The difficult challenges in this area should not deter us from making efforts to provide safe living environments for those awarded a public housing tenancy. Other social housing services also need to be reasonable and effective.

In terms of effectiveness, I am guided by the purpose statement in budget statements G, which says:

... Housing ACT provides social housing that is appropriate, affordable and meets the needs and circumstances of low income and disadvantaged people.

Further on, the budget statements say that one of the new strategic and operational initiatives for 2021-22 includes “increasing public housing repairs and maintenance, including kitchen upgrades, domestic violence security works and disability modifications”. There are a number of other commendable initiatives, such as additional funding for ACT Shelter and for ATSI staff in the Community Services Directorate; additional funding for OneLink; the expansion of the Early Morning Centre services; the provision of a second Common Ground; and many other initiatives, including public housing renewal and growth.

All of these are extremely positive initiatives, and they enhance housing and homelessness services. We commend the spending in that area. But not all is wine and roses in this space, Mr Assistant Speaker. No doubt we are all painfully aware of areas where services could be better.

Our public housing population is not inconsiderable, with around 10,600 tenants and about 21,500 residents. Many of these people are in precarious circumstances of one form or another, and many have what is described as complex needs or have a range of vulnerabilities. I am not speculating here; at any one time, my staff are dealing with around 30 constituent cases. We always have about 30 on the go. Some of them are quite distressing cases—most of them are—because, by the time they get to us, people have exhausted other avenues. As opposed to some of the other portfolio spaces that we deal in, these people are facing problems that affect them every single minute of their day. I dread the thought of what ministers and other MLAs have on their plate in this space.

Going back to the issue of a safe living environment, there is a useful guide on what tenants can expect from their landlord or lessor. The lessors' and tenants' obligations are stipulated pretty clearly in the Commissioner for Social Housing's tenancy agreement. There are a few clauses in this document that are near and dear to my heart and my daily workload in relation to making sure that tenants have reasonable access to a safe living environment. I will quote clause 55(1) of the agreement. It says:

The lessor must maintain the premises in a reasonable state of repair having regard to their condition at the commencement of the tenancy agreement.

The maintenance contract with Programmed facility maintenance sets out a graded series of response times for repairs and maintenance, with a limit of four hours where there is an immediate risk to health, safety or security. For slightly less serious threats, a response is required by 6 pm the next day, with a five-day response where repairs are not urgent but the problem could develop into a health, safety or security risk. All other requirements need to be attended to within 20 calendar days.

These contractual requirements appear sensible and appropriate. They ensure that critical issues will be rectified pretty quickly. The problem is that my in-tray is continuously filled with stark examples of where the contractor is breaching or failing to fulfill its service performance obligations. I will not be the only one to have a string of emails about this. I know that Minister Vassarotti and Minister Berry also have emails.

Without naming the complainants, let me give this chamber some examples. "Garbage and other items are frequently dumped throughout the common areas and regularly stink out the building," says one tenant. "It has been reported to Housing by residents that the ceiling is bowed, with water constantly leaking and mould growing out of control." Another says, "Why do Programmed and Housing never fulfil their promises?" Another says, "There is a huge part of the ceiling in the dining room outside two of the bedrooms that has collapsed and it is like a waterfall when it rains." Another says, "It is disgustingly unclean and tenants do not feel safe." Another says,

“We have been placed into hotels since 1 July”—I cannot give you details on when this was written—“due to mould being found all up our walls all over our bedroom.” Another says, “Garbage and other items”—that is the same as the first one, but that is all right; you get the gist of it. I could go on, and I am sure other members receive similar representations.

These representations are bona fide and genuine pleas for help. I am often genuinely perplexed. When I say that I am genuinely perplexed, I know that I am the shadow minister and you expect shadow ministers to throw grenades over the trenches to the other mob and have a crack at them. But after a while it has nothing to do with politics; it is just on a human level. I am completely perplexed as to why I have to keep writing to ministers about such concerning, and often disgusting, circumstances.

You have to sit back and say, “Why is this being allowed to happen here?” We are a progressive city. We are the capital of one of the leading Western nations in the world. We have people who genuinely appear to care. Ms Vassarotti certainly appears to care. Ms Berry appears to care. What is the actual problem here? Do we have a budget problem? Do we have an administrative problem? Do we have a contract management problem, a job reporting problem, or some other disconnect? It is abundantly clear that we do have a problem.

Whatever the problem is, I hope that it can be fixed in this financial year. Maybe it will be. If there is a funding problem, I would suggest that the top priority for the additional \$80 million in this budget be dedicated to rescuing tenants from squalor. That is all I am going to say on housing at this stage.

MS ORR (Yerrabi) (4.50): I rise today to speak for Minister Berry, who is unable to be here. The 2021-22 ACT budget includes the single largest investment to both increase and improve affordable and public housing in Canberra in the history of self-government. The ACT already provides the most public housing per 1,000 people of any Australian state or territory, at 26 dwellings per 1,000 people, more than double the national average of 12.

Under the ACT Housing Strategy, the ACT government has established a 10-year program of public housing renewal, representing more than a \$1.2 billion investment. This includes the renewal of over 20 per cent of the ACT public housing portfolio stock. In May 2019 Minister Berry launched the Growing and Renewing Public Housing 2019-2024 program, to support the work of the ACT Housing Strategy and deliver its goal to strengthen social housing assistance by providing safe and affordable housing to support low income and disadvantaged Canberrans.

On 5 August 2020 the Chief Minister and Minister Berry announced the expansion of the program, providing economic stimulus through the allocation of funding for the purchase of land and the construction of 60 additional new public housing dwellings, including the expansion of the program by another year, to 30 June 2025. The program now targets 1,000 renewals and 260 additional dwellings by 2024-25. Two years on, the program has made considerable progress on its goals. With a substantial pipeline of works, Housing ACT has facilitated the completed construction of 126

new homes, the purchase of 89 land sites and the acquisition of 71 dwellings from the market.

Now in its third year, the Growing and Renewing Public Housing program is gaining momentum, with the allocation of \$18.5 million by the ACT government in the 2021-22 budget. This investment includes helping 156 households to relocate to allow for the sale or redevelopment of properties; demolishing 91 properties to allow for redevelopment on these sites; purchasing 22 land sites from the Suburban Land Agency; having 809 dwellings in the work in progress schedule at various stages of planning, design and construction, of which a further 116 dwellings will be delivered this financial year, with the remainder delivered prior to the program's completion in 2024-25; and purchasing an additional 69 dwellings from the market.

To support the maintenance of public housing, the ACT government has funded an \$80 million boost to maintenance over the next three years. This initiative builds on the additional investment of \$8.9 million to maintenance as economic stimulus in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Through this measure, the government will provide capital funding to increase public housing repairs and maintenance, including kitchen upgrades, domestic violence security works and disability modifications.

This maintenance funding injection reflects Housing ACT's role as an integrated social housing services provider, which extends beyond tenancy management services to provide support to achieve better social and economic outcomes for tenants and people experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness. The boost to the maintenance budget is so important because access to safe, secure housing is vital to the safety and wellbeing of tenants.

This budget also recognises that, throughout COVID-19, there has been an increase in people accessing homelessness services in the ACT. The government will continue the commitment of addressing homelessness in the ACT, including investing \$18 million over four years to expand the capacity of specialist homelessness services, which have provided additional funding to continue the COVID homelessness initiatives of Mackillop House, Winter Lodge and the client support fund; and will provide a 12.7 per cent increase in funding across the specialist homelessness sector, which will enable the sector to continue to provide crisis accommodation, transitional housing, domestic violence counselling, education, support and advocacy services to Canberrans in need.

These are important and vital funding increases for the sector. With Minister Vassarotti, the Minister for Homelessness and Housing Services, Minister Berry continues to work closely with the sector to ensure that these commitments will drive the best outcomes for providers, clients and everyone connected with the specialist homelessness services sector.

The ACT government is Australia's biggest advocate for and supporter of public housing. This year's budget demonstrates our enduring commitment to provide safe, secure and affordable homes to Canberrans who need them.

Proposed expenditure agreed to.

Major Projects Canberra—Part 1.11.

MR PARTON (Brindabella) (4.55): The Major Projects Canberra organisation is a pretty important one for all of us. It has responsibility for delivering some projects, and they are all quite major. In delivering some of the largest capital initiatives in Canberra's history, it is responsible for a whole range of project planning, purchasing and contract management functions on behalf of various agencies. So it does play a genuine role in shaping our future.

This organisation has a few big ones on its plate at the moment, including the Canberra Hospital expansion, the city to Woden light rail project and the Woden CIT. Of course, another issue that is lurking in the background—nonetheless a quite important one—is the rectification of combustible cladding problems in government-owned buildings and eligible private buildings.

I have covered much of what I wanted to say about Major Projects Canberra, because we rolled it into my address on the transport appropriation. But there are a few further points that I want to make, briefly. This agency's tasks on design for and construction of light rail stages 2A and 2B are near and dear to my day job very often and have far-reaching consequences for a good part of our entire community.

There are a few enduring principles that the government ought to observe in dealing with the light rail project and the community it was elected to serve. The textbooks used to say that we are entitled to some basic things in regard to public governance, and I want to reiterate them for those in the chamber.

With respect to transparency, we in the community are entitled to be kept well informed on this massive project, including schedule costs and impacts on the community. More specifically, we need a better idea of costs. Canberrans could be paying this project off for generations. We deserve a far better understanding of what it could actually cost, compared to what we know at the moment. We deserve to be told about how all of this will be paid for. Will the government take out more loans? Will it raise taxes? Will it defer other projects to get funding offsets? What is going to happen there?

The scoping contract for the light rail project suggests very significant uncertainty, including technical uncertainty over structural works. The impact of these uncertainties on completion timing could be substantial, with the potential for many years of disruptive works across a lengthy expanse of Canberra. The management of all of this will be of great interest to the community, including how long it will last for. I know that Mr Steel will suggest, "Those Liberals are against light rail."

Mr Steel: Do you support it?

MR PARTON: Again, this is a massive project, and Canberrans deserve to know exactly how it will be delivered. Of course we support light rail. It is there. Of course we support light rail. Again, there is this ridiculous belief that, if you are being critical of a data breach, somehow you are not supportive of the hospital. It is ridiculous.

To add to the complexities on light rail issues, there is the potential for major rectification works on our existing carriages. I would note that the New South Wales transport minister made the call in the last 24 hours to send two engineers to Birmingham to try and get a grasp of exactly how they will deal with their CAF Urbos 3 vehicles.

I appreciate that solutions to these issues are not straightforward and that much work is needed. My message to the government is: please share when you know what is happening, even if it involves broad approximations that need to be fine-tuned, because we are all going to pay for it.

The recent auditor's report on the economic benefits of light rail certainly eroded the public's confidence, with the anomalies and contradictory treatment of costs and benefits being of some particular concern. Perhaps a reasonable outcome from this budget would be the publication of a few things for us that would include something that addresses the issues raised by the Auditor-General. We need a revised case on the economic benefits and costs of light rail stage 2A. The capital and other project costs for light rail stage 2B need to be exposed, even if these are indicative. And we need some focused consideration of the affordability of stage 2B, taking into account the transport disruption and business impairment impacts.

On top of all of this, despite those opposite knocking back the suggestion in my motion on 7 October, I still reckon light rail stage 2 deserves the focus of a dedicated select committee, but I will leave that be.

Let us remember that we are dealing with the biggest infrastructure project in the history of our great city. A generation or more of Canberrans will be paying it off and we will have to suffer the traffic disruptions for some time. With all of these factors and risks at play, I think we owe Canberrans the best possible parliamentary scrutiny and the best possible standard of accountability. In my view, the government is not entitled to deny us that right.

MR STEEL (Murrumbidgee—Minister for Skills, Minister for Transport and City Services and Special Minister of State) (5.00): This year's budget sees us getting on with delivering the biggest infrastructure project in the city's history—light rail to Woden. Light rail to Woden is a central part of the government's \$5 billion pipeline of local major infrastructure projects that will underpin Canberra's economic recovery during the COVID-19 recovery. Light rail will support over 6,000 direct jobs for stage 2 construction and many other indirect jobs through broader sectors of our economy. Most importantly, it is happening right now, when the economy needs it most.

The benefits of light rail will not stop at construction. Building light rail will help to make Canberra a more connected, vibrant and sustainable city. Stage 2 to Woden will provide more convenient, reliable transport options for people on the south side, help to prevent future traffic congestion and cut transport emissions, for a cleaner environment. Linking Woden in the south through to the city and on to Gungahlin in the north will create a central transport spine that better connects some of our major town centres with residential and employment hubs.

We are progressing with a staged delivery of light rail to Woden so that we can get on with this project as quickly as possible. The first section, stage 2A, will run from Alinga Street, from the main station in Civic, to Commonwealth Park, just north of Lake Burley Griffin. Our existing network will be extended by 1.7 kilometres and will feature three new stops. An early estimation suggests that daily patronage of light rail between Alinga Street and Commonwealth Park will add an additional 2,500 to 3,000 passengers a day.

To support the delivery of light rail to Woden, we are raising London Circuit by six metres to deliver an at-grade intersection with Commonwealth Avenue. This will create a more pedestrian-friendly and cyclist-friendly environment and, importantly, it will make the southern end of our CBD a more vibrant place, with better connections through to the lake.

Construction is likely to begin in the first half of next year, following procurement, and we expect that it will take around two years to deliver, with stage 2A and trackwork then occurring. This project is a major investment in the urban realm of our city centre in its own right, providing better access for active travel.

It is extraordinary that, in the debate today, the Canberra Liberals have not confirmed their support for stage 2 of light rail. It is extraordinary because we have seen this flip-flopping happen before. Before the election, after previously threatening to tear up the contracts for the stage 1 project, they then said, very tentatively, that they would support it. Now, in a new term of government, we are finding that they cannot come into the chamber during a budget debate about expenditure on this major project—the largest infrastructure project in the city—and say that they support it. They cannot do it. They were asked, and they cannot say that they support stage 2 of light rail to Woden. I find that absolutely extraordinary. They have just shown that they do not care about the thousands of jobs and the many apprentices that will work on these projects.

Ms Lee, in her budget reply during the in-principle stage of this bill, talked about apprentices. She talked about support for skills. If she supported skills, she would support light rail, because we are ensuring, through these major projects—like the hospital, light rail stage 2 and the CIT project—that apprentices are employed on these projects. If you did not support these projects and they did not go ahead if you were in government, it would see hundreds of apprentice opportunities cut—hundreds. Mr Parton could not come in here today and say that he supported stage 2 of the project.

We on this side of the chamber are very excited about the delivery of this important project because of the support that it will give to the many apprentices and trainees that will be employed on it. It will support many thousands of workers on this project. Of course, we have work underway already on the utilities, relocations and preparation for the main works, and particularly, ahead of construction, to raise London Circuit. The evaluation of expressions of interest for a construction partner for London Circuit works is currently underway, and we expect that a shortlist of providers will be invited to participate in the request for tender process before Christmas.

The ACT government, through Major Projects Canberra, is working collaboratively with the National Capital Authority. The project reached an important milestone just after the budget was delivered in October, with the lodgement of works approval and environmental assessment for the National Capital Authority's consideration and public exhibition. These key documents are now on public display, and I encourage Canberrans to lodge questions, view the videos, maps and fact sheets on the NCA website and provide their feedback. Formal submissions can be made until 5 pm on 10 December.

As these works have been getting underway in the city centre to prepare for the delivery of light rail, we are also undertaking significant upgrades in Woden town centre through the delivery of a brand-new CIT campus and a new public transport interchange, including the future light rail stop.

This year's budget ensures that the Woden public transport interchange will be light-rail-ready, with funding to deliver the light rail stop at the heart of the new interchange. The Woden light rail stop will be designed in line with the design along stage 1 of the route and will be used for bus services until the completion of stage 2B—specifically, the rapid bus services. We expect the interchange to be ready towards the end of next year, in time for the old interchange to be demolished to make way for Canberra's brand-new, state-of-the-art CIT campus.

The CIT campus Woden project will bring state-of-the-art learning facilities, improved active travel links and more vibrant public spaces to Woden. This new precinct will be a place that welcomes students, commuters and Woden residents, whether to study, use public transport, access the local shops, including Westfield—as well as services co-located with the campus—or, of course, as a place to meet with others in the new public plazas and green spaces. It will revitalise the eastern side of Woden town centre while better connecting it through to popular green spaces in Eddison Park, Woden Town Park, Arabanoo Park and through to the town square.

The new CIT campus will be home to around 6,500 students, and approximately 10,000 commuters are expected to move through the new public transport interchange every day. The project includes a new pedestrian boulevard, which will connect the interchange through to the campus on a new shared zone, linking Bowes and Bradley streets with links through to the Woden town square and the mall. Our aim is to deliver a modern, vibrant and well-connected space. We are currently consulting with the community on features like active travel, way-finding, safety and what they would like to see included in a revitalised Woden town centre. This community input will feed directly into the next stage of design work, following the appointment of a construction partner in early 2022.

This budget continues our commitment to delivering major new infrastructure projects that shape the future of our city, whether it is making our city better connected through light rail, revitalising the Woden town centre with the new CIT campus and interchange, or the many other great initiatives that Major Projects Canberra has underway and in the pipeline. I look forward to speaking on CIT in a later part of the debate.

MS VASSAROTTI (Kurrajong—Minister for the Environment, Minister for Heritage, Minister for Homelessness and Housing Services and Minister for Sustainable Building and Construction) (5.09): I am really pleased today to speak on the combustible cladding rectification program that is part of this output.

The safety of our community is of the utmost importance and has guided our approach to the handling of potentially combustible cladding on buildings in Canberra. I am pleased that this budget delivers \$14.536 million to be provided through the budget over the next two years to continue the program of rectification works on ACT government buildings.

There are 23 ACT government-owned buildings that require cladding rectification. Work for 21 of those is being undertaken by Major Projects Canberra and is funded through this budget allocation. Work for two was undertaken by the Education Directorate. Of the 23 ACT government buildings, work on 11 buildings is now complete. Work on the final 10 buildings will commence in this financial year, and we are planning for this to be completed by September 2022. This will complete the program for ACT government buildings.

We are also delivering the Private Buildings Cladding Scheme. I am pleased that this budget delivers \$3.07 million over two years to establish and administer a rebate scheme to support eligible private building owners to test for potentially combustible cladding on their apartment buildings. This is the first phase of the Private Buildings Cladding Scheme that is being managed by Major Projects Canberra. It will be followed by a second phase of the scheme where concessional loans will be made available to eligible building owners. This budget funding will enable rebates of 50 per cent of the cost of testing and assessment services per building—up to \$20,000 excluding GST per building. The funding in the budget also includes necessary legal advice, communication and administrative costs to government.

ACT Fire and Rescue undertook an initial kerbside identification of apartment buildings three storeys or higher which may contain combustible cladding. They have identified around 90 buildings that appear to have cladding. We cannot be sure if they do have combustible cladding until they are tested, and this is the basis of our budget calculations. There may be more eligible projects that have not been identified by ACT Fire and Rescue kerbside processes, and some of the 90 buildings may not, in fact, contain combustible cladding.

I encourage all eligible owner corporations to consider participating in this voluntary scheme. The expected outcome is that each building accepted into the scheme will have a professional assessment of its combustible cladding; understand if there is a fire risk; and, if there is, understand what is required to remediate their building.

MS CLAY (Ginninderra) (5.12): This budget is a big one for Major Projects Canberra, with the government investing in an additional 26 full-time equivalent staff compared to last year's budget.

The pipeline for Major Projects in Canberra is ambitious. Stage 1 of light rail was delivered on time and under budget, and I am eager to see delivery of light rail stage 2

as soon as possible. Ensuring that this project stays on track will be incredibly important. Increased staffing for Major Projects will, hopefully, mean that we are delivering fully on our major infrastructure plan. The disruption task force is part of this project. It is a really important way to encourage behaviour change and mode shift for our south-side residents. I look forward to working closely with my ministerial colleagues and members in Murrumbidgee to get the best outcomes in that area.

Major Projects also incorporates Woden CIT and the bus interchange, light rail stage 2 to Woden, and the Canberra Hospital expansion. It is a good budget for Woden. I was really pleased to hear updates during estimates about some of the sustainable design elements, particularly at Woden CIT. I am keen to see all of our major projects reducing their scope 3 emissions, progressing our ISCA ratings and using sensible ideas like onsite organic composting.

There are a few elements in Woden CIT that we would like to see included. We are pleased that we are getting a youth foyer. During estimates I had a great conversation with officials about the anticipated inclusion of some other spaces—a gallery space and perhaps a performance space. It will be great if we can include those for the kids on campus and for the whole community in that area.

Light rail stage 2 and the Woden bus interchange will deliver on the government's strong commitment to developing good public transport infrastructure that will shape our city for decades to come. I am a strong advocate for these projects and for improving public transport across our city. My constituents in Ginninderra are eager for work to begin on light rail stage 3 to Belconnen. We know that we have a long wait and it will be many years before that work begins, but we are keen to see the pre-feasibility work that will extend light rail all the way out to Kippax. Getting community involvement early will help a smooth transition from developing stage 2 to stage 3.

I am delighted to see the increase in staffing and the dedication to a highly qualified public sector staff to help us deliver on this ambitious major projects agenda. We are happy to support this budget.

Proposed expenditure agreed to.

Canberra Institute of Technology—Part 1.13

MR MILLIGAN (Yerrabi) (5.15): In response to the appropriation for CIT, I firstly acknowledge the efforts of CIT—its teachers, staff and especially the students—who faced up to and managed a continuously challenging year over the past 12 months. It is a difficult time to be in education, changing from face-to-face to online learning in such a short period of time. These are nothing short of challenging circumstances.

The skills portfolio is an area where the government is failing to deliver on its promises in a timely manner. This includes management of the joint Woden CIT and bus interchange project; management of the federal JobTrainer scheme; and the provision of adequate apprenticeship places in the ACT.

Let me begin with the closure of the CIT Woden campus, first discussed in 2015, with courses gradually withdrawn from the campus until its forced closure in mid-2018. Woden CIT has had a presence in Woden for over 30 years, and to see its closure was disheartening for many.

The rebuild of Woden CIT was finally promised in 2019 after considerable public pressure from staff, students, the general public and the Woden Valley Community Council. But it will be quite some time before it returns to operation. The extension is a feature of this government's inability to complete projects on time and on budget. This year's budget and forward estimates see an extra \$40 million added, plus another year until completion. This year's forward estimates mean that students will not be able to attend the Woden campus until 2026, eight years after the last students were able to study in Woden. This has been a significant disruption for students, and for businesses in the Woden area, who are experiencing some economic challenges because of the lack of students passing through.

It would be great for both the community and the students if the government could provide a completion date and stick to it. It would also be good if the government could stick to the budget and not have to continually appropriate further funding because of its inability to deliver.

There is also a lack of ability to deliver additional new employment places even through the federal government's JobTrainer initiative, which provides funding on a fifty-fifty basis for additional enrolments. It is difficult to determine where these places have gone, other than the initial 500 allocated. Just 20 per cent of those were allocated to independent RTOs.

The lack of transparency in the budget makes it also difficult to determine if additional places were created, and if the money was allocated to CIT to fund places in existing courses. There are no outcome measures that can ensure that the money provided to CIT was for additional places above the existing. The CIT operation and cashflow statements appear to indicate that, though the money was received, there were no additional enrolments noted.

The intention of this funding from the federal government was the creation of additional enrolments across the vocational training and skills sector as part of its economic response to COVID-19. It would be good if this Labor-Greens government could provide certainty to the people of Canberra that this money went to those additional places. It would also be good for round 2 of this money to have a broader application, with more courses and open applications across all the training providers in the ACT. It should not be predominantly limited to CIT.

Finally, we come to the matter of apprenticeships. This Labor-Greens government recently signed an agreement with the commonwealth to recognise that Australia's vocational education and training system, the VET system, will play a critical role in supporting Australia's future growth and prosperity. This includes the economic recovery from the COVID-19 crisis. It is disappointing to not see this commitment reflected in the budget, with a minimal investment in apprenticeships across the board.

The ACT's overall investment in the VET sector is low and has been trending down significantly over the last 10 years. This is a worrying sign when nationally this is the sector we will be relying on to help us through the economic recovery. This is even more surprising considering this government's touting of its major projects promises. Unfortunately, this may be one indicator of all talk and very little action.

MR DAVIS (Brindabella) (5.21): The last two years have no doubt been extremely difficult for anybody completing a course in vocational education. However, despite the circumstances, CIT students have performed extraordinarily well over the last two years, with their on-again, off-again COVID lockdown.

Strategic indicator No 1 of the CIT subsection of the budget papers described the rates of employment after training with CIT as being 15 percentage points higher than the national average within TAFE and other government providers of vocational education, which is a huge credit to CIT. CIT graduates have also exceeded the national performance in other measures, such as rates of undertaking further study after training and rates of gaining employment where employment was previously not held by a student.

In addition to these fabulous statistics, CIT students have excelled in their subject and module pass rates, culminating in a 90 per cent employer satisfaction rate. These statistics reflect both the dedication of CIT to a high quality of training and the drive of students to study with an acute degree of enthusiasm and devotion. This enthusiasm will no doubt be reflected by students that will study in future at the new CIT campus in Woden, which I look forward to seeing develop as the term continues.

As you know, Madam Speaker, as enthusiastic as I am to see the development of the new CIT hub in Woden, as a member for Brindabella, first and foremost, I have asked many questions in this place, and will continue to work with the minister to ensure CIT services continue to be offered to the people of Tuggeranong in the long term at a location and time that are convenient to them.

In particular, I am interested in continuing to explore the conversation over the next 12 months about how we can encourage young people in high school and college to take on particularly physical trades. We just heard my colleagues make presentations regarding the expenditure proposed in Major Projects. We know that the government has a long-term \$5 billion pipeline for infrastructure. We know that, as recently as last week, the building and construction sector in particular continues to suffer from workforce shortages.

For a city that is historically known as being a white-collar public service town, it is incumbent upon us to put additional efforts into encouraging our young people into vocational education and trades. It is not just because that meets our strategic goals of building more homes for people that need them, building more schools for people that need them, and building our light rail and our roads; it is also because, as time goes on, a vocational trades certificate becomes one of the ways you can be most assured of a long-term, high-income career.

I can still remember having conversations with my old man when I was younger, having been born and raised in Canberra. His ambition for me, and for my brothers and sisters, was always to get one of those good public service jobs with that good public service super and that reliability and security.

Madam Speaker, it might interest you to know that I took my dad's advice and got a public service job. On reflection, he might have wished that he was a little bit more specific. My younger brother, in fact, is a proud graduate of CIT, holding a CIT trade certificate. The reason I tell this story, Madam Speaker, is that, historically, I know that my dad would have given me the advice to get a good public service job on the basis that you will get better pay and working conditions. But for all that is said about the pay and working conditions of politicians, pay cheque to pay cheque my brother rivals me, and his hands are much dirtier at the end of the day. And let me tell you, as the most narrowly elected member of this place, his job is much more secure.

On that basis, I would very much like to encourage Canberra's young people to engage with CIT over the next 12 to 18 months, particularly as we reflect on our employment and reflect on our role in the economy, and as we reflect on COVID. I know that many people in my community have taken the opportunity that COVID has presented over the last 12 months during lockdown to reflect on their jobs, on the way that they contribute to their community and to their society. I have been encouraged to know that at least a few of my constituents that I have spoken to as recently as last week at my electorate office have recently enrolled in aged-care qualifications at CIT, on the basis that conducting care-based responsibilities at home in an unpaid manner during the COVID lockdown inspired them to take the opportunity to monetise that work and find a long-term, sustainable job in that industry.

In short, upon reading all of the budget papers for this particular output class, while I am known to be critical on some occasions of things I do not like, there is very little to not like in the CIT proposal in this budget. I am excited to see that there are more courses being offered to more students.

The minister will know that I will not miss an opportunity to speak about the CIT without reaffirming the ACT Greens' commitment to the Australian Education Union at the last election—the only political party represented in this place to sign the pledge and commit to the union all of their election asks. The one thing where there is still a differentiation between our governing parties is on the importance of a CIT staff representative on the board. That is an issue on which I will continue to advocate over the coming year.

MR STEEL (Murrumbidgee—Minister for Skills, Minister for Transport and City Services and Special Minister of State) (5.27): I am very pleased to be able to speak briefly on the investment that our government is making—the record \$126.3 million investment that we are making in vocational education and training, and particularly through the Canberra Institute of Technology, through this year's budget.

We believe in opportunity through education, whether it is early childhood, school, TAFE or university. One of the ways we can ensure that all Canberrans have the

opportunity to reach their potential is by delivering affordable, accessible and high-quality vocational education and training.

That is why we are committed to keeping CIT in public hands. We have seen governments around the country of the Liberal stripe that have been cutting their TAFEs. That is not what we want to see in Canberra. We are committed to ensuring that at least 75 per cent of total VET funding is provided to CIT. We heard Mr Milligan suggest that funding that was provided to CIT through JobTrainer should be cut and privatised.

This year we will provide more than \$75 million in block funding directly to CIT through the budget. This significant investment is boosted by funding through our contestable Skilled Capital and user choice programs, as well as the recently expanded JobTrainer program.

The ACT government has increased investment in the budget in the Australian Apprenticeships (User Choice) Program that will see improved subsidies in the program to target apprenticeships in key skills areas that our economy needs. From July, the government increased subsidies under the user choice program for the qualifications with higher skills needs, in roof tiling and concreting, and increased subsidies for plumbing as well. We continue to invest in apprentices, whether they are at CIT or a private RTO, as part of the demand-driven user choice program.

CIT plays an integral role in supporting Australian apprentices and trainees, including school-based apprentices. It helps to upskill or reskill existing workers through short courses to keep their training relevant and delivers foundation learning to vulnerable Canberrans who need it, such as English language training for migrants and asylum seekers.

As negotiations with the commonwealth continue over a proposed new national skills agreement, the ACT government will be fighting every single step of the way to ensure that any deal we are offered by the Liberal-National government supports a strong public TAFE in the ACT, a strong CIT. We want to ensure that great training remains accessible and affordable for all Canberrans. We will not sign up to any agreement that delivers cuts to the CIT or our VET system.

The budget includes an additional \$16.75 million for an expanded, extended JobTrainer program, delivered in partnership with the Australian government. The ACT government is funding half of it; the Australian government is funding the other half of it. The first stage of the JobTrainer program has seen more than 2,000 free training places taken up by young Canberrans and those looking for work to upskill or reskill for the jobs that our economy needs the most.

CIT has played an integral role in delivering the first stage of JobTrainer over the last 12 months, with more than 1,400 places delivered across full qualifications, online courses and pre-employment boot camps. CIT will continue to support the delivery of JobTrainer 2, the second stage, over the next two years.

The other key priority for CIT, supported by investment in this year's budget, is their preparation for the transition to a brand-new Woden campus in 2025. Mr Milligan said we did not put a date on it. CIT are seizing this opportunity to modernise and create lasting, positive changes across the organisation for both staff and students.

Following the release of the CIT strategic compass earlier this year, the institute's direction over the next five years is clear. Transformation is underway through the development of their cloud campus model, ensuring learning is flexible and accessible for students. CIT are also continuing to invest in facilities across their other campuses.

This year's budget includes almost \$3 million for upgrades to infrastructure at the Bruce and Fyshwick sites. This includes improvements to the heating, cooling and ventilation systems to make learning more comfortable for students, and renewing learning spaces like the refrigeration workshop for apprentices undertaking training at the Fyshwick campus.

The investment in this year's budget and the work being undertaken by CIT will ensure that the institute remains agile and responsive to the needs of students and industry, and continues to be the vocational education and training provider of choice for Canberrans.

I want to congratulate CIT in particular on the award that they received at the Australian Training Awards just last week, in partnership with some of our fantastic innovative renewable energy companies. They are doing some incredible work in the renewable energy space that has now been recognised nation-wide, and we are looking forward to that continuing with the support of the ACT government.

Proposed expenditure agreed to.

City Renewal Authority—Part 1.14.

Debate (on motion by **Ms Stephen-Smith**) adjourned to the next sitting.

Adjournment

Motion (by **Ms Stephen-Smith**) proposed:

That the Assembly do now adjourn.

CFMEU ACT—women's representation

MS ORR (Yerrabi) (5.33): I rise this evening to speak to some comments made by Ms Lawder yesterday during the debate on the Community Services Directorate budget. Ms Lawder, in her comments, said that she finds it galling that the biggest representative body of construction workers in the ACT, the CFMEU, were given a grant to process gender equality in construction when they do not have any women on the board.

I would like to state for the record that the CFMEU ACT does not have a board. It has an executive of three members who are elected by the membership. And while it is true that there are currently no women on the executive of the CFMEU ACT, Ms Lawder fails to recognise the work that the union is doing to progress women's representation within the union, as well as women's rights and conditions at work. The CFMEU is a democratic organisation of construction workers. Its membership is reflective of the diversity of the construction industry, including in relation to gender balance. This gender balance in the industry is something that both members and the executive are focused on improving.

In order to ensure that women construction workers have a voice in the union, the ACT branch has established a women's committee made up of women who work in construction, which participates in a range of activities intended to support women working in male-dominated industries and occupations. The women's committee provides support to women members and participates in the decision-making bodies of the union, including its branch conferences.

The branch conference is a mechanism by which all rank-and-file members have the opportunity to direct the policy of the union. At the 2019 branch conference, the women's committee proposed, and the conference unanimously endorsed, a plan to develop a gender equity and active bystander training course specific to the construction industry. This proposal was the result of extensive discussion by the women's committee about their experience of working on construction sites, and in particular in non-trade occupations, where often there may only be one or two women out of a workforce of several hundred men.

Women on the committee expressed the view that it was not reasonable to expect women to change the culture of the construction industry all by themselves and that the most effective intervention in circumstances of gender-based harassment that any of them had experienced was when a male construction worker spoke up against it and performed the role of an active bystander. The CFMEU is working with a registered training organisation, guided by the women's committee, on the development of this course. The development of the training course is being coordinated through the position funded by the industry coordination project grant which Ms Lawder was referring to yesterday.

I also note that the branch has been working with members for several years to ensure that, through enterprise bargaining, enforceable clauses have been included to ensure that employers are supporting gender equity initiatives and supplying gender equity and active bystander training courses. This broad approach is consistent with the recommendations of the recent report by RMIT and women in construction exploring the barriers to, and supportive enablers of, wellbeing in the workplace.

Women on boards is one measure of the progress of gender equity in the construction industry and in other industries. However, it is not the only measure. A demonstrated and supported commitment to bringing the experience of women working on the ground into all decision-making processes is another. The work that CFMEU members and officials are undertaking through a range of initiatives—and supported

by the grant funding provided by the ACT government, which is being led by women working in construction on the ground and supported by their executive—will have a positive and lasting impact on women in the construction industry.

I recommend Ms Lawder do further investigation before she condemns the work and initiative being undertaken by grassroots members and their elected leadership of workers' organisations.

Legislation—religious discrimination

MR DAVIS (Brindabella) (5.37): While we have all been enjoying some important and civil debate on the issues that impact Canberrans, I unfortunately have to tell you that it has not been the same up on the hill today. I have been quite nervous and disappointed to see that the federal government is yet gain prosecuting its case for the Religious Discrimination Bill 2021—yet another sign that, unfortunately, this federal government holds the far right of Australian politics responsible for its election and is making sure that it makes good on its commitment.

I want to read from some comments from Equality Australia, who are key allies, particularly to the LGBTIQ+ community, and who have been steadfast in their opposition to the bill. According to Equality Australia, the Religious Discrimination Bill aims to protect people of faith and without faith from discrimination in certain areas of public life, such as employment, education and the provision of goods and services. For example, it will provide protection in certain circumstances for someone who is treated unfairly at work or turned away from a restaurant or shop because they have, or do not have, a religious belief, and will provide protection for someone who is unreasonably prevented from wearing religious dress as part of work or school uniforms.

But, importantly, the bill also takes away rights from people who are currently protected under anti-discrimination laws, like ours here in the ACT. Faith-based institutions will maintain special exemptions allowing them to discriminate against staff, students and people who rely on certain services. The Religious Discrimination Bill takes away existing anti-discrimination protections, including on the grounds of race, religion, sex, marital status, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity or intersex status. Employees, students and people accessing goods and services may not be protected under existing anti-discrimination laws where a person makes offensive, uninformed, insulting, demeaning or damaging statements based in or about religion.

For example, the proposed laws may protect a boss, colleague, teacher, doctor, taxi driver or other service provider who says to a colleague, student, customer or client, “Menstruating women are unclean,” “Homosexuality is a sin,” “Disability is caused by the devil,” “Every child should have a mother and a father who are married,” “God made only men and women,” “HIV is a punishment from God,” and “People who do not believe in Jesus cannot get into heaven.” Statements which are malicious, that harass, threaten, intimidate or vilify, or which encourage serious offences, will not be protected. But where the line will be drawn between statements made in good faith that are allowed, and those which are not, is unclear—purposely unclear. This is

because the purpose of this clause is to allow people to say, write and communicate things which could be discrimination today.

These provisions will also have a chilling effect on people calling out inappropriate comments made at work, school or in the provision of goods and services, because the provisions are complex and allow discrimination complaints to be defended in expensive federal courts. The bill allows other laws to be overridden by regulations. For example, it would allow conversion practice legislation to be proscribed, protecting statements of belief that may amount to LGBTQIA+ conversion practices under state and territory laws.

Qualifying bodies that confer the professional qualifications necessary to practise medicine, law and other jobs will be prevented from responding reasonably to members who make offensive, uninformed, insulting, demeaning or damaging statements based in or about religion outside work contexts. Statements which undermine public confidence in a person's ability to do the job professionally could be left unchallenged unless the body can establish that its requirement is essential to the profession, trade or occupation, or the statements are malicious, harassing, threatening, intimidating or vilifying or encourage serious events. This bill will leave professional bodies with little flexibility to consider whether statements made outside work contexts can nonetheless cause harm to colleagues or clients, or undermine public confidence in the profession.

I encourage all members and anybody in our community concerned about the Religious Discrimination Bill to jump onto the Equality Australia website—equalityaustralia.org.au—and click on Religious Discrimination Bill. The site not only provides some helpful resources but can also give you some strategic activist tools to campaign against it.

In my remaining 30 seconds, can I just say that the TV has been on in the background in my office today, observing federal parliament while we have been busy here working. It has been incredibly disappointing to see that the federal government has had an opportunity, finally, to legislate on a federal independent commission against corruption but has instead chosen to actively prosecute this Religious Discrimination Bill. We know that the federal parliament has the time to do one, but it has chosen to do the other, which makes this federal government's priorities crystal clear to Canberrans.

**Mr Kofi Owusu-Ansah—ARIA awards
Lanyon Homestead—Tripadvisor award**

MS CHEYNE (Ginninderra—Assistant Minister for Economic Development, Minister for the Arts, Minister for Business and Better Regulation, Minister for Human Rights and Minister for Multicultural Affairs) (5.42): I rise this afternoon to recognise the incredible achievements of Canberra musician Genesis Owusu. Kofi Owusu-Ansah is a Ghanaian-Australian creative powerhouse from Canberra, better known by his stage name Genesis Owusu. He was born in Ghana and moved to Australia at a young age with his family. He is the brother of another talented and

famous Canberran, Kojo Owusu-Ansah, otherwise known as rapper and producer Citizen Kay.

Last night, Kofi went to the 2021 ARIA Awards with the most nominations—in and of itself an incredible achievement—and then went on to take the most wins at the Australian music industry's night of nights. Genesis Owusu achieved a phenomenal result, winning four ARIA awards from six nominations. Kofi walked away with the 2021 ARIA awards for album of the year, best hip-hop release, best independent release and best cover art, for his ground-breaking debut album *Smiling With No Teeth*.

This win is just the next in a string of recent awards for the rising star, with him picking up the coveted Australian album of the year and Australian music video of the year at Triple J's J Awards last week. Today, he has announced plans to take this debut album on the road, touring throughout the US, the UK and Australia in 2022.

I am delighted to share that the ACT government was able to support Kofi with a HOMEFRONT grant in May 2020 to help him complete this debut album. As members are aware, HOMEFRONT was specifically developed to support artists in response to the devastating impact of COVID-19 on the sector, and it is incredible what artists have been able to achieve with this funding.

I have no doubt that we are all incredibly proud of these achievements and send our heartfelt congratulations to Kofi. We look forward to seeing what comes next for this Canberra star.

Madam Speaker, I also want to congratulate the staff at Lanyon Homestead, a much-loved treasure which has received global recognition after it was named a Tripadvisor travellers' choice award winner for 2021. The award celebrates the top 10 per cent of worldwide attractions that consistently deliver fantastic experiences to travellers through positive reviews and ratings over the past year. The restored 1850s homestead is also ranked the eighth best sight or landmark in Canberra on Tripadvisor.

It is a credit to the hardworking staff, some of whom I had the pleasure of meeting last week when I visited the homestead. The CEO of the Cultural Facilities Corporation, Harriet Elvin, said to me that when you go through the gates to Lanyon you can feel your blood pressure drop considerably. She is right. The gardens are expertly cared for; the homestead is beautifully maintained; the tours are fascinating and fun; and the gift shop has plenty of local goods. All this comes about not through accident but because of the talented team behind it. This achievement is worthy recognition of their efforts and the truly special place and environment that they help create.

Personal explanation

MR STEEL (Murrumbidgee—Minister for Skills, Minister for Transport and City Services and Special Minister of State) (5.46): Madam Speaker, I want to use the adjournment debate to make a clarification. In question time I was asked about the spreadsheet that was provided, with information through a procurement in relation to workers compensation. At the time, I was asked about some of the information

provided on the spreadsheet. I said at the time that it did not include jobs and roles. I want to make a clarification that it does include occupation as a field in the spreadsheet.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

The Assembly adjourned at 5.47 pm until Tuesday, 30 November 2021 at 10 am.

Answers to questions

Economy—unemployment (Question No 369)

Ms Castley asked the Minister for Business and Better Regulation, upon notice, on 6 August 2021 (*redirected to the Treasurer*):

- (1) Given that the ACT's unemployment rate surged in June to 4.9 percent up from 3.6 percent in May, how many Canberrans lost their jobs during this period.
- (2) Is it correct, as stated by ACT Treasury, that this represented a decline of 5,900 people, as reported in the The Canberra Times on 26 July.
- (3) Can the Minister provide, in relation to these newly unemployed Canberrans, (a) in what sectors were they employed, (b) did they work full-time, part-time or casual, (c) how old they were and (d) what was their salary.
- (4) What are the reasons for the ACT unemployment rate rising so sharply.
- (5) What are Treasury's predictions for unemployment in the ACT over the next six to 12 months, and beyond.
- (6) In what sectors are the main job losses.
- (7) In what sectors in the ACT are there job increases.

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

- (1) The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) has paused publication of labour force data in trend terms as a result of significant volatility in the data and changes in the labour market due to COVID-19. As a result, monthly outcomes should be viewed with caution.

According to the ABS's Labour Force Survey, the level of employment in the ACT fell by 5,900 people to 232,300 people in June 2021, from 238,200 people in May 2021. Since then, employment in the ACT rose by 1,400 people in July 2021 before falling by 7,900 people across August and September 2021 reflecting the impact of lockdown restrictions.

- (2) See answer (1).
- (3) The decline in ACT's employment by 5,900 people in June 2021 was driven by declines in both part-time employment (down by 4,000 people) and full time employment (down by 1,900 people).
 - (a) Data on sector of previous employment is unavailable.
 - (b) Data on status of previous employment is unavailable.
 - (c) Data on unemployment by age is unavailable at a state/territory level.
 - (d) Data on wages and salaries from previous employment is unavailable.
- (4) Following the increase to 4.9 per cent in June 2021, the unemployment rate in the ACT fell to 4.3 per cent in July 2021 and then to 3.5 per cent in August 2021 before

increasing again to 4.1 per cent in September 2021. The monthly volatility in the unemployment rate likely reflects sampling variability in the ABS Labour Force Survey and seasonal factors at the end of the financial year. This sampling variability is an issue of concern that has been raised with the Commonwealth.

- (5) In the 2021-22 Budget released on 6 October 2021, employment is forecast to grow by $\frac{1}{2}$ percent in 2021-22. The loss of employment in the September quarter 2021 is expected to be fully recovered by the June quarter 2022.
 - (6) Based on Single Touch Payroll data, which reports the number of jobs by industry, payroll jobs in the ACT fell across all industries over the month to 11 September 2021, with the *Transport, postal and warehousing*, *Arts and Recreation*, and *Accommodation and food services* industries experiencing the largest falls.
 - (7) See answer (6).
-

Mental health—services (Question No 435)

Ms Lee asked the Minister for Mental Health, upon notice, on 17 September 2021:

- (1) How many calls has the ACT Health COVID-19 Wellbeing Team received since 12 August 2021.
- (2) How many calls have been made to Canberra Health Services' Access Mental Health between (a) 12 August 2021 – present (specifying end of reporting period) and (b) the same period in (i) 2020 and (ii) 2019.
- (3) How many were referred to the Home Assessment and Acute Response Team in each period referred to in part (2).
- (4) How many mental health presentations have been made to Canberra emergency departments between (a) 12 August 2021 – present (specifying end of reporting period) and (b) the same period in (i) 2020 and (ii) 2019.
- (5) How many of the presentations, referred to in part (4), were seen within the clinically recommended timeframe (according to the Australasian Triage Scale).
- (6) What additional funding for mental health support has the ACT Government committed to since 12 August as a result of lockdown, specifically related to (a) business owners, (b) young people and (c) the general public.
- (7) In relation to the funding allocated to those categories referred to in part (6), can the Minister provide (a) what are the terms of the funding and (b) to who/which organisation was it provided.

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

- (1) The ACT Health COVID-19 Wellbeing Team has received 1,019 referrals for support since 12 August 2021. These referrals relate to providing psychosocial support and referral services to assist people in managing their mental health and wellbeing while undertaking quarantine and/or self-isolation due to COVID-19.

(2)

| Access - Triage Phone Data 12 August to 19 September | |
|---|--------------|
| Year | Total |
| 2019 | 4578 |
| 2020 | 5350 |
| 2021 | 4326 |

(3)

| Home Assessment and Acute Response Team Referrals 12 August to 19 September | |
|--|----------------------------|
| Year | Number of Referrals |
| 2019 | 264 |
| 2020 | 402 |
| 2021 | 370 |

(4)

| Mental Health Presentations to Canberra Hospital Emergency Department 1 August to 20 September | |
|---|--------------------------------|
| Year | Number of Presentations |
| 2019 | 686 |
| 2020 | 771 |
| 2021 | 519 |

(5)

| 1 August to 20 September 2019 | | |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| Triage Category | Presentations | % Seen on Time |
| 1 | 4 | 100% |
| 2 | 111 | 43% |
| 3 | 430 | 15% |
| 4 | 129 | 36% |
| 5 | 12 | 83% |
| Total | 686 | 25% |

| 1 August to 20 September 2020 | | |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| Triage Category | Presentations | % Seen on Time |
| 1 | 7 | 100% |
| 2 | 113 | 67% |
| 3 | 485 | 29% |
| 4 | 151 | 46% |
| 5 | 15 | 67% |
| Total | 771 | 39% |

| 1 August to 20 September 2021 | | |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| Triage Category | Presentations | % Seen on Time |
| 1 | 3 | 100% |
| 2 | 71 | 59% |

| | | |
|--------------|------------|------------|
| 3 | 251 | 33% |
| 4 | 167 | 37% |
| 5 | 27 | 63% |
| Total | 519 | 39% |

- (6) On 21 August 2021, the ACT Government committed \$260,000 to extend existing mental health supports delivered by community mental health organisations and sector partners during the lockdown period. This funding saw \$40,000 allocated to each of the following: Perinatal Wellbeing Centre, CatholicCare, Meridian, Carers ACT, Canberra Health Services for Homelessness Outreach, and for the Way Back Support Service delivered by Woden Community Services (WCS).

On 21 September 2021, the ACT Government announced a mental health and community health care support package of \$3.6 million as additional support for the ACT non-government community sector. In addition, on 21 September 2021, it was announced that the 2021-22 ACT Budget will include another \$10.3 million over four years to provide a more timely, supportive and accessible mental health system for young people and their families in the ACT, as well as funding to expand and improve alcohol and other drug services.

- a) As part of the mental health and community health care support packages in response to the pandemic and lockdown, business owners will be able to access services as part of:
- i. \$30,000 to Canberra Business Enterprise Centre for Mental Health First Aid delivered to ACT businesses;
 - ii. \$40,000 to CARE Financial Counselling to provide supports for people struggling financially during COVID-19 due to loss of work;
 - iii. \$50,000 to OzHelp for additional support for workplaces, including workers that have lost or reduced employment; and
 - iv. As part of the \$70,000 provided to Mental Illness Education ACT (MIEACT), MIEACT will provide increased supports for businesses and people in the community.
- b) The funding in these announcements that is exclusively or primarily focused on young people is:
- i. \$130,000 to CatholicCare and Marymead to support the ongoing provision of their mental health services for children and young people.
 - ii. \$80,000 to Gudan Gulwan and Yeddung Mura for increased targeted support for Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders;
 - iii. \$40,000 to Menslink to provide counselling and mentoring services to young boys and men in Canberra; and
 - iv. Part of the \$70,000 provided to MIEACT, will provide increased supports for schools and young people in response to COVID-19.

c) The rest of the additional mental health funding supports mental health services available across the community. This includes the following funding announced in August and September 2021:

- \$1,065,000 to the Police, Ambulance and Clinician Emergency Response (PACER) program;
- \$195,000 to the Canberra Health Service's Eating Disorders Clinic Hub;
- \$120,000 for Justice Health Services at the AMC, particularly targeting people experiencing high prevalence disorders such as anxiety and depression.
- \$80,000 for Winnunga to provide additional capacity for mental health services at the Alexander Maconochie Centre (AMC); and
- \$70,000 to Lifeline ACT for crisis support;
- \$80,000 to Perinatal Wellbeing to extend support to families who are expecting or are caring for a newborn;
- \$40,000 to Meridian to scale-up services to Canberrans in the LGBTIQ+ community;
- \$40,000 to Carers ACT to support people with disability and their carers;
- \$60,000 to Woden Community Services to support the Way Back and Transition to Recovery (TRec) programs;
- \$40,000 to Canberra Health Services for Homelessness Outreach
- \$40,000 to the Multicultural Hub Canberra for culturally appropriate mental health services;
- \$40,000 to Companion House for additional counselling and social support services, including torture and trauma services to asylum seekers and refugees in the ACT;
- \$20,000 to A Gender Agenda to targeted mental health supports for Trans, Intersex and Gender Diverse people;
- \$10,000 to Parentline for parent and carer support;
- \$5000 to Eating Disorders Families Australia (ACT);

(7) For the funding and services outlined in response to question 6:

a) The terms of funding will require the organisations to utilise the funding for the purposes specified and to report on the use of the finances and the activities undertaken. The contracts being developed aim to allocate the funding in a timely manner with streamlined reporting.

b) The organisations receiving funding are described in Part 6.

Health—public health officers (Question No 459)

Mrs Jones asked the Minister for Health, upon notice, on 17 September 2021:

How many persons were authorised officers under subsection 12A(1) of the Public Health Act 1997 on (a) 1 January 2020, (b) 1 February 2020, (c) 1 March 2020, (d) 1 April 2020, (e) 1 May 2020, (f) 1 June 2020, (g) 1 July 2020, (h) 1 August 2020, (i) 1 September 2020, (j) 1 October 2020, (k) 1 November 2020, (l) 1 December 2020, (m) 1 January 2021, (n) 1 February 2021, (o) 1 March 2021, (p) 1 April 2021, (q) 1 May 2021, (r) 1 June 2021, (s) 1 July 2021, (t) 1 August 2021 and (u) 1 September 2021.

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

Under subsection 12A(1) of the *Public Health Act 1997*, the following number of persons were authorised as Public Health Officers, as at:

| | |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| a) 1 January 2020, 162 persons | l) 1 December 2020, 332 persons |
| b) 1 February 2020, 162 persons | m) 1 January 2021, 332 persons |
| c) 1 March 2020, 162 persons | n) 1 February 2021, 332 persons |
| d) 1 April 2020, 180 persons | o) 1 March 2021, 332 persons |
| e) 1 May 2020, 180 persons | p) 1 April 2021, 323 persons |
| f) 1 June 2020, 310 persons | q) 1 May 2021, 323 persons |
| g) 1 July 2020, 310 persons | r) 1 June 2021, 323 persons |
| h) 1 August 2020, 313 persons | s) 1 July 2021, 375 persons |
| i) 1 September 2020, 316 persons | t) 1 August 2021, 375 persons |
| j) 1 October 2020, 330 persons | u) 1 September 2021, 401 persons |
| k) 1 November 2020, 330 persons | |

Please note: Public Health Officers are appointed by position number and some positions may be vacant at any given time.

Canberra Health Services—act of grace payments (Question No 461)

Mrs Jones asked the Minister for Mental Health, upon notice, on 17 September 2021:

- (1) In relation to the \$50,000 act of grace payment for “advocacy work at the Alexander Maconochie Centre” referred to in the Canberra Health Services 2019-20 Annual Report, what type of person or entity (individual, company, charity etc) provided the advocacy, and for whom did they advocate.
- (2) Why was it necessary to provide the \$50,000 as an act or grace payment rather than via a contractual arrangement or grant.

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

- (1) An individual who advocated for the provision of services and supports for detainees of the AMC.
 - (2) The \$50,000 was provided as an act of grace payment due to the special and exceptional circumstances of the advocacy work.
-

**Taxation—fringe benefits tax
(Question No 463)**

Mrs Jones asked the Minister for Health, upon notice, on 17 September 2021:

- (1) How many employees in the Health Directorate, on 31 March 2021, were entitled to receive Fringe Benefits Tax (FBT) exempt benefits under the public hospitals exemption in section 57A of the Fringe Benefits Tax Assessment Act 1986 (Cth) (FBT Assessment Act).
- (2) How many employees in the Health Directorate, on 31 March 2021, were receiving FBT exempt benefits under the public hospitals exemption in section 57A of the FBT Assessment Act.
- (3) How many employees in Canberra Health Services, on 31 March 2021, were entitled to receive FBT exempt benefits under the public hospitals exemption in section 57A of the FBT Assessment Act.
- (4) How many employees in Canberra Health Services, on 31 March 2021, were receiving FBT exempt benefits under the public hospitals exemption in section 57A of the FBT Assessment Act?

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

- 1) ACT Health employees are not entitled to exempt benefits under section 57A of the *Fringe Benefits Tax Assessment Act 1986* (Cth) (FBT Assessment Act).
- 2) Nil, per question 1, ACT Health employees are not entitled to or receiving exempt benefits under the public hospitals exemption in section 57A of the FBT Assessment Act.
- 3) As of 31 March 2021, all employees of Canberra Health Services are entitled to voluntary access to FBT exempt benefits under the public hospitals exemption in section 57A of the *FBT Assessment Act*.
- 4) For the 2020-2021 FBT reporting period (1 April 2020 – 31 March 2021), 5,497 employees of Canberra Health Services received exempt benefits under section 57A of the FBT Assessment Act.

**Canberra Health Services—staff wages
(Question No 464)**

Mrs Jones asked the Minister for Health, upon notice, on 17 September 2021:

- (1) Noting the numerous reports of systemic underpayment of junior doctors in Canberra Health Services, has the Government commenced a review or audit (however described) into the underpayment, or potential underpayment, of staff in Canberra Health Services and antecedent directorates or agencies; if not, why not.
- (2) If the Government has commenced a review or audit, (a) when was the review or audit commenced, (b) who conducted the review, (c) when was, or will, the review will be completed, (d) did, or will, the review result in a written report or reports.

- (3) Further to part (2), if the review or audit did result in a written report or reports, on what date or dates were each of those reports received by the Government.
- (4) Has the Government undertaken, or caused to be undertaken, a reconciliation of the time recorded as worked by staff in Canberra Health Services and antecedent directorates or agencies with attendance data from the Kronos system.
- (5) If the Government has undertaken, or caused to be undertaken, the reconciliation referred to in part (4), (a) who undertook the reconciliation, (b) was a report of the reconciliation created, (c) on what date was any report created and (d) to whom was any report provided.
- (6) Over what period, as far as the Government is aware, have staff in Canberra Health Services and antecedent directorates or agencies been underpaid.
- (7) What is the total amount, as far as the Government is aware, by which staff in Canberra Health Services and antecedent directorates or agencies have been underpaid.
- (8) Has the Government raised, recorded, or recognised a financial provision, contingency or similar in relation to the underpayment of staff in Canberra Health Services and antecedent directorates or agencies.
- (9) If the Government has raised, recorded, or recognised a financial provision, contingency or similar in relation to the underpayment of staff in Canberra Health Services or antecedent directorates or agencies, where in the Canberra Health Services 2019-20 financial statements does that provision or contingency appear and, if the amount is quantifiable, what amount has been raised, recognised or recognised.
- (10) Has the Government sought or received any legal/actuarial/accounting or similar advice about the underpayment of staff in Canberra Health Services and antecedent directorates or agencies, (a) from whom has any such advice been sought, (b) on what dates has any such advice been provided and (c) to whom has any such advice been provided.

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

(1) to (10)

This response is in addition to the Government Response on this matter provided by the Minister for Health on 23 April 2021.

In 2020, several pay issues were raised by some Junior Medical Officers (JMO) in relation to application of entitlements at Canberra Health Services (CHS). CHS took these issues seriously and worked with the Government Solicitors Office and Shared Services function to examine all issues raised. Investigation of this matter by Shared Services Payroll and CHS, in consultation with the JMOs, identified the issue related to public holiday pay and accrued days off (ADOs).

Public Holiday Pay (resolved)

It was identified that there was an issue with the interpretation of some clauses in the Enterprise Agreement in relation to payment after 10 hours and payment on a Public

Holiday. Interpretation was discussed with the relevant representatives and once agreed, Shared Services then developed an internal tool that will calculate JMO entitlements automatically. The tool provides more information on JMO payslips to make it easier for them to raise any issues in the future.

The automated system is in place and the relevant backpays have been made.

ADOs (pending finalisation)

It was identified that the accrual rate of ADOs for JMOs was incorrect; and should be 13 per year instead of the 12 currently configured in the payroll system, Chris21. Canberra Health Services has been progressing this in collaboration with the JMOs group to fix this outstanding issue concerning ADO accrual and continues working towards appropriate finalisation of the matter.

Other matters

CHS responds to any query raised by staff that their pay may be incorrect and notes no further issues being raised by JMOs concerning their pay outside of those issues referred to in this response and the Health Minister's Government Response of 23 April 2021. It is CHS practice to review any queries made by an employee or group of employees and take appropriate action as necessary based on the specific situation. Where there is any indication of an issue with interpretation of entitlements as opposed to a mistake being made, CHS consults and works with Shared Services to take appropriate action.

There has been no government review, audit or reconciliation commenced, with exception of shared services payroll staff conducting case-by-case reviews should a specific query be raised by an employee. It is also noted that CHS does not utilise the Kronos system.

Whilst acknowledging that underpayments and overpayments may occur from time to time, there is no consolidated record for those amounts and no financial provisioning has been allocated by CHS. Further, no legal, actuarial, or accounting advice has been sought by CHS on this matter.

Children and young people—out of home care (Question No 465)

Mrs Kikkert asked the Minister for Families and Community Services, upon notice, on 17 September 2021:

- (1) In relation to the children and young people out of home care resolution, passed by the Assembly on 11 May 2021, and statements made during the debate, when is the intended completion date by which the next iteration of A Step Up for Our Kids will be complete.
- (2) What impact has the public health emergency (including lockdowns) had on the design process of this new iteration.
- (3) How many young people turning 18 years old before 31 December 2020 were on the report prepared through the Children and Family Secretaries Group.
- (4) How many of these young people had identified gaps in supports.

- (5) What additional support did the ACT Government provide to the young people who were transitioning off orders during this period of the pandemic.
- (6) How many of these young people are currently in stable accommodation, and how many are studying and/or employed.
- (7) How many young people in care have turned 18 years old since 1 January 2021.
- (8) What specific steps have been taken to identify these young people, identify gaps in supports for them, and fill those gaps.
- (9) When is the current review of the Children and Young People Act expected to be completed, and when is it expected that proposed amendments will be tabled.
- (10) Since the motion was passed, have there been any changes to data collection involving young people in care who have turned 18; if so, what changes.

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

- (1) It was intended that the updated out of home care strategy would be completed by the end of 2021. Unfortunately, detailed consideration within Government has been delayed due to the recent COVID-19 outbreak. As a result, it is now likely that the updated strategy will be completed and released in the first quarter of 2022.
- (2) The Community Services Directorate has progressed the development of the next stage of *A Step Up for Our Kids* during the ACT Public Health Emergency, including lockdowns. Contingency options have been developed to ensure the continuity of services for children, young people and families post 30 June 2022.

The ACT's lockdown restrictions which commenced 12 August 2021 coincided with the last phase of the scheduled engagement activities to inform the design of the next Strategy. The ACT Government worked with community partners to ensure engagement activities continued. This has included using online discussion platforms and receiving written feedback to capture the experience of a diverse range of stakeholders.

The new stage has been informed by significant review and consultation on the benefits and challenges experienced in out of home care since implementation of the *A Step Up for Our Kids* Out of Home Care Strategy commenced in 2015. During the five years of implementation from 2015-2020, the Community Services Directorate heard from a diverse range of stakeholders on their reform experience. The experiences of people who have engaged in child protection and out of home care were central to the consultation process with additional targeted activities commencing in early 2021.

An overview of feedback and insights shared by stakeholders is captured in two Listening Reports. The *Stage One Listening Report* was publicly released on the *YourSay* web platform in August 2021. The *Stage Two Listening Report* has now been released.

- (3) In May 2020, Children and Families Secretaries and Community Services Ministers considered point in time data on the number of young people in care turning 18. This data was used to estimate the size of the cohort and assist in providing additional

supports to young people in care during the COVID-19 pandemic. This data is subject to change, including changes from future data cleansing. As at May 2020, the ACT reported five young people in care were turning 18 by 30 June 2020, and 19 young people in care were turning 18 between 1 July 2020 and 31 December 2020.

- (4) Young people who turned 18 years old before 31 December 2020 will have worked closely with their case manager, either through Child and Youth Protection Services or ACT Together, to develop a Transition Plan. Any identified gaps in supports would have been considered as part of this planning process which starts when a young person is 15 years old. They also would have been eligible to receive ACT Government supports offered as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic, which are detailed further below.
- (5) *A Step Up for Our Kids* Out of Home Care Strategy 2015-2020 established a commitment to extend the continuum of care subsidy payments for eligible care leavers up to the age of 21 years and access to after care services until a young person is 25 years old. The ACT developed targeted information for children and young people and carers, outlining the operation of out of home care services (including transitions from care) during the COVID-19 emergency.

The ACT Government recognised that young people in care who were turning 18 in 2020 and 2021 were likely to experience increased vulnerability as they work towards a transition to independence. In August 2020, the Government announced a \$1.7 million *Supporting Children, Young People and their Families Package* targeted at young carers, foster and kinship carers and young people. The package included:

- one-off payments of \$300 for each child and young person in foster and kinship care to support the wellbeing of young people and ease financial stress for carers whose employment or income have been affected during the COVID-19 pandemic
 - an extended carer subsidy for young people in out of home care who turn 18 to support living expenses, housing costs or connect them with training and employment
 - funding to support young carers to meet additional expenses, maintain wellbeing and support educational participation
 - one-off grant payments to non-government service providers to assist with direct service delivery, brokerage and support for young people and their families to respond to increased demand for services.
- (6) The ACT Government does not retain data on children and young people when they leave the out of home care system.
- (7) There were 13 young people in out of home care who turned 18 years old between 1 January to 31 August 2021.
- (8) Child and Youth Protection Services and ACT Together have worked together to identify and support young people as they transition from care during the COVID-19 pandemic. Young people transitioning from care will have worked with their case manager, to develop a Transition Plan to support their transition to adulthood. The Transition Plan would have included any additional provisions required to support the young person to transition from care during the pandemic period.
- (9) The ACT Government is committed to modernising the Children and Young People Act 2008 (CYP Act), and the 2021-22 Budget allocated funding to this work. The

Government is also committed to raising the minimum age of criminal responsibility, which will involve changes to the CYP Act. This work is likely to result in a series of amendments to the CYP Act through 2022 and 2023.

- (10) Community Services Directorate (CSD) is developing capability to collect more data for young people living in out of home care in the years before reaching 18 years-old, and for those who have turned 18 and agree to receive post-care support.

Children and young people—out of home care education (Question No 466)

Mrs Kikkert asked the Minister for Families and Community Services, upon notice, on 17 September 2021:

In relation to the children and young people out of home care education resolution passed by the Assembly on 3 June 2021, has anyone from the Community Services Directorate been able to meet (either in person or virtually) with Anglicare Victoria to review their TEACHaR program; if not, are there plans in place to do so and when.

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

The Community Services Directorate has contacted Anglicare Victoria to discuss the TEACHaR program being implemented in Victoria. I can confirm discussions were held on 7 October 2021.

Also, I can confirm that the Community Services Directorate has been in contact with the Education Directorate. The Education Directorate is aware of the Anglicare's TEACHaR Program being implemented in Victoria.

Health—COVID-19 vaccination rollout (Question No 468)

Mr Milligan asked the Minister for Health, upon notice, on 17 September 2021:

- (1) In relation to COVID-19 booster to be made available by the Federal government and people living with disabilities or in social housing complexes, what is the Minister's directorate doing now proactively to plan for and provide timely support and access to booster vaccinations when they become available.
- (2) Why was this support not made available previously, so these outbreaks in residential villages could have been avoided.
- (3) What proactive processes have been put into place in our social housing complexes to ensure that further exposure does not occur in these sites.

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

- (1) The ACT continues to focus its attention on ensuring members of the Canberra community are fully vaccinated against COVID-19. ACT Health Directorate is monitoring the advice of the Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation

(ATAGI). On 23 September, ATAGI advised that it continues to consider its position with regards to booster vaccines. We are actively working with Commonwealth and State and Territory Governments to plan for a booster program when it is appropriate.

- (2) There are ongoing challenges in reaching some members of the community which we continue to work through. ACT Health Directorate is working closely with key stakeholders to deliver its Equity to Access vaccination program which is designed to offer safe, efficient, and equitable access to COVID-19 vaccinations for all Canberran's. The program is planned specifically to address these challenges, delivering targeted engagement and communications, combined with flexible vaccine delivery programs, in-reach, mobile and in-home vaccination clinics, as well as vaccines offered at the Access and Sensory clinic.
- (3) The ACT Government is working closely with community partners to offer vaccination and testing within social housing complexes. In addition to the detailed planning work undertaken by ACT Health Directorate since the start of the pandemic, updated risk assessments have been conducted at large social housing sites across the ACT in response to the recent outbreak. ACT Health Directorate has established an additional quarantine and isolation accommodation facility to provide further accommodation for positive cases and contacts who are unable to safely quarantine or isolate in the broader community for a variety of reasons. The facility will provide individuals with access to clinical, social, community and cultural supports.

Development—Belconnen (Question No 471)

Mrs Kikkert asked the Minister for Planning and Land Management, upon notice, on 8 October 2021 (*redirected to the Minister for Housing and Suburban Development*):

- (1) In relation to the tender process for Display SL210517 (Belconnen Lakeshore – Stage One), how many sale and development proposals were received for the (a) Circus Sites Precinct and (b) Former Water Police Site, before tenders closed on 7 October 2021.
- (2) By which date or dates will a successful tenderer be awarded for each of these sites referred to in part (1).

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

- (1) The Request for Proposal released to the market includes both the Circus Sites and the Former Water Police site as one package. Separate submissions for individual sites were not sought.

Until the evaluation process is concluded it is not possible to disclose how many submissions were received.

- (2) Belconnen Lakeshore land release is a two-stage design and place led process, starting with the Request for Proposal (RFP) to be followed by a Request for Tender (RFT). On conclusion of the RFT evaluation a Preferred Tenderer will be announced for this land sale package. This is anticipated to occur mid to late 2022.
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**RSPCA—relocation
(Question No 475)**

Ms Lee asked the Minister for Planning and Land Management, upon notice, on 8 October 2021 (*redirected to the Minister for Transport and City Services*):

- (1) Were other sites in the ACT considered as part of the proposed relocation of the RSPCA to Pialligo (Duntroon Horse Paddocks); if so, can the Minister provide a list of these other proposed sites and the reasons for not pursuing these alternate sites; if not, why not.
- (2) Is the Government aware that it proposes to build the facility in a prescribed airspace of the Canberra Airport and a designated emergency landing area for light aircraft.
- (3) Has consultation been conducted with the Canberra Airport Group, Civil Aviation Safety Authority and Aeroclubs using the runway for schooling exercises; if so, can the Minister provide any advice received; if not, why not.
- (4) Is the Government aware that the proposed site is only 300 metres from the Duntroon Military Hospital.
- (5) Has the Australian Defence Force Academy (ADFA) and the Royal Military College (RMC) been consulted in relation to the proposed relocation of the RSPCA to Pialligo (Duntroon Horse Paddocks); if so, can the Minister provide any advice received; if not, why not?
- (6) Has the Government received advice about the history of emergency landings from light aircraft planes travelling to and from Canberra Airport occurring within the Duntroon Horse Paddocks and/or the impact the proposed relocation may have on emergency landings; if so, can the Minister provide the advice received.
- (7) What is the Government doing to protect valuable grazing land and Canberra's unique equestrian community that makes up a large part of the sport and recreational community, and supports local businesses (eg, stockfeed stores, vets, equine therapists, riding instructors, etc).
- (8) Is the RSPCA aware of the noise levels at Duntroon, which includes firework-style noise from ADFA ceremonial parades and practices, the Majura training area (Army), the Canberra pistol club, light aircraft plane throttle from take-off/landing and frequent helicopter flight pass, and the impact this might have on both staff and animals.
- (9) How is the Government planning to protect our horses and our safety from the increased public presence if the proposal goes ahead.
- (10) Are there plans to widen roads and create a safety entry/exit to Addison Road and the proposed facility while maintaining easy access to the paddocks, sporting fields and for fire management; if so, what is the status of those plans.
- (11) Is the Government aware that Duntroon has an active Landcare Group and received a Landcare award in 1999.

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

- (1) Two sites have been identified as potentially suitable for accommodating the RSPCA site, these sites are located at Symonston and Pialligo. A decision on the preferred site will be dependent on future consideration by Government.
 - (2) The ACT Government has not yet made a decision on where to build the future RSPCA facility. However, the potential site at Pialligo would not protrude into prescribed airspace of the Canberra Airport.
 - (3) Consultation with Canberra Airport has been undertaken and is ongoing. All airport related activities are being managed with Canberra Airport directly.
 - (4) Yes.
 - (5) The Department of Defence has been consulted about the project and during this process have advised that they have no operational concerns with RSPCA potentially being located at the Pialligo site.
 - (6) The Government has not received specific advice about the history of emergency landings from light aircraft planes travelling to and from Canberra Airport occurring within the Duntroon Horse Paddocks. However, Canberra Airport has provided advice about the impact of the potential relocation. Based on their advice, National Airport Safety Framework (NASF) Guidelines would apply to the facility if this site were chosen.
 - (7) As the city of Canberra grows the use of land may change from time to time for the benefit of the broader community. This may impact on some previous or current land uses. The ACT Government continues to put significant effort into measures that either mitigate or reduce the impact of development on land that is currently being used for other purposes. As an example of this effort, work has been undertaken at Pialligo (former Abattoir Holding Paddocks) to improve the pasture and infrastructure to make this suitable for horse equestrian use. This project is expected to have areas available in 2024 that may be suitable for horse agistment and other equestrian activities. As the majority of horses housed in the ACT are in private agistment complexes, future investigations will be undertaken to ensure there is capacity within the private sector to support the agistment needs of Canberra's equestrian community so they can continue to pursue and enjoy their equestrian endeavours.
 - (8) Yes. A noise impact assessment has been undertaken and identified a low to medium risk which is considered manageable. Further noise studies will be undertaken as required.
 - (9) The potential location of the facility at this site considered the need to have minimal impact on horse paddock users.
 - (10) Feasibility assessments of any necessary road upgrades to improve safety will be considered as part of government's deliberations on the preferred site location.
 - (11) Landcare groups play an important role in the protection of the environment within the ACT. The Landcare Group located at Duntroon should be commended on their efforts in that area and congratulated on their previous awards.
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**Municipal Services—footpath obstruction
(Question No 476)**

Mr Milligan asked the Minister for Transport and City Services, upon notice, on 8 October 2021:

- (1) Given that, according to the *Public Unleased Land Act 2013*, people found obstructing footpaths or nature strips can be fined, can the Minister advise, from January 2020 to July 2021, how many complaints were lodged about obstructed (a) footpaths and (b) nature strips.
- (2) What were the three most common complaints about obstructions.
- (3) How many of the complaints, referred to in part (1), (a) were reviewed in person by a relevant authority and (b) resulted in fines being issued because of non-compliance.

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

- (1) 3,981 complaints were lodged about obstructed footpaths and nature strips, however, a breakdown of the proportion is unavailable due to data system limitations.
- (2) There are many ways in which nature strips or footpaths can be obstructed or obscured. These can include overhanging foliage, unauthorised movable signs, or the placing of an unauthorised objects such as construction materials and abandoned motor vehicles. The three most common complaints received in relation to obstructions were: unauthorised use of public land (including nature strips); overhanging foliage; and unauthorised movable signs.
- (3) (a) All 3,981 complaints were attended to by an authorised officer delegated under the *Public Unleased Land Act 2013*.

(b) 407 Infringement Notices and 1,079 Warning Notices were issued.

**Municipal services—street sweeping
(Question No 480)**

Ms Lawder asked the Minister for Transport and City Services, upon notice, on 8 October 2021:

- (1) Given that a street sweeping optimisation study was undertaken by the Balmoral Group (AWA Water Matters 2019) on behalf of Transport Canberra and City Services in 2018, is another study scheduled to take place; if not, when will one take place.
- (2) If a study has occurred since 2018, would the Minister be able to provide a copy of the report.

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

- (1) A further study, "Optimised Street Sweeping Program for Canberra" was conducted in May 2021.

(2) A copy of the report is provided at Attachment A.

(A copy of the attachment is available at the Chamber Support Office).

Municipal services—playgrounds (Question No 486)

Mrs Kikkert asked the Minister for Transport and City Services, upon notice, on 8 October 2021:

- (1) In relation to the 2020 election promise to fund the upgrade of a playground in Aranda, is there funding for this in the budget; if so, under what line item is this being funded.
- (2) When will the design and construction phase for these upgrades begin.
- (3) When will the upgrades be completed.
- (4) Will there be a public consultation phase.
- (5) Are there any specific plans for the upgrades already; if so, what are those upgrades; if not, why has the Government not funded this commitment.
- (6) What is the location of the intended playground for upgrade.

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

- (1) Yes, the funding is allocated as part of the 'Better community infrastructure - Better play spaces and dog parks' item in the 2021-22 Budget.
 - (2) The upgrade is part of a package of works which will be phased over four years. The construction will commence upon completion of design.
 - (3) A timeframe for the duration of construction will be clear following the competition of design.
 - (4) Yes. Public consultation will occur as part of the design development process.
 - (5) Refer to answer (1).
 - (6) Consideration will be made based on an accessible central location, size, zoning, access and existing infrastructure.
-

Roads—cycle lanes (Question No 490)

Mrs Kikkert asked the Minister for Transport and City Services, upon notice, on 8 October 2021:

- (1) What is the estimated completion date of the extension of the Belconnen Bikeway along Haydon Drive.

- (2) How much was spent building the retaining wall along College Street near the University of Canberra, including the excavation work.

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

- (1) The estimated completion date of the extension of the Belconnen Bikeway along Haydon Drive is mid-2022.
- (2) As part of the Belconnen Bikeway Stage 1 project, approximately \$290,000 (excl GST) was spent to construct the mortared stone retaining walls along the northern side of College Street near the University of Canberra.

Sport—Hawker District Playing Fields upgrades (Question No 492)

Mrs Kikkert asked the Minister for Sport and Recreation, upon notice, on 8 October 2021:

- (1) In relation to the 2020 election promise to fund the upgrade of lighting, facilities and parking at the Hawker District Playing Fields, is there funding for this in the budget; if so, under what line item is this being funded.
- (2) When will the design and construction phase for these upgrades begin.
- (3) When will the upgrades be completed.
- (4) Will there be a public consultation phase.
- (5) Are there any specific plans for the upgrades already; if so, what are those upgrades; if not, why has the Government not funded this commitment.

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

Upgrades to the Hawker District Playing Fields will be included in future budget processes in line with the election commitment with works to commence in the financial year the project is funded. Public consultation and activities will occur as part of this process.

Sport—Holt District Playing Fields upgrades (Question No 493)

Mrs Kikkert asked the Minister for Sport and Recreation, upon notice, on 8 October 2021:

- (1) In relation to the 2020 election promise to fund upgraded amenities at Holt District Playing Fields, is there funding for this in this year's budget; if so, under what line item is this being funded.
- (2) When will the design and construction phase for these upgrades begin.

- (3) When will the upgrades be completed.
- (4) Will there be a public consultation phase.
- (5) Are there any specific plans for the upgrades already; if so, what are those upgrades; if not, why has the Government not funded this commitment.

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

Upgrades to the Holt District Playing Fields will be included in future budget processes in line with the election commitment with works to commence in the financial year the project is funded. Public consultation and activities will occur as part of this process.

Sport—Melba District Playing Fields upgrades (Question No 494)

Mrs Kikkert asked the Minister for Transport and City Services, upon notice, on 8 October 2021 (*redirected to the Minister for Sport and Recreation*):

- (1) In relation to 2021-2022 priorities for the Transport Canberra and City Services, how much has been funded in the Budget for the facility improvements to the cricket infrastructure at Melba playing fields.
- (2) Will there be a period of public consultation before the improvements commence.
- (3) Will there be upgrades to the adjacent ovals and toilets blocks.

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

- (1) \$300,000 in total has been provided to deliver cricket facilities at Melba and Taylor ovals.
 - (2) Yes.
 - (3) No.
-

Domestic and family violence—safer families levy (Question No 495)

Mrs Kikkert asked the Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence, upon notice, on 8 October 2021:

In relation to the Safer Families Levy and recommendations from the *We Don't Shoot Our Wounded* Report (2009), the report makes 12 recommendations for the ACT Government to implement and given in late 2020, the Reference Group for the Domestic Violence Prevention Council identified four key recommendations as priority actions, can the Minister provide the current status of each of the priority recommendations, as well as the current status and plans in relation to the remaining eight recommendations.

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

The Reference Group identified the following key recommendations as priority actions from the *We Don't Shoot Our Wounded* Report:

- establish a specific service for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women where a range of legal, advocacy, practical and healing activities can be delivered;
- develop a coordinated approach to supporting children and young people affected by family violence that recognises the importance of education and of family; and which offers practical, sustainable and non-punitive support to the parent who is also a victim of violence;
- provide advocacy, assistance and support to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women from the time they report to police through to prosecution and court process and linked to victim support measures aimed at securing their personal, financial and social stability and security; and
- identify and implement a range of healing, supportive, advocacy and other interventions focused on addressing the trauma and harm from family violence.

The ACT Government continues to work with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Domestic Violence Prevention Council Reference Group (the Reference Group) to co-design new Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander domestic and family violence programs and services to respond to these priority recommendations. To support this work, the ACT Government has allocated \$790,000 over four years in the 2021-22 budget. An additional \$198,000 has also been rolled over from 2020-21 to further boost delivery against the recommendations.

The initial work requested by the Reference Group has centred around possible models of service suitable for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women experiencing domestic and family violence, which goes to a range of the recommendations. While the COVID-19 emergency has affected the progress of this work it remains a priority of the ACT Government.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders—legal services (Question No 499)

Mrs Kikkert asked the Attorney-General, upon notice, on 8 October 2021:

- (1) In relation to government funding for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander interview friends as mandated by section 24A of the *Crimes (Forensic Procedures) Act*, when exactly did the Justice and Community Safety Directorate stop providing funding to the Aboriginal Legal Service to operate an interview friends program for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
- (2) What were the reasons behind this decision.
- (3) Since this decision was made, has the ACT Government provided funding to any other entity to operate an interview friends program for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people since this decision was made; if so, which entity and how much in funding.

- (4) Is funding still occurring; if not, which entity is now providing the interview friends program previous offered by Aboriginal Legal Service.

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

Section 24A of the *Crimes (Forensic Procedures) Act 2000* (ACT) commenced in October 2015.

In summary, section 24A provides that if a suspect is an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person then an interview friend is required when the suspect is being asked to consent to a forensic procedure, unless the suspect has expressly and voluntarily waived their right to an interview friend being present. An interview friend can be:

- a) a parent or guardian or other person chosen by, or acceptable to, the person; or
- b) a lawyer of the person; or
- c) if the person is an incapable person—a close associate of the person; or
- d) if no one mentioned in paragraphs (a) to (c) is available—a person chosen by an authorised applicant for a forensic order in relation to the person who is not—
 - (i) a police officer; or
 - (ii) in any way involved in the investigation of the offence concerned.

The *Crimes Act 1914* (Cth) also contains requirements with respect to interview friends for Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander suspects, offenders and volunteers.

Prior to October 2015, an ACT Interview Friends Scheme had been established under which Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people brought into police custody for interview, had the option of seeking interview friend support from a list of interview friend community volunteers.

This list of interview friend community volunteers met the requirement (then) on the relevant Commonwealth Minister, under section 23J of the *Crime Act 1914*, to maintain a list of interview friends. At different times, the list of interview friend community volunteers was maintained by JACS, the Aboriginal Justice Centre and the Aboriginal Legal Service NSW/ ACT.

From October 2015, the ACT Interview Friends Scheme was also available to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander suspects being asked to consent to a forensic procedure under section 24A of the *Crimes (Forensic Procedures) Act 2000* (ACT) be offered an interview friend.

In 2018, section 23J of the *Crimes Act 1914* (Cth) was repealed and the requirement on the relevant Commonwealth Minister to maintain a list of interview friends ceased.

In 2019, the ACT Government's arrangement with the Aboriginal Legal Service NSW/ ACT, requiring it to maintain a list of volunteer interview friends ceased.

The Aboriginal Legal Service NSW/ ACT has continued to be funded to provide legal representation that can be requested to provide services that meet the Commonwealth's and ACT's legislated interview friend requirements. In addition to the Commonwealth funding provided to the ALS, the ACT Government provides annual funding to the ALS for a Duty Lawyer at \$109,390 per year.

**Transport Canberra—shuttle services
(Question No 501)**

Mrs Kikkert asked the Minister for Transport and City Services, upon notice, on 8 October 2021:

- (1) What are the guidelines that determine where and when Transport Canberra will introduce a shuttle service instead of service by a regular size bus.
- (2) How many shuttles does Transport Canberra currently own.
- (3) How many shuttle routes could be operated by the shuttles that are currently owned.
- (4) Has the ACT Government explored increasing the number of shuttles in its fleet; if so, what were the substance and outcome of this exploration.
- (5) Has the ACT Government ever considered the use of a shuttle in Lawson until the suburb can be serviced by a regular size bus; if so, what were the substance and outcome of this consideration.
- (6) Has the ACT Government ever considered introducing shuttle services in areas where the roads are too small for regular size buses, such as Britten Jones Drive in Holt; if so, what were the substance and outcome of this consideration.

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

- (1) Transport Canberra currently operates a fleet of standard rigid and articulated buses to provide public transport services across Canberra, whilst a fleet of smaller mini buses are in use exclusively for the purposes of Special Needs Transport, Flexible Transport and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander programs**
- (2) Transport Canberra does not own any shuttle buses but it does own and lease mini buses for the operations described in (1). Transport Canberra does have a service agreement with a provider for bus services in Strathnairn where the fleet of two mini buses is owned by the provider and the drivers are Transport Canberra staff.
- (3) Transport Canberra owns and operates some mini buses but does not operate shuttle services*. Transport Canberra provides the drivers to enable the two Strathnairn shuttle services to operate.
- (4) The ACT Government may consider increasing the number of mini buses to meet any operational growth of the on-demand and flexible services.
- (5) The ACT Government has not considered the use of a mini bus for Lawson. Furthermore, Lawson is earmarked to be serviced by a redirection of an existing route service in the future.
- (6) The ACT Government has not considered the use of a mini bus for roads too small for regular buses.

*shuttle services are defined by Transport Canberra as a service that shuttles back and forth between two points repeatedly, often connecting into an interchange.

****Transport Canberra** on behalf of the Government operates additional mini buses as part of Special Needs Transport, Flexible Transport fleet, Community bus fleet and ATSI Transport buses: There are currently 26 vehicles leased performing this mix of services.

(A copy of the attachment is available at the Chamber Support Office).

Municipal services—shopping centre upgrades (Question No 502)

Mrs Kikkert asked the Minister for Transport and City Services, upon notice, on 8 October 2021:

- (1) How much of the \$18.7 million announced for upgrades to local shops will be used for upgrades to the local shops of (a) Evatt, (b) Macquarie, (c) Kippax Group Centre and (d) Florey.
- (2) When is each of the four upgrades referred to in part (1) intended to be complete.
- (3) Can the Minister detail the planned upgrades to the Kippax Group Centre in relation to the development outlined in the Kippax Master Plan.

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

- 1) The exact allocation for each local shops upgrade will differ based on the scope of works to be undertaken. This will be informed through the design process including undertaking community consultation.
- 2) Shopping centre upgrades have been funded under a four-year delivery program.
- 3) The Kippax Group Centre Masterplan 2019 (Masterplan) proposes enhanced public space design that facilitates business and social interaction, encourages walking and cycling and improves tree cover. The upgrades planned for Kippax Group Centre will progress the Masterplan vision by preparing design and strategic works implementation plan that improves access to facilities, services and public transport; public spaces with opportunity for social interaction, and design that encourages walking and cycling as well as a significant increase in tree cover.

Canberra Health Services—intensive care beds (Question No 504)

Mrs Jones asked the Minister for Health, upon notice, on 8 October 2021:

- (1) How many intensive care unit (ICU) beds physically existed within, or were in the control of, the Canberra Health Service on (a) 30 June 2019, (b) 30 June 2020, (c) 30 June 2021 and (d) 30 September 2021.
- (2) How many ICU beds were being operated by the Canberra Health Service on (a) 30 June 2019, (b) 30 June 2020, (c) 30 June 2021, and (d) 30 September 2021.

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

- (1) On the dates requested, there were the following physical ICU beds at CHS:
 - a: 31
 - b: 31
 - c: 31
 - d: 31
- (2) As at midnight on the dates requested the number of ICU beds operated by CHS, as recorded in the ACT Patient Administration System was:
 - a: 22
 - b: 19
 - c: 23
 - d: 24

**Canberra Health Services—personal protective equipment
(Question No 505)**

Mrs Jones asked the Minister for Health, upon notice, on 8 October 2021:

- (1) What brands of masks were available for use by staff at Canberra Health Service on 30 September 2021.
- (2) For each brand of mask referred to in part (1), how many were held by Canberra Health Service on 30 September 2021.
- (3) Has Canberra Health Service, since 1 July 2021, advised any staff that one brand of mask is a suitable substitute for another brand of mask such that it may be safely used without a specific “fit test”.

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

- (1) The below table shows the brands of masks available for use by Canberra Health Services (CHS) staff on 30 September 2021. (Note: only brands of N95 Level 3 Respirators have been listed. Surgical masks have not been listed)

| Brand (P2/N95 Level 3 Respirator) | Qty on Hand (30/09/2021) |
|--|---------------------------------|
| BSN Proshield | 50,800 |
| BYD Care | 386,675 |
| Care Essentials Cocoon | 70,060 |
| Halyard Fluidshield | 2,150 |
| Industree Trident | 89,140 |
| 3M Aura | 0 |
| Total | 598,825 |

- (2) The above table shows the quantities available for each brand of mask on 30 September 2021. (Note: quantities listed relate to stock held in inventory and does not include hospital stock held in each ward).
- (3) Yes. Due to nationwide shortages of the 3M Aura mask type in late September 2021 staff were advised that a suitable alternative mask, the Trident mask, could be used for those impacted staff members who had previously been fit tested only with the 3M Aura mask.

This advice was informed by evidence provided by the Victorian Department of Health on fit test pass rates for the Trident mask, as well as local trials undertaken within Canberra Health Services which indicated that the Trident mask had an equivalent if not better fit test pass rate compared to the 3M Aura mask. Based on the information provided the Clinical Health Emergency Coordination Centre (CHECC) endorsed the use of the Trident mask to address the 3M Aura mask shortage and to improve P2/N95 mask option availability for all applicable staff.

Municipal services—playground fencing (Question No 507)

Mrs Jones asked the Minister for Transport and City Services, upon notice, on 8 October 2021:

- (1) Can the Minister provide a list of the fully fenced playgrounds constructed by the ACT Government in the ACT.
- (2) Of all the playgrounds identified in part (1), how many met the Building Code of Australia – Swimming Pool and Spa Construction (BCA-SPSC) standards (specifically the maximum 100mm gap at any point in the fence and vehicle access gate requirements).
- (3) Can the Minister provide a list of fully fenced playgrounds that have been repaired, and the cost of any repairs, since 1 August 2020.
- (4) Further to part (2), can the Minister indicate whether it is financially viable for any playgrounds that do not meet the BCA-SPSC standards to be repaired to meet these standards.
- (5) Given that in August 2020 the Coombs playground had gaps greater than 30cm under the fence, can the Minister provide the details of the proposed expenditure and timeframe for this to be repaired as well as any other aspects of the fencing that do not meet the BCA-SPSC.
- (6) Did community feedback help inform the roll-out of \$200,000 of upgrades at Canberra's popular off-leash dog parks in 2017; if so, has there been any public consultation on the spending of the \$400,000 on fully fenced playgrounds; if so, what consultations have taken place and what did they recommend.

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

- (1) Fully fenced playgrounds in the ACT:
 - Acton, Black Mountain Peninsula (Liberty Swing only).

- Bonython, Burgoyne Street.
 - Chifley, Charteris Crescent.
 - Coombs, Terry Connelly Street.
 - Florey, Kesteven Street (Shops).
 - Gungahlin, Yerrabi Pond (Liberty Swing Only).
 - Jacka, Appleford Crescent.
 - Kaleen, Gwydir Square (Shops).
 - Kambah Adventure Playground (Liberty Swing only).
 - Macgregor, John Holt Street.
 - Narrabundah, Iluka Street (Shops).
 - Ngunnawal, Paul Coe Crescent.
 - Phillip, Eddison Park.
 - Phillip, Tank Street.
 - Spence, Glassey Place (Shops).
 - Waramanga, Waramanga Place.
- (2) The ACT Government is currently assessing a proposal to adopt playground fencing standards into the ACT Municipal Infrastructure Standards that align with guidelines from Kidsafe Australia and the Building Code of Australia, which at a minimum comply with the BCA-SPSC standard/Australian Standard 1926.1 Swimming Pool Safety – Safety barriers for swimming pools.
- (3) Since 1 August 2020, fencing repair work has totalled \$2,877.00 (ex GST). Repair work was due to vandalism. Sites included:
- Bonython Playground, Burgoyne Street.
 - Florey Shopping Centre Playground.
 - Narrabundah Playground, Iluka Shops.
 - Jacka Playground, Appleford Crescent.
- (4) Playgrounds, including associated fencing, are built in accordance with the standards that applied at the time of construction. Playgrounds are annually assessed through an independent Level 3 Safety and Compliance Audit. Works programs that follow this audit are risk-based with the highest safety concerns being prioritised.
- (5) The Coombs playground including the associated fence was built in accordance with the standards that applied at the time of construction.
- As identified in the ACT Municipal Infrastructure Standards, *“fences or barriers are not to be used as passive management to contain unsupervised children.”* This highlights the importance of supervising children while they use playgrounds.
- (6) Yes, there was community consultation done in 2016-17 at each dog park which has informed improvements made over the subsequent period.

The fencing component of the playground, shade sails and fencing project is a direct outcome of feedback from the 2018 Better Suburbs Play Spaces Forum about the need to make playgrounds more inclusive, safe and suitable for families with special needs, in particular for children with autism and Asperger-related conditions, and their parents and carers.

TCCS has also discussed playground fencing with Marymead and others in relation to specifications and requirements to meet the needs of children and families with special needs.

Planning—public housing choices (Question No 508)

Mr Parton asked the Minister for Housing and Suburban Development, upon notice, on 8 October 2021:

- (1) In relation the categories of public housing properties of (a) two, (b) three, (c) four, (d) five and (e) six bedrooms, how many freestanding homes does Housing ACT expect to (i) build in 2021-2022, (ii) to sell in 2021-2022 and (iii) to buy in 2021-2022.
- (2) How many apartment complexes does Housing ACT expect to build in 2021-2022.
- (3) Of those apartment complexes referred to in part (2), how many (a) two, (b) three and (c) four or more bedroom apartments will these include.
- (4) How many townhouse complexes does Housing ACT expect to build in 2021-2022.
- (5) Of those townhouse complexes referred to in part (4), how many (a) one, (b) two, (c) three and (d) four or more bedrooms townhouses will these include.

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

- (1) Housing ACT expect to deliver a total of 116 properties in 2021-22, including 74 freestanding dwellings and 42 multi-unit townhouse dwellings. Housing ACT continue to work on the construction of 468 dwellings this financial year for delivery in future years and progress the design and planning phase for 225 dwellings. Overall, a total of 809 dwellings will be the work in progress (WIP) schedule in 2021-2022.

Housing ACT expect to sell a total of 150 freestanding dwellings in 2021-22; and acquire (purchase) a total of 69 dwellings. The expected acquisitions will be a combination of freestanding homes and townhouses/duplexes/triplexes depending on suitable market opportunities.

The below tables provide a breakdown of construction deliveries, sales and purchases by bedrooms in 2021-22.

| 2021-2022 | Total | 2 Bed | 3 Bed | 4 Bed | 5 Bed | 6+ Bed |
|---|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|---------------|
| Built deliveries - Freestanding | 74 | 30 | 9 | 25 | 9 | 1 |
| Built deliveries - Townhouse | 42 | 31 | 8 | 3 | - | - |
| <i>Built deliveries Total</i> | 116 | 61 | 17 | 28 | 9 | 1 |
| Sell - Freestanding | 150 | 11 | 137 | 2 | - | - |
| Acquire - Mixed Freestanding and townhouse | 69 | 10 | 42 | 17 | - | - |

- (2) Housing ACT expect to build one complex of 40 apartments in 2021-22, Common Ground Dickson.
- (3) The Common Ground Dickson apartments are to the following bedroom configuration:

| | Total | 1 Bed | 2 Bed | 3 Bed | 4 Bed | 4+ Bed |
|-------------------|-----------|-------|-------|-------|-------|--------|
| Apartments | 40 | 18 | 14 | 8 | - | - |

- (4) Housing ACT expect to build 8 complexes comprising of 42 townhouses in 2021-22.
- (5) These townhouses are of the following bedroom configuration.

| | Total | 2 Bed | 3 Bed | 4 Bed | 5 Bed | 6+ Bed |
|--------------------------|-----------|-------|-------|-------|-------|--------|
| Build - Townhouse | 42 | 31 | 8 | 3 | - | - |

Municipal services—playgrounds (Question No 509)

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

- (1) How many inspections, over the past four financial years, have taken place at (a) Kambah Adventure Park, (b) Heagney Crescent playground, Gilmore, (c) Fadden Pond playground and (d) Louis Loder playground, Theodore.
- (2) Of those inspections referred to in part (1), can the Minister provide a list of the jobs lodged for each playground.
- (3) Of these jobs referred to in part (2), can the Minister provide the average amount of days it took for the job to be completed for each playground.

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

- (1) Please see below inspection details over the last four financial years

| | Inspections |
|---------------------------------------|-------------|
| Kambah Adventure Playground | 420 |
| Heagney Crescent, Playground, Gilmore | 108 |
| Fadden Pond Playground | 108 |
| Louis Loder Playground, Theodore | 108 |

(2) Louis Loder Playground, Theodore

- Spring animal missing bolt/cap cover set.
- Damaged/loose gate latch.
- Caps missing on see saw crossbar x 4.
- Bolt missing on climb net.
- Cracks at slide entry.

Fadden Pond – Nicklin Cres

- Rocks missing in border wall.
- Rope bridge mount broken and rope worn.
- Slats missing on tower.
- No Smoking sign removed from ground.
- Bugle screws loose on tower slats.
- Door on tower opening.
- Grab handles loose x 2.
- Rope mount loose.
- Spinner missing bolt.
- 6 x bolts missing on post collars.
- Spiker Spinner missing base bolt.

Heagney Cres, Gilmore

- Track ride not gliding with ease.
- Baby swing seat damaged - S hooks.
- Timber deck splitting.
- Bent/damaged deck poles.
- Track glide doesn't roll smoothly, removed for repair.

Kambah Adventure Park

- Small flying fox mount worn and large flying fox cable slack.
- Tic Tac Toe damaged - smashed/brittle – taped – needs repair.
- Chains worn on purple carousel/hosing.
- Baby seat damaged - S hooks worn – replaced.
- Damaged spring surfer – needs replacing – parrawebbing to be installed.
- Fence panels x 4 missing at nature play.
- Missing locks on liberty swing - needs repair.
- Carousel missing bolt.
- Nature play net has loose I.D. Plate.
- Nest swing burnt.
- Cracked welds on large slide at entry and at mid-point on tag.
- Hosing split on carousel.
- Sign damaged and sharp edges at skate bow.

- Damaged/cracking naughts and crosses - taped - needs repair.
- Sand pit full of rubbish and tree debris.
- Rubbish spread throughout playground.
- Holes forming in softfall under basket swing.
- Cap missing on post below sun dial.
- Soft fall damaged at big slide, small slide and small fly fox.
- Hosing split on small fly fox.
- Hole in slide entrance stairs.
- Chain worn on carousel.
- Bolts have movement on small and large flying fox.
- Timber carousel missing bolt.
- Tic Tac Toe damaged – taped – needs repair.
- Twin S/S slide has crack in surface.
- Flying fox bolts worn.
- Flying fox strap worn.
- Flying fox hose worn.
- Carousel missing T nut.
- Rubber split on spider net.
- Stainless slide welds broken.
- Liberty Swing bridge not locking properly.
- Birds Nest Swing missing - replaced.
- Liberty Swing Bridge not locking again.
- Damaged rubber soft-fall large flying fox.
- Missing cap on Carousel.
- Spike Spinner damaged.
- Swing brackets loose.
- Flying fox handle worn.
- Top swing mounts loose on baby swing.
- Spinner loose in housing.
- Slide missing rivets.
- Liberty Swing Fence panel kicked.
- Replaced cap top side of carousel.
- Carousel Bolts undone.
- Damaged Tic Tac Toe.
- Hose splitting on small flying fox.
- Liberty Swing base plate lock panel.
- Repair welds on stainless slide.
- Post caps missing on sun dial.
- Safety chain twisted on bird nest swing.

- Cracked welds on large slide.
- Rubber soft-fall damaged.
- Chime paddle missing.
- Carousel missing cap covers.
- Low branches at swings and flying fox.
- Missing handle on carousel.
- Rubber splitting on spider net.
- Missing bolt on Carousel.
- Basket Swing S hook damaged.
- Small Flying fox frame post welds cracking.
- Liberty Swing locks broken.
- T swing bolts loose.
- S hooks on birds nest swing damaged.
- T swing movement in frame.
- Softfall washed out.
- Nut missing on carousel.
- Bolts loose on carousel.
- Pommel Seat damaged small flying fox.
- Baby Swing seat split.
- Damaged yellow caps.

(3) Providing a response for each individual job would require an unsustainable allocation of Government resources as it would be time consuming, requiring extensive queries being made across multiple record systems. Typically, regardless of the site, playground repairs fall into two categories.

- a) simple repairs or minor works that require off the shelf products such as shackles, nuts and bolts, latches, paint etc to rectify the issue - timeframe for completion ranges from immediate at the time of inspection to up to eight weeks.
- b) more complex repairs or major works that require custom made or fabricated parts/ parts that are only available from overseas suppliers - timeframe ranges from a few weeks up to 12 months.

Where required to ensure public safety, equipment awaiting repair or replacement parts may be temporarily removed or barricaded off to prevent use.

Development—Campbell shops (Question No 510)

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

- (1) Can the Minister provide the total cost of consultation from 22 March 2021 to the closure of consultation on 10 May 2021, including, but limited to (a) the cost of the

Transport Canberra and City Services pop-up at Campbell shops on 1 May 2021 and (b) the cost and number of houses letterboxed across the suburb inviting residents to visit the YourSay webpage.

- (2) Can the Minister provide the results of the 176 people who completed the YourSay survey for the development of the Campbell shops, including a breakdown of results by question.

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

- (1)
- a. The cost of the pop-up at Campbell Shops on 1 May 2021 was \$940.69.
 - b. In total 1,586 dwellings were letterboxed across Campbell at a cost of \$426.18.
- (2) The results of the questionnaire are provided at Attachment A.

(A copy of the attachment is available at the Chamber Support Office).

Roads—traffic data (Question No 512)

Mr Cain asked the Minister for Transport and City Services, upon notice, on 12 November 2021:

In relation to traffic surveys undertaken by Transport Canberra and City Services on Redfern Street and Lyttleton Crescent in Cook, can the Minister advise the (a) number of surveys undertaken in the (i) 2019, (ii) 2020 and (iii) 2021 calendar years, including the date, time and duration of each survey, (b) number of vehicles monitored in each survey and (c) highest speed of a moving vehicle observed.

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

- (a)
- i. 2019: No surveys.
 - ii. 2020: Redfern Street 23 March - 29 March (inclusive) x3 locations 24hrs a day.
2020: Lyttleton Crescent 10 June – 16 June (inclusive) x2 locations 24hrs a day.
 - iii. 2021: No surveys.
- (b)
- Redfern Street
- 2020
- Site 1 (Bowman Street – Bowman Street) = 37,749 vehicles (two-way total over 7 days).
 - Site 2 (Lyttleton Crescent – Allman Circuit) = 32,742 vehicles (two-way total over 7 days).
 - Site 3 (Elizabeth Street – Lachlan Street) = 20,951 vehicles (two-way total over 7 days).
- Lyttleton Crescent
- 2020
- Site 1 (Bindubi Street – Bourne Street) = 26,981 vehicles (two-way total over 7 days).

- Site 2 (Cambridge Street – Rowan Street) = 19,789 vehicles (two-way total over 7 days).

(c)

Redfern Street

2020

- Site 1 (Bowman Street – Bowman Street) 117km/h Eastbound Saturday 28 March;
118km/h Westbound Sunday 29 March.
- Site 2 (Lyttleton Crescent – Allman Circuit) 125km/h Eastbound Tuesday 24 March;
132km/h Westbound Sunday 29 March.
- Site 3 (Elizabeth Street – Lachlan Street) = 136km/h Eastbound Saturday 28 March;
132km/h Westbound Sunday 29th March.

Lyttleton Crescent

2020

- Site 1 (Bindubi Street – Bourne Street) - 90km/h Saturday 13 June; 101km/h Friday 12 June.
- Site 2 (Cambridge Street – Rowan Street) - 91km/h Tuesday 15 June; 102km/h Wednesday 16 June.

**Better Regulation Taskforce—administration
(Question No 516)**

Mr Cain asked the Minister for Business and Better Regulation, upon notice, on 12 November 2021:

- (1) On what date was the Better Regulation Taskforce established.
- (2) Does the Better Regulation Taskforce have terms of reference; if so, can the Minister provide them.
- (3) How many full-time equivalent members of the ACT Public Service (ACTPS) comprise the Better Regulation Taskforce.
- (4) How many contractors, advisers, or other external service providers comprise the Better Regulation Taskforce and what are their roles.
- (5) Does the Better Regulation Taskforce hold formal internal meetings within the ACTPS; if so, are any minutes taken and can the Minister provide those minutes.
- (6) From the Better Regulation Taskforce's discovery to date, what are the top ten regulatory issues, barriers or delays identified by businesses.
- (7) What actions has the Better Regulation Taskforce taken to date in response to regulatory issues, barriers or delays identified by businesses.
- (8) What was the cost of the legislative review in the 2020-21 financial year.

- (9) When will the legislative review be completed and will a legislative review report be publicly released.

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

- (1) The Jobs and Economic Recovery Plan released on 27 August 2020 committed to establish a Better Regulation Taskforce. This commitment was funded in the 2020-21 Budget, and the Taskforce commenced in February 2021.
- (2) Five priority areas for the Taskforce were identified through the Jobs and Economic Recovery Plan:
 - a. Expanding digital service offerings of the ACT Government's public interactions and support Canberra businesses to transition to greater digital technology operations.
 - b. Improving labour mobility through automatic recognition of licences from other parts of Australia.
 - c. Identifying areas of regulatory burden through stakeholder engagement with ACT industry representative groups and businesses.
 - d. Reviewing key legislation to:
 - i. reduce the need for businesses to contact multiple Government agencies; and
 - ii. ensure legislation across the ACT supports new business models to grow the digital economy.
 - e. Removing barriers to investment in the Territory.
- (3) At the 2020-21 Budget four FTE were reprioritised from within CMTEDD to form the Better Regulation Taskforce (SES 1.4, SOGA, SOB and SOGC calculated using the Average Salary Costing Model).
- (4) No contractors, advisers or other external service providers comprise the Better Regulation Taskforce. Through the 2020-21 Budget the Better Regulation Taskforce received funding for:
 - a. procurement of specialist capabilities to the value of \$329,100 over three financial years (\$124,000 in 2020-2021, \$142,900 in 2021-2022, and \$62,200 in 2022-2023).
- (5) The Better Regulation Taskforce has met with stakeholders within the ACTPS as part of the discovery phase and to validate areas for further analysis. These meetings are not minuted.
- (6) The Taskforce has undertaken initial analysis of the issues raised through stakeholder engagement. While there is still necessary engagement to be undertaken, some common themes and issues have presented themselves, including:
 - a. Small business information and communications
 - b. Simplification of Government to Business interactions
 - c. Regulator Practice (clarity, capability, culture, continuous improvement)
 - d. Programs and Support for SMEs
 - e. Skilled Workforce
 - f. Continuous Improvement – Reviewing ACT Legislation and Regulations.

- (7) The Taskforce is now developing a program of work to address these issues. The Taskforce has also addressed direct queries from business during the Discovery Phase, helping to find solutions to immediate concerns.
- (8) \$36,960 (GST inclusive) was spent on the legislative review project in 2020-21. The total contract value is \$92,400 (spanning 2020-21 and 2021-22).
- (9) Phase One of the legislation review was completed on 8 November 2021. This phase has identified a shortlist of key areas which may be selected for an in-depth legislative review by the Taskforce. The findings of Phase One will be incorporated into the program of work for the Taskforce. Government has not yet made a decision on the release of these findings.

Multicultural affairs—cultural centres (Question No 524)

Mrs Jones asked the Minister for Multicultural Affairs, upon notice, on 12 November 2021:

- (1) Which multicultural, ethnic or national cultural groups have a cultural centre in Canberra.
- (2) For each cultural centre identified in part (1), (a) what is its address and (b) when was it established.

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

- (1) Canberra has a range of multicultural, ethnic or national cultural groups who have dedicated privately established cultural centres or clubs, or who use other facilities to deliver cultural activities to the community.

Privately established Clubs in the ACT include:

- Hellenic Club of Canberra;
- Polish Australian White Eagle Club Inc;
- Spanish Australian Club of Canberra;
- Italian Cultural Centre of Canberra;
- Canberra Sikh Association;
- Latin American Cultural Centre;
- Hindu Temple and Cultural Centre;
- Gungahlin Masjid;
- Alliance Francaise Canberra;
- Austrian Australian Club Canberra;
- Canberra Irish Club;
- Wat Lao Buddhanimitt Canberra established by the Lao Association of the ACT Inc;
- Slovenian Australian Association;
- Harmonie German Club of Canberra;

- Australian-Croatian Club;
- Canberra Highland Society Burns Club;
- Croatia Deakin Soccer Club;
- Canberra White Eagles Soccer Club; and
- Canberra Sultans Sports Club.

Some cultural communities and organisations use publicly available ACT Government or privately owned community facilities to deliver activities or hold celebrations. These include:

- The Theo Notaras Multicultural Centre;
- Multicultural Hub Canberra;
- Cook Community Centre;
- Weston Creek Community Centre; and
- Belconnen Community Centre.

(2)

(a) Addresses to cultural centres listed in Answer 1:

- Hellenic Club of Canberra Hellenic Club – Matilda St, Phillip ACT 2606
- Polish Australian White Eagle Club Inc - 38 David Street, Turner ACT 2612
- Spanish Australian Club of Canberra - 5 Narupai Place, Narrabundah ACT 2095
- Italian Cultural Centre of Canberra - 80 Franklin St, Forrest ACT 2603
- Canberra Sikh Association - 15 Hickey Cct Weston, ACT 2611
- Latin American Cultural Centre - 28 Astrolabe Street, Red Hill ACT 2603
- Hindu Temple and Cultural Centre - 81 Ratcliffe Crescent, Florey Canberra
- Gungahlin Masjid – 140 The Valley Ave, Gungahlin ACT 2912
- Alliance Francaise Canberra - 66 McCaughey St, Turner ACT 2612
- Austrian Australian Club Canberra - Heard Street, Mawson ACT 2607
- Canberra Irish Club - 6 Parkinson Street, Weston ACT 2611
- Wat Lao Buddhimit Canberra established by the Lao Association of the ACT Inc - 20 Jenke Cct, Kambah ACT 2902
- Slovenian Australian Association - 19 Irving St, Phillip ACT 2606
- Harmonie German Club of Canberra 49 Jerrabomberra Avenue Narrabundah, ACT 2604
- Australian-Croatian Club - 68 McCaughey St, Turner ACT 2612
- Canberra Highland Society Burns Club – 28 Kett St, Kambah, ACT 2902
- Croatia Deakin Soccer Club- 3 Grose St, Deakin, ACT 2600.
- Canberra White Eagles Soccer Club - Corner of Ainsworth and Kitchener Streets, Phillip, ACT 2606
- Canberra Sultans Sports Club – Weetangera Playing Fields, 103 Weetangera Pl, Weetangera ACT 2614.

(b) The Directorate does not have data on the establishment of cultural centres.

**Municipal services—mowing
(Question No 527)**

Mr Milligan asked the Minister for Transport and City Services, upon notice, on 12 November 2021:

- (1) In relation to the maintenance of government land in the Yerrabi region, will the Government take responsibility if a constituent has an accident due to low vision, caused by overgrown grass, as the result of Government neglect.
- (2) Why has the Government not yet conducted urgent mowing to remove traffic hazards in the Yerrabi region.
- (3) What catching methods does the Government have for the freshly mown grass clippings; if none, why not.
- (4) When can Yerrabi Residents expect their suburbs to be mown.

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

- (1) Public safety is the highest priority for maintenance of public areas. Legal or other claims are considered on a case-by-case basis.
- (2) Mowing to ensure public safety, such as line of sight, access, and fire fuel reduction is a priority when delivering mowing programs and takes precedence over amenity mowing. In the Yerrabi region, TCCS has recently actioned line of sight issues reported along the Barton Highway, Curran Drive, Wells Station Road, Clarrie Hermes Drive, Kellaway Avenue and Gungahlin Drive.
- (3) Clippings are generally discharged from the rear of the machine to minimise spread onto hard surfaces such as paths and roads. Mower operators ensure that if there are excess clippings left after mowing, these are evenly spread over the area and the clip is not left in windrows. Follow up blowing is undertaken as required to remove excess grass in gutters and on footpaths.
- (4) All suburban areas mown by City Services have been cut at least once this season with most areas now having received a second cut. To find out when a suburb is next due to be mown, please refer to the mowing map, available at <https://www.cityservices.act.gov.au/public-land/maintenance/grass-mowing>. The map shows where crews have recently mowed and are planning to mow in the coming weeks.

**Employment—women
(Question No 531)**

Mrs Kikkert asked the Minister for Women, upon notice, on 12 November 2021 (*redirected to the Chief Minister*):

- (1) What statistics does the ACT collect on women in the workforce.
- (2) Has the ACT Government identified any specific cohorts of women that experience a distinct lack of opportunity when seeking employment; if so, what are those cohorts of women.

- (3) Are there any industries or sectors that the ACT Government are focussing on to increase the employment levels of women; if so, what are those industries.
- (4) What is the current gender pay gap in the ACT, according to the ACT Government.
- (5) What is the ratio of men to women in the ACT workforce.
- (6) How many women are employed in the ACT workforce.
- (7) Does the ACT Government have a quota for hiring women; if so, (a) is this a general quota for all of government or does it vary according to directorate and (b) what are those quotas.

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

- (1) Statistics are collected on women in ACT Government employment across a range of metrics, including classification, pay, age and diversity group.
- (2) Women with intersecting social identities, including women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, older women, women with a disability, and women identifying as part of the LGBTIQ+ community are known to face additional barriers to employment.
- (3) Through the Second Action Plan 2020-22 of the ACT Women's Plan 2016-2026, the ACT Government is seeking to enhance links/opportunities into traditionally male-dominated trades and occupations as a career path for women in the building and construction industry.
- (4) The most recent data from the Workplace Gender Equality Agency identifies the gender pay gap in the ACT as 7.9% as at May 2021.
- (5) The ACT Govt does not collect information in lieu of other organisations such as the Australian Bureau of Statistics.
- (6) The ACT Govt does not collect information in lieu of other organisations such as the Australian Bureau of Statistics.
- (7) No.

Questions without notice taken on notice

Education—teachers

Ms Berry (*in reply to a question by Mr Hanson on Thursday, 7 October 2021*):

There is no reduction in the number of funded frontline teachers.

The 2020-21 Interim Outcome figure for Full Time Equivalent Staff (FTEs) in the Education Directorate's Budget Statements includes temporary staff associated with the COVID-19 Pandemic, including the Jobs for Canberrans.

The 2021 22 Budget reflects the underlying staffing levels in the Directorate and may be affected by future temporary staffing to address identified needs.

Mental health services—consumer feedback

Ms Davidson (*in reply to a supplementary question by Mrs Kikkert on Tuesday, 9 November 2021*):

For the period of 1 October 2020 to 1 October 2021, the total number of mental health related complaints for the Emergency Department (ED) at Canberra Hospital was 24.